

Children and Young Peoples' Views on Well-Being: A Qualitative Study

Maja Tadić Vujčić¹  · Andreja Brajša-Žganec¹ · Renata Franc¹

Accepted: 15 May 2018 / Published online: 20 May 2018
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V., part of Springer Nature 2018

Abstract The main purpose of the present study was to examine children and young people's (CYP) perspectives on well-being. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms through which CYP can flourish, it is necessary to examine the positive indicators of well-being in addition to negative aspects of childhood and adolescence. In doing so, it is important to understand the meanings CYP attach to well-being. We performed 10 semi-structured interviews and 2 focus groups with children (10–12 years old) and adolescents (15–16 years old) in 2 contrasting schools (different types with different background pupils). We also performed 10 semi-structured interviews and 2 focus groups with young people (16–19 years old) who are representative of different social groups and different levels of civic engagement. The participants of the study were gender balanced. The study strictly followed all of the relevant ethical standards related to research involving CYP. The results of this qualitative study provided a better insight into CYP's global understanding of well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction by revealing how CYP themselves experience different aspects of well-being, and what they think are the most relevant factors that determine their well-being. The study also demonstrated how the CYP's family, friends, school, environment, health, and material issues determine their well-being. These findings can be used to address and optimized specific difficulties and challenges of investigating children's and young people's well-being.

Keywords Subjective well-being · Qualitative study · Children and young people's perspectives · Happiness · Life satisfaction

✉ Maja Tadić Vujčić
maja.tadic@pilar.hr

¹ Department of Psychology, Institute of social sciences Ivo Pilar, Marulićev trg 19/1, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia

Children and young people's well-being is a very relevant scientific issue and a highly important concern for policy makers because the quality of children's lives throughout their development impacts a broad spectrum of psychological, social, and health-related outcomes, and strongly affects all major domains of their lives in adulthood (Bradshaw and Richardson 2009; Proctor et al. 2009; Richardson and Ali 2014). Accordingly, in recent years there has been a growth in the international comparisons of child well-being (Andresen et al. 2015; Bradshaw et al. 2006; Dinisman et al. 2015; Richardson and Ali 2014). These studies provided valuable insights on the importance of monitoring correlates and features of different aspects of children's and young people's well-being. Nonetheless, they also revealed the need for a better understanding of the ways children conceptualize different facets of well-being and the importance of including children as active agents in decision making relevant to their lives.

Therefore, the main goal of the present study was to gain new insights into the ways children and young people understand and conceptualize well-being by actively engaging children and young people in well-being research processes and by ensuring their voices are heard. We conducted the current study within a large international research project entitled Measuring Youth Well-Being (MYWeB).¹ In doing so, we aimed to capture children and young people's personal views, experiences, and perspectives on the different aspects of well-being (Goswami et al. 2015; Mason and Danby 2011). More concretely, rather than focusing on predetermined variables, the identification of cause–effect relationships, and prediction of outcomes, in this study we were interested in the quality and texture of processes and experiences: What it means and how it feels for children and young people to experience high or low levels of well-being. In order to gain in depth view into the ways how children and young people make sense and experience well-being, we used qualitative methodology, namely, interviews and focus groups with children and young people (Eder and Fingerson 2002; Gibson 2007). In particular, the study had three specific research goals: (a) To explore the children's and young people's understandings of well-being and meanings that they attach to well-being; (b) To investigate whether and how children and young people conceptualize and understand different dimensions or aspects of well-being (happiness, life-satisfaction, psychological well-being); and (c) To examine children and young people's ideas on how major life domains contribute to high-level of well-being (e.g. family, school, environment, health, material aspects).

1 Theoretical Background

Well-Being of Children and Young People Studying well-being of children and young people is very important because it is positively and strongly related to various beneficial outcomes and indicators of adaptive psychosocial functioning, including the quality of social relationships, healthy behaviors, academic success, school satisfaction, teacher support, competence, self-efficacy, and decreased behavior problems (Gilman

¹ MYWeB is an EU funded project (European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007–2013 under grant agreement n° 613,368) that aims to assess the feasibility of a European Longitudinal Study for Children and Young People, coordinated by prof. Gary Pollock from the Manchester Metropolitan University. For further information please see the project web site: www.fp7-myweb.eu

and Huebner 2003, Gilman and Huebner 2006; Proctor et al. 2009, Proctor et al. 2010). In defining the concept of well-being, a distinction is typically made between the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches (Diener 2013; Ryan et al. 2013).

On the one hand, hedonic approach to well-being focuses on the experience of pleasure versus displeasure, which is reflected in two main components: affective (positive affect and negative affect) and a reflective cognitive component (life satisfaction) (De Neve et al. 2013; Diener 2012). It is worth noting that high well-being does not develop from the absence of negative affect, but from a positive balance of negative and positive affect (Huppert 2009; Huppert and So 2013; Tugade and Fredrickson 2004).

On the other hand, the eudaimonic approach argues that high well-being reflects not only feeling good, but also functioning effectively, which is typically understood as psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan Deci and Ryan 2008a, Deci and Ryan 2008b; Huppert and So 2013). Psychological well-being encompasses positive relationships, a sense of engagement and meaning in life, and self-actualization (Diener et al. 2018; Ryan et al. 2013). For instance, the self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of fulfilment of three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness in order to achieve and sustain high well-being (Deci and Ryan 2008a). The fulfilment of these needs is essential for psychological growth (e.g. intrinsic motivation), integrity (e.g. internalization and assimilation of cultural practices), and well-being. Ryff and Singer (2008) defined psychological well-being as multidimensional construct consisting of six aspects of human actualization: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness.

Children's Perspectives most of the existing theoretical approaches and studies on well-being within both hedonic and eudaimonic approaches focused on adults, and mostly relied on adult experts developing the categories and measures aimed to assess information on children, or, rarely, from children (Camfield and Tafere 2009; Fattore et al. 2012). This is somewhat problematic as several existing studies indicate that adults' perspectives are not always the same as children's (Dex and Hollingworth 2012; Spilsbury et al. 2009; Taylor et al. 2010). For instance, Sixsmith et al. (2007) showed that, although children's, parents and teachers well-being schemas have some similarities-particularly complexity of schemas-they also have notable differences. Nonetheless, only a few studies addressed how children define well-being (e.g. Fattore et al. 2012), and whether they distinguish different well-being components as outlined in the existing theories and research on adults.

Furthermore, most of the theoretical approaches to well-being contain a complex and multidimensional view, which is somewhat in collision with single measures of life satisfaction or happiness as well-being indicators, which are most often used (e.g. World Values Survey; Gallup World Poll; European Social Survey). Assessing well-being via only one construct entails a loss of potentially valuable and large amount of information, and these issues become particularly relevant in the context of children's and young people's well-being assessments (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014; Casas 2016a, 2016b; Huppert and So 2013).

Interest in well-being of children and young people arose only recently with growing body of literature attempting to identify, analyze, and monitor children and young people's well-being (e.g. Dinisman et al. 2015; Fattore et al. 2012; Gilman and Huebner

2006; Richardson and Ali 2014; Tomy and Cummins 2011). This reflects a fundamental challenge: How to assess children and young peoples' well-being so it adequately represents their own perspectives, emotions, perceptions, and experiences? In other words, if we do not take into account children as key agents in providing information on their personal experiences, aspirations, and emotions, it may be very difficult to assess their well-being in a precise, valid, and reliable way (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014). In order to be able to work on enhancing well-being of children- the main goal of children well-being research-we need to be confident that our measures are valid. As stated by Casas (2016a, 2016b), information on children's lives are most valid when they come from the most relevant experts on their lives: children themselves.

Whilst the use of subjective and positive indicators has been growing even within research on children's and young people's well-being (Andresen et al. 2015; Casas 2016a; Dex and Hollingworth 2012; McAuley 2012; McAuley and Rose 2014), this stream of research is still at early stage and studies involving children and young people as active participants in well-being research are scarce. Some qualitative studies examples include the study on children's understanding of well-being in the Republic of Ireland by Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005), a small-scale Irish study by Hanafin et al. (2007) on the experiences of two groups of young people with physical disabilities, an Australian study that described children's perceptions of healthiness and sources of health knowledge using focus groups by Brindal et al. (2012), a study by O'Higgins et al. (2010), which explored what adolescents understand by the words "healthy" and "happy" using semi-structured interviews, and a study by Fattore et al. (2009) involving individual or group interviews, which investigated what makes up the elements of well-being for children and young people.

These studies revealed that children and young people highly emphasize the importance of relationships with others, as well as the importance of a positive sense of self, and of having a sense of safety, agency and control in the different relevant life domains (i.e. family, friends, education, leisure time) (Fattore et al. Fattore et al. 2009, Fattore et al. 2012). These findings validate the approach that recognizes the views of children and young people as valid, competent and rich source of information on the ways children and young people understand their everyday lives (Camfield et al. 2009; Crivello et al. 2009).

However, further research is necessary to better understand and develop more comprehensive well-being frameworks based on children's perspectives. Therefore, by using qualitative methodology, the present study aimed to add to the existing literature through further investigation of the personal perspectives of children and young people, how they themselves conceptualize well-being, its major components, and life domains that contribute to high well-being.

2 Method

2.1 Participants and Procedure

Children in Schools Our study included 29 primary school children in total. In particular, we interviewed 10 children, and we conducted two focus groups (one focus group consisting of 10 children and the other focus group consisting of 9 children). We

used the most common sampling procedure for qualitative research: purposeful sampling (Coyne 1997; Palinkas et al. 2015; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Specifically, in line with the research aims, we choose schools for data collection because in the compulsory primary school the full spectrum of social demographic profiles of children is present. The younger group of school children included in our study were 9–10 years old ($N=15$). The older group of children in schools ($N=14$) included in this study were 13–15 years old. By selecting respondents from these two age-based categories of children, we managed to include children in different, but comparable developmental stages, who come from similar school settings.² Table 1 presents the detailed sociodemographic information on children in our study 1.

Young People Our study included 22 young people in total, 11 of them participated in semi-structured interviews and other 11 in one focus group, both taking places at the research institution in Zagreb. In our sampling, as with school children, we used purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al. 2015; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Table 2 presents the detailed sociodemographic information on young people in our study. To recruit young people, we contacted many NGOs, groups and organizations.³

Ethical Considerations The study was performed in accordance with all the ethical standards of research involving children and young people (Coyne 2010; Skånfors 2009), and it was approved by ethics board of the Institute of social sciences Ivo Pilar as well as the ethics committee at Manchester Metropolitan University as a coordinating institution for the whole project. We also gained approval from the Croatian Ministry of science, education and sport to contact schools in order to recruit the children in schools as participants. The participation of children and young people was voluntary and based on valid informed parental and personal consent. We explained procedures and potential benefits and risks to children according to their age and cognitive development. We organized and attended preliminary meetings at the primary schools, at which we provided relevant information about the content and goals of this project. At the preliminary meeting, we also arranged all of the necessary technical aspects of conducting this study, including the distribution of parental consent forms. All parents signed consent forms for all of the children that participated in this study. During the first preliminary meeting, both of the school principals expressed interest and willingness to participate further in this project.

² The younger group of school children included in our study were 9–10 years old ($N=15$). The older group of children in schools ($N=14$) included in this study were 13–15 years old. By selecting respondents from these two age-based categories of children, we managed to include children in different, but comparable developmental stages, who come from similar school settings. Table 1 presents the detailed sociodemographic information on children in our study 1.

³ Forum for Freedom in Education: www.fso.hr; NGO Praktikum-Center for Children and Youth: www.udruga-praktikum.hr; Volunteer Centre: www.vcz.hr; Association of Our Children Societies: www.savez-dnd.hr; Youth Network Croatia: www.mmh.hr; Centre for Peace Studies: www.cms.hr; NGO Lijepa Naša: www.lijepa-nasa.hr; Information Centre for Youth: www.icm-zg.info; Youth Council of City of Zagreb: www.skupstina.zagreb.hr/default.aspx?id=700; NGO Imagine: www.zamisli.hr; Croatian Association of youth NGOs and students with physical disabilities SUMSI: www.savezsumsi.hr; NGO for Fostering Quality of Life Let: www.udruga-let.hr; Youth Council of the Ombudsman for Children: www.dijete.hr.

Table 1 Participants' socio-demographic characteristics: Primary school children

	Categories	Interviews	Focus groups	Total
Age	9	–	4	4
	10	5	6	11
	13	–	3	3
	14	4	6	10
	15	1	–	1
Gender	Male	6	9	15
	Female	4	10	14
Place of birth	Croatia	10	18	28
	Abroad	–	1	1
Ethnicity	Croatian	10	19	29
Disability	Yes (type)	2 (1 dyslexia/dysgraphia; 1 sight disability)	2 (1 cognitive - learning disability; 1 hearing disability)	4
	No	8	17	25
Place of residence	Urban	4	11	15
	Rural	6	8	14
Residential status	Lives in single parent family	1 (father died)	4 (1 father died)	5
	Lives with parents	9 (1 step-father)	15	24
	Lives with grandparents/ relatives	2	7	9
Education	Primary school pupils in full-time education	10	19	29

The focus group discussions and the interviews were audio recorded for the sole purpose of obtaining information about the children and youth scopes of well-being. We kept all records confidential and made them available only to professional researchers involved in the study. Moreover, we present the results of this study in a way that the individual children and young people cannot be identified. Before starting the interviews and focus groups, all of the young participants were informed about purpose of the study, anonymity, audio taping, and also signed the consent form and filled in the sociodemographic data sheet. All of the participants in the study received an 8GB USB stick as a gift.

2.2 Measures

General Interview and Focus Group Schedule Structure In this study, we used a combination of a deductive and inductive approach because we wanted to explore specific issues and topics of children and youth well-being; however, we also aimed to leave space to discover other unexpected aspects of children and young people's experiences and perspectives of well-being. Accordingly, the general interview and focus group schedule was semi structured.

Table 2 Participants' socio-demographic characteristics: Young people

	Categories	Interviews	Focus groups	Total
Age	16	2	5	7
	17	2	1	3
	18	4	4	8
	19	3	1	4
Gender	Male	6	6	12
	Female	5	5	10
Place of birth	Croatia	11	11	22
	Abroad	–	–	–
Ethnicity	Croatian	11	11	22
Disability	No	11	11	22
	Yes	–	–	–
Place of residence	Urban	11	11	22
	Rural	–	–	–
Level of education accomplished	Primary school	6	9	15
	High school	5	2	7
Current Education	High school student	6 (5 in general secondary education; 1 vocational secondary education)	9 (8 in general secondary education; 1 vocational secondary education)	17
	Currently at university	5	2	7
Employment	in full-time education	11	11	22
	employed/unemployed	–	–	–
Civic / organizational involvement	Yes	5 (5 NGO)	5 (2 political organisations, 3 NGOs)	10
	No	6	6	12
Residential status	Lives in single parent family	1	–	1
	Lives with parents	10	10	20
	Lives with roommates	–	1	1
Family status	Single	10	11	21
	Partner / married	1	–	1

The interview and focus groups consisted of several thematic units: a) Introduction, where the interviewer/moderators presented themselves, the project and the development of the interview/focus group; b) Understanding and measuring well-being, where participants responded to questions on their global understanding/definition of well-being, meaning of well-being and different well-being dimensions (happiness, life-satisfaction, and psychological well-being), and on the role of major domains of life for their well-being, such as the relationship

with their family (parents, brothers/sisters), of their school (teachers, friends), their town/neighborhood, their health and their housing; and d) Closing thoughts, where the respondents could talk about topics they find important, but that were not discussed before.

2.3 Qualitative Data Analyses

In order to address the research questions, we employed a framework analysis to analyze which is particularly appropriate for our qualitative data consisting of individual and group interview transcripts (Gale et al. 2013; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). We followed recommended systematic process of framework analysis performed in several steps: a) data collection, b) transcription, c) familiarization with the data, d) coding and identifying a thematic framework, e) developing a working analytical framework-indexing and charting, f) applying the analytical framework, g) charting data into the framework matrix-mapping, and, h) interpreting (Gale et al. 2013; Rabiee 2004; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). More specifically, after the data collection, we first transcribed audio recordings of the interviews and focus groups. We added all the relevant notes and observations made during and after interview to each of the transcripts.

First, using framework analysis, we created a structure into which we systematically reduced the transcribed data, to analyze it by case and by code. Second, we carefully read and re-read each transcript, and became very familiar with the experiences, perspectives, and emotions expressed by children and young people included in our study. In the next phase, we started to code the transcripts. During the readings of the transcripts in this phase, every member of the research team sorted out quotes, made comparisons both within and between children and young people cases, highlighted interesting statements relevant to our research aims and coded them using specific labels. Moreover, in the transcripts we noted any questions, ideas, or explanations that emerged in this process. After this phase, we had a meeting where we discussed our codes, questions, insights, and ideas on the findings.

Thereafter, we worked towards developing a working analytical framework, by discussing each coded section, and, finally, by agreeing on a set of codes. During the further analysis, we refined the existing codes, and developed our final analytical framework, which we illustrate in Table 3. The table presents and briefly explains main codes clustered into categories. We systematically went through each transcript, highlighting each meaningful passage of text and selecting and attaching an appropriate code from the final analytical framework. We then charted the relevant data into our final analytical framework by summarizing the data in a matrix for each theme. Finally, we proceeded to the interpretation stage during which we worked on relationship between the quotes and recognizing patterns of children and young people's views on well-being. We looked for any differences in these patterns based on differences in profiles of children and young people and worked on exploring possible explanations of the patterns found in the data.

Table 3 The final analytical framework with constituent codes, categories, and descriptions

Theme/Category	Code	Description
Understanding well-being	Global understandings and definitions of well-being	The ways children and young people attach meaning to the term 'well-being'; how they understand it; how important it is to them
	(In)equality in well-being	Perceptions of the differences in well-being between children and young people; how big are the differences; which factors contribute to these differences (health-related difficulties, financial status, family status, etc.); Perceived (in)equality in well-being among children and TYP
Well-being dimensions	Positive and negative affective states	The way children and young people feel, and how do they experience positive affective states, especially happiness; as well as negative emotions; how they recognize and express it (i.e. feelings of happiness, tranquility, joy, sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness)
	Life-satisfaction	The ways children and young people understand the concept of life satisfaction; how satisfied are they with their own lives
	Psychological well-being	Autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life-purpose, mastery, positive relatedness Impression that things in life are worthwhile, personal achievements, level of control of their life, level of acceptance/disagreement, feeling of being accompanied in life, etc.
Major Life Domains	Major Life Domains	Ideas on what contributes to well-being; which aspects of one's life are most important for one's well-being (e.g. family, school, environment, health, material aspects)
Differences in well-being understandings and conceptualizations	Age	Age based differences in well-being conceptualizations
	Urban vs. rural living environment	Differences in well-being conceptualizations based on one's living environment
	The level of civic engagement	Differences in well-being conceptualizations based on one's level of civic engagement
	Family socioeconomic status	Differences in well-being conceptualizations based on one's family socioeconomic status
Having their voices heard	Having their voices heard	Extent to which their voices are heard within society
Theme/Category	Code	Description
Understanding well-being	Global understandings and definitions of well-being	The ways children and young people attach meaning to the term 'well-being'; how they understand it; how important it is to them
	(In)equality in well-being	Perceptions of the differences in well-being between children and young people; how big are the differences; which factors

Table 3 (continued)

Theme/Category	Code	Description
Well-being dimensions	Positive and negative affective states	contribute to these differences (health-related difficulties, financial status, family status, etc.); Perceived (in)equality in well-being among children and TYP The way children and young people feel, and how do they experience positive affective states, especially happiness; as well as negative emotions; how they recognize and express it (i.e. feelings of happiness, tranquility, joy, sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness)
	Life-satisfaction	The ways children and young people understand the concept of life satisfaction; how satisfied are they with their own lives
	Psychological well-being	Autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life-purpose, mastery, positive relatedness Impression that things in life are worthwhile, personal achievements, level of control of their life, level of acceptance/disagreement, feeling of being accompanied in life, etc.
Major Life Domains	Major Life Domains	Ideas on what contributes to well-being; which aspects of one's life are most important for one's well-being (e.g. family, school, environment, health, material aspects)
Differences in well-being understandings and conceptualizations	Age	Age based differences in well-being conceptualizations
	Urban vs. rural living environment	Differences in well-being conceptualizations based on one's living environment
	The level of civic engagement	Differences in well-being conceptualizations based on one's level of civic engagement
	Family socioeconomic status	Differences in well-being conceptualizations based on one's family socioeconomic status
Having their voices heard	Having their voices heard	Extent to which their voices are heard within society

3 Results

3.1 Children's and Young People's Understandings of Well-Being

Global Understandings and Definitions of Well-Being Children and young people in this study define well-being as positive and joyful expressions and experiences of their lives. For instance:

‘Well-being is when a child feels good, lives well, when a child has good parents, and when another person helps her to be happy.’ (interview, female, 10 years old)

'I feel good when I help someone...and I was happy when I went to visit my grandmother in England last Christmas.' (focus group, female, 9 years old)

'It's something we do to become happier and more satisfied and, at the same time, to connect with other people, friends. Helping and teaching other people is very important to me, and learning new things.' (interview, female, 19 years old)

As these quotes illustrate, children and young people frequently defined well-being in terms of what—according to their personal experiences and perceptions—leads to higher levels of well-being, rather than defining what well-being is. They often linked well-being to being a good person and to pursuing and achieving interesting goals. This is in line with previous studies that show that children and young people conceptualize well-being as complex and multidimensional (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014; Dex and Hollingworth 2012).

In line with expectations, there were noticeable differences in understanding and conceptualization of well-being between children (aged 9–10 and 13–15) and young people (16–19). Children (aged 9–10 and 13–15) defined well-being primarily using concrete and specific terminology relating to their relationships with parents, friends, and their school-related experiences.

'I feel good when I manage to go to a higher level in a computer game.' (focus group, male, 10 years old).

'I feel best when I am spinning around in a circle with my cousins at my grandmother's place.' (focus group, male, 10 years old, primary school).

In these definitions, two main aspects of life emerged as the most important well-being aspects: a) The quality of social relationships, including family relations, relations with friends, being a good person and being kind to others; and b) Engagement in interesting and fun leisure activities. For instance, one participant (focus group, female, 13 years old) considers friendship to be the most important thing: 'My friendship is the most important thing, and if I am in a fight with my friend, I feel very sad.' Another girl (interview, female, 10 years old) stated: 'I'm happy when I go to my cousin's place or friend's, when I sleep over at my friend's place, and when I eat ice-cream.'

Young people (16–19) emphasized social relationships (including family relations, relations with friends, being kind to others), and being engaged in intrinsically valued and meaningful activities as the two main aspects of their well-being, as illustrated in one participant's statement: 'Well-being consists of social relationships, relationships with friends, and being engaged in various NGOs.' (focus group, female, 18 years old, secondary school). Similarly, other participants mentioned: 'It's most important to be able to socialize and have opportunities in society, to volunteer and travel.' (focus group, female, 18 years old, 1st year student); and 'It's something we do to become happier and more satisfied and, at the same time, to connect with other people, friends. Helping and teaching other people is very important to me and learning new things.' (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student); 'Well-being is a feeling that I'm able to achieve a balance between school and music, and at the same time to have a normal life. I hope I'll have time for all that in the future.' (focus group, male, 16 years old, secondary school).

When asked about their well-being, children and young people often tend to first focus on the negative experiences and aspects of their lives, on what is wrong and what needs to be “fixed”, and, only later, or when asked specifically, they talk about the positive aspects of their lives.

When asked about inequality in well-being among children and young people, rather than stating what contributes to higher well-being, most of the participants focused on explaining what lowers well-being. Participants mostly mention various negative life circumstances and experiences as detrimental for well-being, such as health-related difficulties, financial status, divorced parents, etc. Their accounts reflect their own experiences and experiences of their friends, school peers, or relatives. They notice the differences and empathize with children and young people who are having difficulties in their lives. This finding can also be understood in terms of the negativity bias: It may be that children and young people focus more and are more influenced by negative than by positive information, just as adults are (Hamlin et al. 2010; Vaish et al. 2008). For example, a participant (interview, 14 years old, female, primary school) stated: ‘The reason is health, happiness, attention, honesty. At school, we have two pupils who need help. One is in a wheelchair and cannot run, and the other does not see well and has a problem with walking. Some pupils make fun of them. These two pupils seem strong in front of us, but I am sure they are hurt by it and that they have a difficult time when they get home.’

3.2 Well-Being Dimensions

Positive and Negative Affective States In the study, we were particularly interested in children and young people’s experiences and perceptions of their positive and negative affective states, as well as how they recognize and express them (i.e. feelings of happiness, tranquility, joy, sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness). Both children and young people mostly described happiness as a positive and energetic affective state one experiences when participating in interesting, intrinsically driven activities and relationships. In line with recent studies, most children and young people in the present study described themselves as being at least moderately happy (Holder 2012; Holder and Klassen 2010).

Children mainly described their happiness in concrete terms, that is, by reporting the circumstances, activities and events that make them happy. Children mostly (although not exclusively) focused on events and activities that happened recently and that reflected a) positive relations with close and significant people (family and friends), and b) their achievements, which include both school- and hobby-related successes, as well as feeling useful and helping others. Several examples illustrate this:

‘I wrote a letter to Saint Nicholas, I helped my mum, I advanced in a computer game, cleaned my room, and then my mum took me to a café with her friends—that was a great day.’ (focus group, male, 9 years old)

‘I was invited to play handball for a team, I was very happy that day and it was very special for me, and I was successful that day in everything.’ (focus group, female, 14 years old)

In a similar vein, when discussing unpleasant emotions, children also used concrete experiences and circumstances that perceived as something bad, scary, or uncomfortable for them. These descriptions were typically short and specific. Several children described what makes them feel unhappy, sad, worried, and angry in a more detailed way. The reasons for unpleasant emotions were usually difficulties in interpersonal relations, for example 'For me, today is the unhappiest day because my mum will work until 19:00, so I'll be home alone all afternoon.' (focus group, male, 9 years old); 'I feel bad when I am in a fight with someone. I often fight with my parents and then I feel bad' (interview, female, 10 years old) or related with difficulties in school e.g. 'I was unhappy when I got bad grades.' (focus group, male, 14 years old).

When describing their happiness, many young people describe it in terms of intrapersonal relations, and specific activities, mostly, doing interesting things, and achieving desired goals (e.g. good grades). For example, a participant stated 'I am often very happy and enthusiastic when I am in my college. I come there, I do interesting things, and I can ask what I am curious about. I love to learn new things, to help, that fulfills me, makes me happy (interview, male, 18 years old, secondary school). Similarly, other participant stated: 'I am very happy with my studies, it so much better than high school, I feel more autonomy, more freedom, I can manage my own time, and that makes me feel good. Also, I feel good when I get good grades' (interview, female, 19 years old, student). 'I feel happiest during the summer holidays; nothing can make me feel sad. When I feel bad, it often depends on how things are at school, or it's just a bad day.' (interview, male, 16 years old, secondary school).

Life Satisfaction We were also interested in children and young people's own perspectives and definitions of life satisfaction as a construct. Bearing in mind that some studies indicate that children's sometimes understand the word 'satisfaction' as 'satisfactory' (Taylor et al. 2010), in this way, we aimed to see how the children and young people attach meaning to life satisfaction, and how they use this terminology when assessing their own life.

Our findings revealed that most of the participants interpret life satisfaction as one's attitudes towards life in general, which is in line with the existing literature (Gilman and Huebner 2006; Huebner 2004), and the theoretical conceptualization of life satisfaction as reflective cognitive assessments of one's life (Diener et al. 2018). Moreover, when talking about life satisfaction, participants mostly focused on the sources of their satisfaction including perception of the conditions of their lives, the quality of the significant relationships, including mainly family and friends, but also teachers, as well as their achievements in school or hobbies. For example:

'I'm satisfied when I make my family happy, but my brother makes fun of me and insults me' (focus group, male, 9 years old)

'The most important reason why we are not more satisfied are friends. There are kids in our class who have a lot of money and they keep to themselves and look down on us.' (focus group, male, 14 years old)

‘Teachers sometimes make distinctions between pupils, and then we’re not satisfied.’ (focus group, female, 13 years old)

‘I’m satisfied with my school achievements, I’m happy about this; I’m glad that I’m doing well at school.’ (interview, female, 14 years old)

In addition to social relations and living conditions, young people reported intrinsic goal pursuits as the most important aspects of their life satisfaction.

‘I’m really very satisfied with my life, I had a beautiful childhood and lots of friends. Now I’m in secondary school... I am really satisfied in 90% of things. It’s great that we are young and we have our whole life ahead of us, although sometimes it’s not so great to be young because we have to wait a couple of years to do some things, we have to finish secondary school and deal with teenage issues.’ (interview, male, 16 years old, secondary school).

‘I’m satisfied with my family, with the academic aspects of my life. I’m very satisfied with my leisure time, I’m rarely bored, which I think is good. My love life is OK; there have been better days, but also worse days.’ (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student).

Psychological (I.E. Eudemonic) Well-Being Psychological well-being represents the most complex and somewhat more abstract well-being dimension than life satisfaction and affective states; hence, we wanted to gain more insight into how children and young people understand this aspect of well-being. The analyses showed that children and young people mostly associate psychological well-being with educational and interest-related achievements, but also with having meaningful goals in life, and pursuing personally valued activities. They recognize and highlight the importance of these experiences for their sense of meaning and fulfillment in life. Both younger (9–10) and older children (13–15) describe psychological well-being in terms of school achievements, grades, and enrolling in the desired secondary school and finding the job they want.

‘I’m happiest when somebody in my family succeeds in something, for example, when my mum gets a project or when I get good marks in school.’ (focus group, male, 9 years old).

‘I think I will have benefits because I’m learning, I’ll finish secondary school. Maybe, if I’m good, I’ll go to college, and get a good job...It’s also good that I have good relations with my brothers, that I don’t fight, and that I am helping my parents, and not just rejecting them.’ (interview, female, 14 years old).

Young people often mentioned opportunities for pursuing meaningful interests, achieving one’s desires and wishes as essential parts of well-being. Many of our participants indicated the importance of having interesting and personally valuable goals and being engaged in personally valued activities. Accordingly, young people highly appreciate a) having autonomy to choose the types of activities they engage in; b) opportunities and circumstance that enable them to choose from various interesting activities, formal or informal; and c) having sufficient time and space to pursue these activities.

‘I think it is very important that all children can try out different activities, to see what they are really interested in and what they are good at, and then they can choose

what is good for them... I'm very satisfied with my studies, my knowledge, and the opportunities I was given.' (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student).

'I would associate well-being with children's rights, that is, to what extent children have possibilities to have good lives and good opportunities.' (interview, male, 16 years old, secondary school).

'To have a fulfilling life, one has to have a hobby, regardless of whether this hobby is useful or not.' (focus group, female, 18 years old, secondary school).

Some of the young people mentioned that their parents have difficulties in accepting their intrinsic interests when these do not align with their parents' plans and aspirations. Young people attribute these difficulties to parents' concern for the material well-being of their children. This is important as parents can be of great influence, which can be very positive when they support their children (now young people), or negative if they hinder their children's intrinsic goals pursuit. In addition, young people sometimes expressed they feel a lot of pressure to please their parents, which can be detrimental for their psychological well-being on longer terms. In other words, in line with the developmental challenges of this life stage, young people sometimes find it difficult to recognize and follow their own intrinsic aspirations.

'For me unhappiness is the fact that I'm interested in social sciences and the humanities, but, as it's difficult to find a job in this area, I think I will have to choose something else to study.' (focus group, female, 18 years old, secondary school).

'It's important to choose a job that you'll like more than a job that can provide some benefits. My parents wanted me to study law, but I enrolled into the Faculty of Education and I'm very satisfied now. The problem is that parents put more emphasis on financial factors than on our wishes.' (focus group, female, 19 years old, 1st year student).

3.3 Major Domains of Life that Contribute to Well-Being

Relationships Children and young people expressed that their important relationships in are most significant aspects of their lives that have major impact on their well-being; they strongly associate and define happiness in terms of the perceived quality of important relationships, including mostly family and friends, and also pets. For instance, one participant stated: 'I think that it [level of happiness, pleasant emotions] mostly depends on relationship with other people' (interview, female, 19 years old, secondary school). Other participant mentioned: 'Mostly, I feel very good, I am an optimistic and cheerful person. I feel well when others around me are also feeling well. If people around me are feeling down, and I am feeling happy, I do not feel comfortable in those situations' (interview, male, 18 years old, secondary school). 'I was also happy when I was with my dog. He's always in a good mood, so he cheers me up when I'm down' (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student).

'To have a high level of well-being, it's very important to have good relationships with friends, to be able to tell them everything. It's also important to have good relationships with parents and sisters, and to be good in school. And also, this depends on whether you're bullied in school. I recognize well-being by the feeling I get when I sense that my friend is a true friend. You can't be okay if you don't have good relationships.' (interview, female, 16 years old, secondary school).

Family Relationships Children and young people mostly emphasized the importance of family relations (parents, caretakers, siblings, as well as grandparents) as the strongest interpersonal resource for their well-being. In doing so, children highly valued positive relations with both of the parents, even if they are separated. Family is the crucial element for younger children and its relative importance tends to somewhat diminish with age, because in the processes of becoming an adult young people discover the outer world and establish new relationships. However, even among those young people who are university students and involved in many activities, the family still represents one of the most important aspects of their well-being.

‘It’s very important to feel good at home, to have a stable family life. People who have broken homes have more difficulties finding their safety.’ (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student).

When talking about occasional discussions or disagreements with parents, or between parents, children and young people stated that, although they may not be comfortable, they are not necessarily disruptive; rather, they see occasional conflicts with parents as normal and expected, and mentioned that they can even have positive outcomes, such as better understanding and more closeness. However, as expected children and young people pointed out that permanent and strong conflict had significant negative impact on their lives and continuous difficulties in family relations, such as quarrels, divorce, missing parents, present the main reasons of unhappiness. This indicates that perceived quality of parental relationships has the strongest effects on well-being of children and young people, regardless of the family status (i.e. married or divorced parents). This is in line with studies showing that children living in two-parents families marked by high conflicts can be worse off than children in divorced families (Amato 2010; Grossman and Rowat 1995).

‘I feel bad when I am in a fight with someone. I often fight with my parents and then I feel bad. I am sad and I spend my weekends thinking about it. We most often fight about my brother, and we often fight very harshly, and then my parents are angry with us both, and then I somehow feel sad...I also feel sad when my parents are fighting, they yell at each other.’ (interview, female, 10 years old).

Moreover, we noticed that children that live with both parents seem to somewhat stigmatize children whose parents are divorced. In line with these findings, we also noticed that several children explicitly did not say that their parents were divorced, but vaguely mentioned it later in the interview, which may indicate feelings of shame regarding family difficulties and fear of stigmatization.

‘Kids who have both parents are better off, while those whose parents are divorced are worse off, they experience trauma, especially girls. For boys it’s easier, for girls it’s harder; boys go to a bar and get drunk.’ (interview, male, 15 years old).

‘We’re satisfied as a family. There are kids whose parents are divorced, but luckily, I haven’t experienced that.’ (interview, 14 years old).

‘Some kids don’t talk with their parents. Some kids in my class have lost their mum or dad; they died, or got divorced, or they have even lost a brother who went abroad to work’ (interview, male, 10 years old).

It is important to note that children and young people also mention issues of efficient and inefficient parental boundary settings, particularly in terms of instating on specific activities. This implies that children and young people value more intrinsic support from parents, such as appreciation, acknowledgment, showing love and care, than they

do extrinsic support, such as guidance and rules about which activities should children and young people attend.

'The family makes us kids go to church, to mass; they make us do sports, they want us to move away from the computer. I think they should listen to children more, but maybe not too much. For example, some kids want this Play station 5, the new one, and their parents can't afford it, but they buy it anyway, and kids play on it for three hours and that's it.' (interview, male, 14 years old).

Sibling Relationships Children and young people frequently mentioned the quality of relationships with their siblings as very significant aspect of their well-being, both in a positive and negative ways. Siblings can provide strong support and additional coping resources, particularly in periods of puberty and adolescence marked by complex socioemotional and cognitive changes (Proctor et al. 2009).

'I think that children who live alone with their parents are bored.' (interview, male, 10 years old).

'I think I'll always be close to my sisters. I find it very strange when somebody says they had a fight with their sister and that they are not talking now. It's important to me that we help each other, like my oldest sister helps us.' (interview, female, 16 years old, secondary school).

A few children and young people mentioned negative aspects of relationships with their siblings, including high levels of conflicts with siblings, which had a negative impact on their well-being. However, in these cases we also noted poor parental relations and high conflict among parents, which could explain the perceived poor quality of sibling relations.

'We most often fight about my brother, and we often fight very harshly, and then my parents are angry with us both, and then I somehow feel sad...I also feel sad when my parents are fighting, they yell at each other' (interview, female, 10 years old).

Peer Relations Children and young people in our study highlight the role of their friends and peers for their well-being. Indeed, literature shows that good friendships quality can predict well-being of children and young people above and beyond the influence of personality (Demir et al. 2006; Demir and Weitekamp 2006).

'My friendship is the most important thing, and if I am in a fight with my friend, I feel very sad.' (focus group, female, 13 years old, primary school).

'Well-being consists of social relationships, relationships with friends, and being active.' (focus group, female, 18 years old, secondary school).

'To have a high level of well-being, it's very important to have good relationships with friends, to be able to tell them everything [...] I recognize well-being by the feeling I get when I sense that my friend is a true friend. You can't be okay if you don't have good relationships.' (interview, female, 16 years old, secondary school).

These findings may be because children and young people choose close friends autonomously; and close friendships assume high levels of trust and closeness. Close friendships are also a context in which children and young people can freely express themselves, as well as give and receive feedbacks and support when needed. That is why positive peer relationships and friendships are very important as they help children and young people deal with developmental tasks such as exercising social skills and forming identity (Currie et al. 2012). Thus, as indicated in our participants' statements,

close friendships can be understood as a context in which basic psychological needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence can be satisfied, which, in turn, fosters well-being (Deci et al. 2006; Demir et al. 2006).

Education Children and young people indicated in our interviews and focus groups that they mostly perceive school as very important and they also think that high school achievements can enable them to succeed later in life.

‘I think playing is worthwhile; it helps me to be more cheerful, relaxed, so nobody is sad; and learning helps us to get a good job. If you’re not doing well in school, then you can’t earn enough money to buy food, and then it’s not good. If you can’t buy food, you can’t have a good house and other important things, and you’re worried all the time. My mum keeps on telling me that it is important to study so that I don’t get a lousy job.’ (interview, male, 10 years old).

However, most of the participants consider school as something obligatory and formal; rather than seeing it as something that they might enjoy or be intrinsically interested in. This finding reflects school system limitations to a large degree. More specifically, young people often criticized the education system in terms of a) its high workload and pressure; b) difficulties in finding meaning and value in some school activities, and c) the lack of opportunity to exercise their talents and work on their intrinsic goals.

‘The main problem is that most people are not happy with the school they were enrolled in.’ (focus group, male, 16 years old, secondary school).

‘I think that young people are overburdened and pressured by school and don’t have enough time to express themselves, they are under stress. Perhaps, school is hindering us to a certain degree, it’s too broad, we can’t focus on our interests; rather, we have to learn about everything, which is a problem for me. I have a band and I’m a freelance programmer, and I don’t have time and space to do everything I’m interested and curious about.’ (interview, male, 18 years old, secondary school).

Nonetheless, young people reported the value of school and education to a greater extent than children did, as can be illustrated with a statement from a student: ‘Education is essential, I think that a person can’t feel fulfilled if he or she doesn’t have opportunities for education’ (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student). Bearing in mind that many young people in our study already started their studies, this indicates that young people may feel more autonomy in their educational pursuits. In this way, students may feel they are following their own interests and values more than children and young people who are still attending primary and secondary school.

This is important as existing literature suggests that positive experiences in schools can have an important role in supporting children and young people’s well-being and even buffer negative outcomes (Currie et al. 2012). For instance, our study also showed that schools are of particular importance to children with special needs: ‘The school helps out children who need help—kids who have some difficulties, like me, they have assistants in the classroom, and assistants help us with learning... Schools sometimes reduce the amount of school work... Also, for example, I can’t see what’s on the blackboard, so they copy things on paper and give it to me to rewrite it.’ (interview, male, 15 years old).

Children and young people reported different experiences with teachers and expressed different attitudes in relation to the role of teachers for their well-being.

Many children have mentioned the positive influence that a teacher can have on their lives. We also noted that younger children find their relationships with teachers more important than young people.

'My teacher is fun, and funny, and not too harsh on us.' (interview, male, 10 years old, primary school).

Older school-aged children mentioned discrepancies between what teachers say and teach them, and what teachers actually do. For example: one participant mentioned: 'I was at a bar and I saw my teacher smoking. So, she is saying one thing at school, and doing the opposite. That's not very nice...I was bothered by this.' (interview, male, 14 years old).

Many young people have mentioned the positive influence that a teacher has had on their lives, but also their contribution to their lack of interest/disengagement with their studies. Overall, we noted that young people value teachers when they support their autonomy and acknowledge their talents and wishes. Young people resent it when teachers do their jobs in a superficial manner and they are very sensitive to the unjust behavior of teachers.

'I think that teachers are not essential for my well-being. Many teachers want to resolve in school something that is troubling them in their private lives, and then they take it out on us. They invest minimum effort while expecting a lot from us.' (interview, male, 18 years old, secondary school).

Leisure Activities Throughout the interviews and focus groups, it was evident that children and young people highly value their leisure time. Many of them mention interests, hobbies and activities in which they are intrinsically engaged in. However, leisure activities that satisfy their interests seem not to relate to the process of identity construction; rather, they seem to remain merely as instruments for having fun.

'When I play football, it's not so much about the game for me, I'm a goalkeeper, I like to defend and throw myself on the ball, and it's great, regardless that others think that being a player is better. I think my team is awesome; they score many goals' (interview, male, 10 years old).

Young people highly value their leisure time, and many of them mention their intrinsic engagement in their interests, hobbies and activities (without us asking them specific questions). They especially highlight the importance of having autonomy and freedom in managing their leisure time.

'To have a high level of well-being young people need to have a stable environment and to have good opportunities.' (focus group, female, 18 years old, secondary school).

Physical Health Children in our focus groups and interviews generally expressed that they value health highly and consider illness to be a problem. More specifically, they expressed concerns and sympathy for sick children.

'Health is the most important thing to me, if we are healthy and happy, our parents are happy too.' (focus group, female, 9 years old).

'Health is important, I don't like to be sick because everything hurts and I feel bad, I cannot do anything but just lie down and watch TV.' (interview, male, 10 years old).

'I'm alive, that's what is most important to me. I can walk, I could have ended up in a wheelchair. Thank God, this catastrophe didn't happen.' (interview, male, 15 years old boy with special needs).

Young people generally consider illness to be a difficulty; however, they recognize that health difficulties do not necessarily substantially reduce quality of life. They stated that the most important thing is how a person deals with it. In addition, young people emphasized the important role of social support in dealing with health-issues.

‘Health is important, but young people don’t take care of their health that much. Recently, I found out that I have Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, so I started to take better care of myself. I watch what I eat now. I think that the majority of youth don’t think about their health, but then in 5 or 10 years you’ll see the effects of this.’ (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student, organized/active).

Material Conditions The topic of material conditions emerged as important for children and young people, as they often mentioned social and income inequalities. Most of the young people consider material conditions highly important, which is related to the ongoing economic recession and high unemployment rates in Croatia. However, young people do not see material conditions as the most important prerequisites of a good life.

‘Material conditions are important because, without them, some people would not have the opportunities to have different things and experiences. However, everyone has some opportunity, some people have more, and some people less, but I think that everyone has a way to ‘get out’. (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student).

‘To be well, we need material things to satisfy us. This isn’t always necessary, but, nowadays, most of the time it is... Not only material things make me happy, there are also other things, of course, but I like to get material things.’ (interview, male, 18 years old, secondary school).

4 General Discussion

Based on interviews and focus groups, the present study examined the meanings children and young people attach to the understanding of well-being. Engaging children and young people in this way enabled us to gain novel and fine-grained, in-depth understandings of the well-being as it is lived and experienced by children and young people in their everyday lives.

4.1 Children’s and Young People’s Understandings of Well-Being

First, the findings of the study provided new insights into the ways children and young people understand well-being. The study demonstrated that children and young people conceptualize well-being as positive and joyful expressions and experiences of their lives, which is strongly related to the quality of the most important relationships in their lives (i.e. family relations and relations with friends) and their engagement in meaningful and fun activities, and in pursuing personally valuable goals. These two aspects represent the reference points and the mechanisms through which children and young people define their well-being and evaluate the quality of their lives.

Moreover, most of the children and young people we interviewed understood well-being as ‘being a good person and/or doing something good’. For instance, a

participant defined well-being as: 'Doing something with good intentions, what we want to do well, and in aspects of life that we are interested in, where we want to be successful' (interview, male, 18 years old, secondary school). Another participant stated: 'Well-being is, firstly, awareness about other people in general. You cannot be a good person if you are acting only to your own advantage... If you can help someone in any way-teach him/her something, help him/her in a direct way, or psychologically, in any way.' (interview, female, 19 years old, 1st year student). This could indicate that children and young people often link well-being to being a good person, to a positive sense of self mostly related to being present for important people in their lives and helping others.

Furthermore, when asked about their well-being, children and young people tend to first focus on the negative aspects of their lives, and only later, or when asked specifically, they talk about the positive aspects of their lives. This is important as it illustrates the negativity bias, that is, the tendency to give negative information, events, and emotions priority over positive information, events, and emotions, which was often documented in earlier studies among adults (Baumeister et al. 2001; Wojciszke et al. 1993). Moreover, as outlined by Fattore et al. (2009) these patterns could also reflect children's integration of the interplay of both positive and negative experiences and circumstances into their well-being conceptualizations. In addition, cultural background could also have played a role as expressions of one's satisfaction and happiness are often considered as bragging within the Croatian context.

Nonetheless, this finding has two relevant practical implications. In order to gain accurate understanding on optimal, positive experiences in the lives of children and young people, well-being investigation designs should focus clearly and precisely on positive aspects of children and young people's lives. In other words, children and young people need to be explicitly asked what makes them happy, or else they will probably first focus on what makes them unhappy. In addition, when developing interventions aimed at fostering well-being of children and young people, practitioners should explore the ways to make children and young people more aware of the positive sides of their lives, such as mindfulness, which has been shown to reduce negativity bias (Brown and Ryan 2003; Garland et al. 2011; Kiken and Shook 2011).

4.2 Well-Being Dimensions

Second, when asked about their views and perspectives on different well-being constructs, children and young people recognized and distinguished between positive and negative affective states (particularly happiness), life satisfaction, and psychological (i.e. eudaimonic) well-being. However, it is important to note that our results revealed both children and young people rely less on the analyses of the specifics and the quality of their affective states, intrapersonal dynamics, and introspection; rather, they use the assessment of the quality of their relationships and everyday activities as the main indicators of the different well-being dimensions.

Nonetheless, most of the participants interpret life satisfaction as one's attitudes towards life in general, which mainly stems from living conditions and the quality of the significant relationships in their lives (mainly family and friends). Indeed, according to large body of existing research life satisfaction encompasses reflective cognitive appraisals and evaluations of one's life and its comparison to personal standards of the

good life (Diener et al. 2018; Gilman and Huebner 2006; Huebner 2004). As such, our findings suggest that children and young peoples' life satisfaction appraisal seems to reflect the level of basic safety and stability they sense in their lives.

Children and young people mostly described happiness as a positive and energetic affective state one experiences when participating in interesting, intrinsically driven activities and relationships. This is in line with the circumplex model of affect (Posner et al. 2005), which posits that feeling happy reflects positive evaluation and middle arousal (not too high and not low). These results confirm and expand the existing research showing that the most often mentioned happiness-increasing activities and circumstances include having safe and fun social relations, academic and other types of achievements, and enjoying hobbies (Uusitalo-Malmivaara 2012). Our findings reveal how children actually experience these happiness-inducing activities in their everyday lives, as well as how different children, depending on their personal characteristics, interests, living situations, and culture, can express them in different ways.

Children and young people often mentioned the importance of being engaged in intrinsically valued and personally meaningful activities and having a sense of life purpose, which reflects psychological well-being, that is, eudaimonic aspect of well-being (Huppert 2009). From the children and young people's statements in interviews and focus groups, it seems that they conceptualize hedonic and psychological (i.e. eudaimonic) well-being as very closely related, practically inseparable concepts. More concretely, children and young people revealed that they feel good and have a sense of a good life when their important relationships are warm, fulfilling, and, supportive, and when they are engaged in fun and meaningful activities (children), and when they have a sense of autonomy and agency in their lives (young people).

These findings imply that children and young people understand well-being not only as feeling good (e.g. feeling happiness, satisfaction, interest, engagement), but also as functioning effectively (in a psychological sense) (Huppert 2009; Huppert and Baylis 2004; Ryan et al. 2013). In other words, children and young people talk about positive affect and pleasure as both indicators and consequences of having positive relationships and living well, which is one of the main propositions of the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 2013). Specifically, having high psychological (i.e. eudemonic) well-being does not imply that one feels good all the time; rather, it integrates and acknowledges the experience of unpleasant emotions (e.g. frustration, anger, sadness, grief) as a normal part of life (Huppert 2009). Psychological well-being reflects being able to manage painful emotions (as long as they are not extreme or very long lasting in a way that is detrimental to one's functioning in daily life) (Huppert 2014).

4.3 Major Life Domains and Well-Being

Third, our findings demonstrated how children and young people's express their ideas on how major life domains contribute to well-being. Specifically, children and young people discussed the roles of relationships, education, health, leisure time, and material resources as important aspects of their well-being because these life domains reflect possibilities for children and young people to develop and sustain positive relationships, to build their sense of agency and autonomy, to develop their personal resources and work towards their aspirations, as well as to have a sense of meaning and purpose.

In line with large body of previous research on the role of social relations for well-being in general (Diener 2013; Fattore et al. 2009; Tian et al. 2014), children and young people emphasized the social relationships in their lives as most significant elements of their well-being. In doing so, they particularly emphasized the importance of family relations (parents, caretakers, siblings, as well as grandparents) as the strongest interpersonal resource for their well-being. Their statements suggest that they get the most out of relationships in which they feel safe, and in which they can build a positive sense of self, as well as feel free to be who they are and express themselves, which also implies that children and young people use the relationship dynamics with important people as reference points to get an idea how they are doing. These findings are in line with the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 2013), which posits that positive relationships foster satisfaction of basic psychological needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence. In order for children and young people to feel secure, good social relations are essential, and they need to feel cared for and supported in their everyday lives.

Children and young people discussed the role of school for their well-being, and they all stressed its importance as school achievements can foster many positive outcomes in their lives. Participants also addressed the problems of the school system in a sense that it is burdened with too much workload and pressure, often formal and distant relations with teachers (although they also mentioned positive examples), and the lack of opportunity to express their talents and work on their intrinsic goals. Hence, they see the value of school and are motivated to do well; however, the rigid and overburdened system often seems to undermine the quality of their relationship towards school.

In this context, children and young people expressed how they value the quality of their leisure time, not only for rest and play, but also for involvement in different personally meaningful hobbies and activities. The importance of leisure time reflects the opportunity to think about and pursue activities that are intrinsically motivating, fun, and interesting.

Furthermore, it seems that most of the young people see the importance of material conditions as giving opportunities for enjoying life. However, it seems that some of them value the role of material conditions more than do others. This may be, to a certain degree, related to their family socioeconomic status. For instance, if their parents have financial difficulties and often discuss them in front of their children, children may be burdened by this and subsequently think about the financial aspects of life more intensely.

When discussing the different life domains, children and young people both indirectly and directly addressed the importance of agency, that is, of being able to make decisions in their everyday lives and have an impact on relevant aspects of their school-lives and family relations and activities. This is important because it fosters children to participate in intrinsically chosen activities and fosters young peoples' engagement in personally meaningful goal pursuits. Having personally meaningful goals can energize young people to move towards them. Having a sense of agency, competence, and autonomy along with sufficient social and personal resources to pursue these goals is essential for young people's personal growth as literature shows that autonomous goal pursuit is strongly associated with increased well-being (Sheldon et al. 2009; Sheldon and Elliot 1999).

In this way, young people can learn how to choose goals that are suitable for them personally, how to modify them if necessary to better suite their intrinsic interests, and how to learn from mistakes. In doing so, young people can experiment and learn more about themselves and their personal relations, values, and skills. Hence, as a crucial ingredient of well-being, it is important to empower young people to choose their everyday activities autonomously, as much as possible, and to enable them to experiment with their goals. These processes can enable young people to satisfy their basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which can enhance their well-being.

4.4 Study Limitations

In this study, we noted some methodological differences between interviews and focus groups. Specifically, research data revealed several important differences between focus groups and interviews. In focus groups with children, the children often knew each other because they came from the same school environment, which might have affected how they responded to questions. Also, children rarely tell their stories with complete openness in a focus group setting, especially for the first time. Hence, future studies could use more session with the same groups, and also combine it with interviews with the same participants. In interviews, children and young people were more open and reported more details, namely, they shared more intimate, in-depth stories and experiences in interviews than in focus groups. The interaction of respondents in focus groups sometimes stimulated a richer response or raised new and valuable ideas. On the other hand, group/peer pressure might have inhibited or modified some responses related to intimate and personal matters.

We noted a specific type of bias that occurred in focus groups with children and young people (but not in interviews due to the nature of the setting). Specifically, when a person contributed something to a focus group discussion, others often mentioned the same topic. On the one hand, this may be due to conformism in groups, which is a present topic in adolescence. It may also be due to a memory bias with one participant's response triggering recall of similar events and experiences among other participants. For example, when one participant stated: 'I'm unhappy when we have a general clean-up of my room because then my mum throws everything in a pile and I have to clean it up.' (focus group, female, 10 years old), another one mentioned: 'I was unhappy too when I had to clean my room.' (focus group, female, 9 years old).

Furthermore, it is important to note that throughout the interviews and focus groups among children and young people the problem of "well-being" terminology became evident. Specifically, the term 'well-being' is '*dobrobit*' in Croatian, which, literally translated, is similar to "being good". Moreover, it is a somewhat formal, scientific term rarely used in everyday life, particularly among children and young people. Thus, in order to bring the well-being construct closer to children and young people it was necessary to emphasize that the term '*dobrobit*' reflects happiness and satisfaction, and we also used phrases such as 'good life', 'happy life' as additional explanations. We assume that similar issues emerge in other languages as well and we think that this is a very important issue to consider. Using the words and/or phrases that capture the construct of well-being the best for a specific language and culture may be the optimal solution rather than using literal/scientific translations of well-being.

In addition, our sample is small, and represented a quite heterogeneous group of children and young people. On the one hand, this is a strength of the study as it shows understandings of well-being from different reference points and contexts. On the other hand, it is also a weakness because within this research design, we cannot easily disentangle the role of personal contexts for participants' expressions in our qualitative data collection. For instance, children of different age groups are in different life stages, their interests are changing and their understandings of well-being reflect their individual life processes (e.g., 13 years old child and 19 years old first year student). Thus, in line with the existing literature, our study reveals the importance of taking into account the developmental stages of the children's age group in well-being research. Younger children provided more concrete, simple and straightforward types of answers and explanations to the questions. In addition, we noted that younger children tend to be more similar and homogeneous in their responses than older children and young people.

Moreover, children seem to have had more difficulties to explain concepts related to well-being so family, school or peer environment appear as very important. As they identify more easily with their parents' and teachers' perspective, family tensions or institutional injustices have a direct effect on the quality of their well-being. In contrast, young people had a more reflective relationship towards their family, school, and peer environment. They evaluated their broader context, potentials and responsibilities and initiated actions oriented to resolve potential problems or to realize goals.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

Altogether, this study contributed to the existing literature by revealing how children and young people understand well-being and what meanings they attach to it, by showing how children and young people conceptualize different dimensions or aspects of well-being (happiness, life-satisfaction, psychological well-being), and by demonstrating children and young people's own ideas on how major life domains contribute to well-being.

Children and young people who participated in our study understand well-being as complex and multidimensional positive and joyful expressions and experiences of their lives. In their understandings of well-being, children and young people integrate both negative and positive aspects and experiences of their lives, namely, they understand well-being not only as feeling good (e.g. feeling happiness, satisfaction, interest, engagement), but also as functioning effectively. In other words, children and young people talk about positive affect and pleasure as both indicators and consequences of having positive relationships and living well.

In assessing their well-being, children and young people typically rely on their appraisal of the quality of their relationships and everyday activities as the main indicators of the different well-being dimensions. In other words, they consider the quality of the most important relationships in their lives (i.e. family relations and relations with friends) and their engagement in meaningful and fun activities, and in pursuing personally valuable goals as the reference points and the mechanisms through which they conceptualize well-being and evaluate the quality of their lives. Children and young people feel good and have a sense of a good life when their important relationships are warm, fulfilling, and, supportive, and when they have a sense of autonomy and agency in their lives.

This study demonstrates that, in order to be able to work towards enhancing well-being of children and young people, it is necessary to hear and acknowledge children's and young people's own experiences and personal perspectives on well-being; how they understand different well-being aspects, and how different life domains are associated with well-being in their opinion. Qualitative data obtained from children and young people themselves can provide important, fine grained, and in-depth contextual information on children's lives, their needs, and personal experiences. These data can make sure that we design studies that will acknowledge and address all of the well-being aspects that children find important, meaningful, and that they can easily relate to. This is important because the efficiency of fostering well-being using intervention programs largely depends on whether these interventions are responsive and relevant to children and young people's needs and concerns (Camfield and Tafere 2009; Fattore et al. 2012; Richardson and Ali 2014).

Acknowledgements The data reported in this paper were collected by a Croatian team of researchers within a large international research project entitled Measuring Youth Well-Being. We would like to thank to the researchers who also contributed to the data collection: Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan; Toni Babarović; Ines Sučić; Jelena Maričić.

References

- Amato, P. R. (2010). Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 650–666.
- Andresen, S., Ben-Arieh, A., Bradshaw, J., Casas, F., & Rees, G. (2015). Children's views on their lives and well-being in 15 countries: A report on the Children's Worlds survey, 2013–14. In G. Rees & G. Main (Eds.). York, UK: Children's Worlds Project (ISCWeB).
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), 323–370.
- Ben-Arieh, A., Casas, F., Frønes, I., & Korbin, J. E. (2014). Multifaceted concept of child well-being. In A. Ben-Arieh, F. Casas, I. Frønes, & J. E. Korbin (Eds.), *Handbook of child well-being: Theories, methods and policies in global perspective* (pp. 1–27). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Bradshaw, J., Hoelscher, P., & Richardson, D. (2006). An index of child well-being in the European Union. *Social Indicators Research*, 80(1), 133–177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-006-9024-z>.
- Bradshaw, J., & Richardson, D. (2009). An index of child well-being in Europe. *Child Indicators Research*, 2(3), 319–351. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-009-9037-7>.
- Brindal, E., Hendrie, G., Thompson, K., & Blunden, S. (2012). How do Australian junior primary school children perceive the concepts of “healthy” and “unhealthy”? *Health Education*, 112(5), 406–420.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>.
- Camfield, L., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M. (2009). Wellbeing research in developing countries: Reviewing the role of qualitative methods. *Social Indicators Research*, 90(1), 5–31.
- Camfield, L., & Tafere, Y. (2009). ‘No, living well does not mean being rich’: Diverse understandings of well-being among 11–13-year-old children in three Ethiopian communities. *Journal of children and poverty*, 15(2), 119–138.
- Casas, F. (2016a). Children participating in measuring what matters—why, when, how? *Learning for Well-being Magazine*, 1, 1–7.
- Casas, F. (2016b). Children, adolescents and quality of life: The social sciences perspective over two decades. In F. Maggino (Ed.), *A life devoted to quality of life: Festschrift in honor of Alex C. Michalos* (pp. 3–21). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Coyne, I. (2010). Accessing children as research participants: Examining the role of gatekeepers. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 36(4), 452–454.

- Coyne, I. T. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26(3), 623–630.
- Crivello, G., Camfield, L., & Woodhead, M. (2009). How can children tell us about their wellbeing? Exploring the potential of participatory research approaches within young lives. *Social Indicators Research*, 90(1), 51–72.
- Currie, C., Zanotti, C., Morgan, A., Currie, D., Looze, M. d., Roberts, C., . . . Barnekow, V. (2012). Social determinants of health and well-being among young people: Health behaviour in school-aged children (HBSC) study: International report from the 2009/2010 survey *Health Policy for Children and Adolescents*. Copenhagen, Denmark: WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- De Neve, J.-E., Diener, E., Tay, L., & Xuereb, C. (2013). The objective benefits of subjective well-being. In J. Helliwell, R. Layard, & J. Sachs (Eds.), *World happiness report 2013* (pp. 54–79). New York: United Nations.
- Deci, E. L., La Guardia, J. G., Moller, A. C., Scheiner, M. J., & Ryan, R. M. (2006). On the benefits of giving as well as receiving autonomy support: Mutuality in close friendships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(3), 313–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205282148>.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008a). Facilitating optimal motivation and psychological well-being across life's domains. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 49(1), 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0708-5591.49.1.14>.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008b). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 49(3), 182–185. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012801>.
- Demir, M., Özdemir, M., & Weitekamp, L. A. (2006). Looking to happy tomorrows with friends: Best and close friendships as they predict happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8(2), 243–271. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9025-2>.
- Demir, M., & Weitekamp, L. A. (2006). I am so happy 'cause today I found my friend: Friendship and personality as predictors of happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8(2), 181–211. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9012-7>.
- Dex, S., & Hollingworth, K. (2012). *Children's and young people's voices on their well-being The Childhood Well-being Research Centre working paper* (Vol. 14). London: Institute of Education.
- Diener, E. (2012). New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research. *American Psychologist*, 67(8), 590–597.
- Diener, E. (2013). The remarkable changes in the science of subjective well-being. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 8(6), 663–666. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691613507583>.
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Tay, L. (2018). Advances in subjective well-being research. *Nature Human Behavior*, 2(4), 253–260. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0307-6>.
- Dinisman, T., Fernandes, L., & Main, G. (2015). Findings from the first wave of the ISCWeB project: International perspectives on child subjective well-being. *Child Indicators Research*, 8(1), 1–4.
- Eder, D., & Fingerson, L. (2002). Interviewing children and adolescents. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (Vol. 1, pp. 181–203). London: SAGE.
- Fattore, T., Mason, J., & Watson, E. (2009). When children are asked about their well-being: Towards a framework for guiding policy. *Child Indicators Research*, 2(1), 57–77.
- Fattore, T., Mason, J., & Watson, E. (2012). Locating the child centrally as subject in research: Towards a child interpretation of well-being. *Child Indicators Research*, 5(3), 423–435.
- Gabhainn, S. N., & Sixsmith, J. (2005). *Children's understandings of well-being*. Galway: Department of Health Promotion, Centre for Health Promotion Studies, National University of Ireland.
- Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13(1), 117. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-117>.
- Garland, E. L., Gaylord, S. A., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2011). Positive reappraisal mediates the stress-reductive effects of mindfulness: An upward spiral process. *Mindfulness*, 2(1), 59–67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-011-0043-8>.
- Gibson, F. (2007). Conducting focus groups with children and young people: Strategies for success. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 12(5), 473–483.
- Gilman, R., & Huebner, E. S. (2003). A review of life satisfaction research with children and adolescents. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 18(2), 192–205.
- Gilman, R., & Huebner, E. S. (2006). Characteristics of adolescents who report very high life satisfaction. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(3), 293–301. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-006-9036-7>.

- Goswami, H., Fox, C., & Pollock, G. (2015). The current evidence base and future needs in improving Children's well-being across Europe: Is there a case for a comparative longitudinal survey? *Child Indicators Research*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-015-9323-5>.
- Grossman, M., & Rowat, K. M. (1995). Parental relationships, coping strategies, received support, and well-being in adolescents of separated or divorced and married parents. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 18(3), 249–261.
- Hamlin, K. J., Wynn, K., & Bloom, P. (2010). Three-month-olds show a negativity bias in their social evaluations. *Developmental Science*, 13(6), 923–929. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7687.2010.00951.x>.
- Hanafin, J., Shevlin, M., Kenny, M., & Mc Neela, E. (2007). Including young people with disabilities: Assessment challenges in higher education. *Higher Education*, 54(3), 435–448.
- Holder, M. D. (2012). Understanding the construct of positive well-being and happiness *Happiness in Children* (pp. 1–4): Springer Netherlands.
- Holder, M. D., & Klassen, A. (2010). Temperament and happiness in children. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 11(4), 419–439.
- Huebner, E. S. (2004). Research on assessment of life satisfaction of children and adolescents. *Social Indicators Research*, 66(1–2), 3–33.
- Huppert, F. A. (2009). Psychological well-being: Evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 1(2), 137–164.
- Huppert, F. A. (2014). The state of wellbeing science: Concepts, measures, interventions, and policies. In F. A. Huppert & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Wellbeing: A complete reference guide* (Vol. 6, pp. 1–49). Oxford, UK: John Wiley and Sons, Inc..
- Huppert, F. A., & Baylis, N. (2004). Well-being: Towards an integration of psychology, neurobiology and social science. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 359(1449), 1447–1451.
- Huppert, F. A., & So, T. T. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), 837–861. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9966-7>.
- Kiken, L. G., & Shook, N. J. (2011). Looking up: Mindfulness increases positive judgments and reduces negativity bias. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 1948550610396585.
- Mason, J., & Danby, S. (2011). Children as experts in their lives: Child inclusive research. *Child Indicators Research*, 4(2), 185–189.
- McAuley, C. (2012). Editorial: International advances in child well-being: Measuring and monitoring subjective well-being. *Child Indicators Research*, 5(3), 419–421. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-012-9166-2>.
- McAuley, C., & Rose, W. (2014). Children's social and emotional relationships and well-being: From the perspective of the child. *Handbook of child well-being: Theories, methods and policies in global perspective*, 1865–1892.
- O'Higgins, S., Sixsmith, J., & Nic Gabhainn, S. (2010). Adolescents' perceptions of the words "health" and "happy". *Health Education*, 110(5), 367–381. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09654281011068522>.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>.
- Posner, J., Russell, J. A., & Peterson, B. S. (2005). The circumplex model of affect: An integrative approach to affective neuroscience, cognitive development, and psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology*, 17(3), 715–734.
- Proctor, C., Alex Linley, P., & Maltby, J. (2009). Youth life satisfaction measures: A review. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(2), 128–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760802650816>.
- Proctor, C., Linley, P. A., & Maltby, J. (2010). Very happy youths: Benefits of very high life satisfaction among adolescents. *Social Indicators Research*, 98(3), 519–532.
- Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 63(04), 655–660.
- Richardson, D., & Ali, N. (2014). *An evaluation of international surveys of children OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers* (Vol. 46). Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage Publications Inc..
- Ryan, R. M., Huta, V., & Deci, E. L. (2013). Living Well: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on Eudaimonia. In A. Delle Fave (Ed.), *The Exploration of Happiness* (pp. 117–139): Springer Netherlands.
- Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9(1), 13–39.

- Sheldon, K. M., Abad, N., Ferguson, Y., Gunz, A., Houser-Marko, L., Nichols, C. P., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2009). Persistent pursuit of need-satisfying goals leads to increased happiness: A 6-month experimental longitudinal study. *Motivation and Emotion, 34*(1), 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-009-9153-1>.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Elliot, A. J. (1999). Goal striving, need satisfaction, and longitudinal well-being: The self-concordance model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*(3), 482–497. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.3.482>.
- Sixsmith, J., Gabhainn, S. N., Fleming, C., & O'Higgins, S. (2007). Childrens', parents' and teachers' perceptions of child wellbeing. *Health Education, 107*(6), 511–523. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09654280710827911>.
- Skånfors, L. (2009). Ethics in child research: Children's agency and researchers' ethical radar'. *Childhoods Today, 3*(1).
- Spilsbury, J. C., Korbin, J. E., & Coulton, C. J. (2009). Mapping children's neighborhood perceptions: Implications for child indicators. *Child Indicators Research, 2*(2), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-009-9032-z>.
- Taylor, R., Olds, T., Boshoff, K., & Lane, A. (2010). Children's conceptualization of the term 'satisfaction': Relevance for measuring health outcomes. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 36*(5), 663–669. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2010.01105.x>.
- Tian, L., Chen, H., & Huebner, E. S. (2014). The longitudinal relationships between basic psychological needs satisfaction at school and school-related subjective well-being in adolescents. *Social Indicators Research, 119*(1), 353–372. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-013-0495-4>.
- Tomyn, A. J., & Cummins, R. A. (2011). The subjective well-being of high-school students: Validating the personal wellbeing index—School children. *Social Indicators Research, 101*(3), 405–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9668-6>.
- Tugade, M. M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). *Resilient Individuals Use Positive Emotions to Bounce Back From Negative Emotional Experiences* (Vol. 86, pp. 320–333). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.86.2.320>.
- Uusitalo-Malmivaara, L. (2012). Global and school-related happiness in Finnish children. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 13*(4), 601–619.
- Vaish, A., Grossmann, T., & Woodward, A. (2008). Not all emotions are created equal: The negativity bias in social-emotional development. *Psychological Bulletin, 134*(3), 383–403. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.134.3.383>.
- Wojciszke, B., Brycz, H., & Borkenau, P. (1993). Effects of information content and evaluative extremity on positivity and negativity biases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*(3), 327–335.