

# Children's Subjective Well-Being, Peer Relationships and Resilience: An Integrative Literature Review

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#### **Abstract**

This study presents an integrative review of the scientific literature on children's subjective well-being (SWB) and its association with peer relationships and resilience. Articles addressing children's SWB published in English and Portuguese from 2014 to 2020 were investigated. The data bases were PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO, Scopus. 14 studies were selected after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Most of the articles were published in English, were empirical studies, with quantitative design, and samples of children in the school context. There was an association between children's SWB and peer relationships, with contribution of personal (e.g. sex) and contextual (e.g. school environment) variables to the relationship between these constructs. Individual (e.g. self-esteem) and contextual (e.g. positive parenting) aspects of resilience were found as variables that are related to children's SWB. The review highlights the potential of positive peer relationships in childhood as a predictor of both SWB and resilience.

**Keywords** Childhood · Subjective Well-Being · Interpersonal Relationships · Resilience · Literature Review

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#### 1 Introduction

The movement of Positive Psychology has brought light to studies on happiness and well-being (SWB) as well as to other healthy aspects of human beings (Lee Duckworth et al., 2005). The focus have been on virtues and strengths without disregarding the relevance of trauma, suffering and difficulties faced by individuals and groups. Subjective well-being is a multidimensional construct whose components involve negative and positive affect and cognitive elements related to the perception of life satisfaction (Diener, 2000; Medeiros & Martins, 2020). Defined as a perception of the individual's internal experience about their own lives, SWB can be assessed by scales that consider the above components: the two affective dimensions and life satisfaction (Hutz, 2014; Medeiros & Martins, 2020). SWB has gained more attention during the recent decades, not only with regard to investigations about the factors that influence it, but also with regard to its consequences, such as: better job performance, more satisfactory social relationships, greater creativity, self-esteem, longevity and resilience (Diener et al., 2018).

Although SWB is a phenomenon most frequently studied in the adult population, there is a growing interest in its occurrence in childhood (Ben-Arieh, 2010; Sarriera et al., 2018). A recent review of the Brazilian literature revealed that among 15 analyzed articles, only 4 addressed the topic in children and adolescents (Medeiros & Martins, 2020). Past research on children's well-being considers the multidimensionality of the construct based on investigations with adults, pointing out objective indicators for its assessment, including: the environment, behavior, material resources, education, health, and psychosocial well-being. However, subjective indicators and measures of the children's own perspectives are disregarded (Casas & Rees, 2015; Cho, 2015). This is a gap pointed out in a Brazilian study that stressed methodological questions (Giacomoni et al., 2014). Therefore, current studies on SWB in childhood demand the perspective of the child, who should be seen, listened and understood as an active and participating subject and not just as an "object" of research (Cho, 2015).

The main axes explored in the literature on child well-being were identified by Amerijckx and Humblet (2014): (1) the negative indicators of child well-being, which are investigated in most studies; (2) the existing significant differences between the perspectives of adults (objective) and children (subjective); (3) the existing differences between the hedonic (perceived, subjective state of well-being) and eudemonic (well-being as a process associated with psychosocial functioning, self-image, achievement, among others) aspects of well-being; (4) the characterization of well-being, which is more staggered by material (access to financial, health, educational and family resources or the lack of them) than spiritual aspects; and (5) the predominance of research in the individual and family context.

According to the Bioecological Theory of Human Development, the proximal processes or significant reciprocal relationships take place in the microsystemic context. These relationships can promote healthy development of children and adults (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Merçon-Vargas et al., 2020). The progressive increase in the complexity of such positive interactions and their frequency and



continuity over time are essential for the well-being in both childhood and adult-hood. Especially in childhood, the family, school, community and cultural spheres are the closest and most relevant contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This present study aims to highlight one of the most important developmental systems in childhood: the peer relationships.

Research confirms that peer relationships are vital to children's healthy development and that, in the course from childhood to adolescence children tend to spend more time with their peers than with their families (Rubin et al., 2006). Childhood peer experiences influence children's self-assessment and well-being (Rudolph et al., 2005). It includes socialization systems that are unique and different from adult relationships, while being complementary and supplementary of family relationships (Rubin et al., 2015). In the child domain, interpersonal relationships and their contexts "are described as the most important aspect of their well-being" (Lippman et al., 2011, p. 434). However, few studies have associated both concepts (Santos et al., 2019).

Interpersonal relationships also play an important role in resilience processes and are often associated with well-being (Satici, 2016; Yunes, 2015). Resilience is a construct immersed in the Positive Psychology movement and recently discussed by the fields of humanities and health (Yunes, 2015). In a study on the similarities and differences on resilience patterns Ungar (2018) identified shared principles of resilience across different systems: a resilient system always happens in contexts of adversity; it is dynamic and complex; and, encourages connectivity (there are exchanges between systems). Resilience is also a learning experience with diversity and participation, being understood as "capacity of a system to anticipate, adapt, and reorganize itself under conditions of adversity in ways that promote and sustain its successful functioning [in human terms, its well-being]" (Ungar, 2018, p. 1). In this sense, Smith et al. (2021) called special attention to the associations between positive development and resilience emphasizing the interactions that involve individual, relational and contextual resources.

The resilience phenomenon is also discussed as a positive indicator of mental health in its correlations with life satisfaction and SWB. Satici (2016) showed the mediating role of hope when analyzing resilience as a predictor of SWB. However, that aspect appears only in adult research. In childhood, resilience is positively associated with connection with: a competent and caring adult in the family and/or community; a motivational environment; a positive self-conceptand self-regulation; cognitive skills and hope regarding the future (Masten, 2001, 2014).

The lack of studies about children's subjective well-being (SWB) and its association with peer relationships and resilience is notorious. Considering the importance of this topic for a better understanding of positive development in childhood, an integrative literature review was carried out on studies published in English and Portuguese during the period 2014–2020. The purpose was to reach the most recent scientific production on the themes. The guiding question of the review is: "What is the state of the art of recent published research on children's subjective well-being associated with peer relationships and resilience?".



#### 2 Method

### 2.1 Type of Study

This is an integrative literature review which aims to gather, analyse and synthesize results of studies about the knowledge on a specific content integrating empirical and theoretical studies and which requires careful steps (Lawless & Foster, 2020; Souza et al., 2010; Torraco, 2005). Accordingly, an integrative review "synthesizes research and draws conclusions from diverse sources on a topic" (Toronto, 2020, p. 4) broadening knowledge on the subject investigated. For the structure and conduction of the review, eight steps were followed (Costa & Zoltowski, 2014): (1) identification and delimitation of the theme; (2) choice of databases; (3) choice of keywords for the search; (4) collection of data/survey in databases and storing of results; (5) selection of articles by title, abstract and keywords according to inclusion and exclusion criteria; (6) extraction of data from the selected articles; (7) evaluation of articles; and (8) synthesis and interpretation of data. The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) flow diagram (2015) guidelines were covered with respect to the inclusion of the number of collected, screened and selected records (Fig. 1).

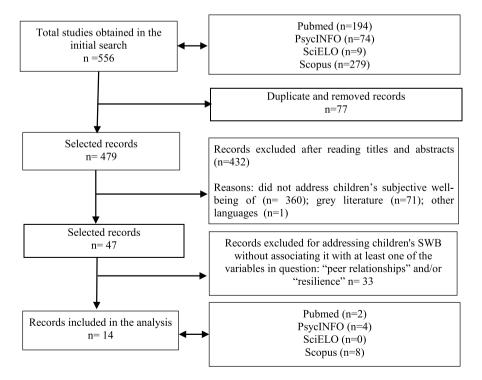


Fig. 1 Flowchart of selection, exclusion and inclusion of studies



### 2.2 Indexing Bases and Keywords Used

Scientific articles were surveyed in journals indexed in the following databases: PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO and Scopus. The term "subjective well-being" was used in English and Portuguese. We opted to preserve the term SWB as defined by Diener (1984) in order to better limit the search. The research was developed based on the combination of this construct with the following terms ("child" OR "children") AND ("resilience") AND ("peer(s) relationship(s)" OR "peer(s) group(s)") in English and Portuguese and their between terms.

#### 2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The period elected to select the publications was from 2014 to 2020 in order to list the most recent articles. This criteria was applied because more recent publications present updated approaches, discussions and information on the researched theme (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Moreover, the starting date of 2014 covers the public call for an action plan of the '2030 Agenda' formally adopted by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015), composed of a set of 17 objectives and 169 universal goals, which directly affect the quality of life and well-being of children and adolescents. Thus, we opted for the recovery of studies that introduced a current scientific unfolding on the theme of this review under the umbrella of recent advances in studies on well-being. The search in the databases took place between November 2019 and May 2020 and the studies were selected according to the following inclusion criteria: (1) study published between 2014 and 2020; (2) written in Portuguese and English; (3) containing the term "subjective well-being" in children associated with the factors: "peer relationships" (and their between terms) and/or "resilience" in the title, abstract and/or keywords; (4) available in full length in the selected database; (5) carried out with the general population of children aged up to 14 years.

After analyzing titles and abstracts, the following exclusion criteria were considered: (1) duplicated articles; (2) master's and doctoral works, book chapters, among others that refer to gray literature and that were not articles; (3) study published before 2014; (4) study addressing children's SWB without associating it with at least one of the variables in question: "peer relationships" and/or "resilience"; and (5) study carried out with other age groups (e.g. adults).

#### 2.4 Procedures and Data Analysis

The search for the studies was performed through the uniterms and their combinations in the selected bases. The retrieved studies were submitted to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected articles were submitted to the evaluation of two judges, graduate students of the research group of which the authors of this article are members. The criteria were clarified and the exclusions resolved; there was a consensus in more than 80% of the articles included. The retrieved articles were read in full length and the data extracted was organized in an Excel spreadsheet for



subsequent analysis elaborated with a two-phase multi-method design, thus providing a broad analysis of the investigated studies.

In the first, a quantitative analysis was made by frequency data. At this stage, the objective description of the publication profile was analyzed. The studies were characterized based on the following indicators (Lima & Morais, 2018; Pires et al., 2015): language, year of publication, nationality of the institution of the first author, journal, nature of the article (empirical or theoretical), approach (quantitative, qualitative or multimethods), instruments of data collection, number of participants and their ages. The second stage had a qualitative nature and the contents and results were organized, synthesized and interpreted. For such, it was followed the content analysis (Bardin, 1979) guidelines and the stages of pre-analysis, material exploration, treatment, interpretation and categorization. The central themes were identified according to the objective of the review. After that, the data were introduced and discussed based on the literature. The following thematic categories were identified: the influence of peer relationships on the children's SWB, contribution of personal and contextual variables in association with peer relationships and SWB, contributions for the study and promotion of SWB, individual and contextual aspects of resilience influence children's SWB, challenges of assessment and measurement of the constructs.

#### 3 Results and Discussion

The initial search in the databases resulted in a total of 556 publications. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in the analysis of titles, keywords and abstracts. Fourteen articles were selected and read in full, as shown in the flowchart (Fig. 1).

The articles found in the initial search were excluded for the following reasons: article duplicated in the databases (n=77); gray literature (n=71); children's SWB is not addressed in the article (n=360); article published in languages other than English or Portuguese (n=1); the term children's "subjective well-being" was used in the article but with no association with the factors: "peer relationships" (and their between terms) and/or "resilience" in the title, abstract and/or keywords (n=33).

#### 3.1 Quantitative Characterization of the Articles

Most publications were written in English (n=12) and only two are in Portuguese (n=2). The countries of the institutions of origin of the first authors were, the United States (n=5) Brazil (n=3), Spain (n=2), China (n=1), Greece (n=1), South Korea (n=1), and Algeria (n=1). A greater number of publications was in 2015 (n=4). There was also a predominance of studies published on behalf of authors of the same group of researchers (see Table 2).

It was found that most of the studies associated peer relationships with children's SWB (n=10) and a smaller number associated resilience with children's SWB (n=3). It is important to note that only one study (Andreou et al., 2020) resulted from the search for the elements of this research, which aimed to focus on studies



that associate children's SWB, resilience and peer relationships. However, this study emphasized the frequency of negative peer interactions, particularly school bullying (n=1).

Regarding the methodology, there was a predominance of empirical, cross-sectional and quantitative studies (n=13). There was only one qualitative study with a theoretical focus (n=1). Still about the quantitative studies, 30 instruments were identified to access the evaluated constructs, as shown in Table 1. The analyzed publications in this review had samples of participants considered numerically large (see Table 2), ranging from 500 to 25,906 children. The predominant age group was 8 to 14 years old and there were mixed samples of students from public and private schools.

#### 3.2 Qualitative Characterization of the Articles

In the qualitative analysis of the publications, five thematic axes were identified (see Table 3). This categorization was guided by the main results addressed in the studies, thus contributing to the argument of this review with discussions related to the association (positive or negative) between SWB and peer relationships, contribution of personal (e.g., sex) and contextual (e.g., school environment) variables to the relationship between these constructs, the influence of individual (e.g., self-esteem) and contextual (e.g., positive parenting) aspects of resilience were found as variables that are related to children's SWB and the potential of positive peer relationships in childhood as a predictor of both SWB and resilience.

#### 3.2.1 The Influence of Peer Relationships on Children's SWB

The studies showed a strong relationship between the constructs with either a positive or negative effect. In investigations with samples of children from different countries, Lee and Yoo (2015), Sarriera et al. (2018), Lawler et al., (2015, 2017) and Newland et al., (2015, 2018) highlighted that social relationships have an influence on SWB and that in addition to family and community relationships, peer relationships with schoolmates and friends are significant and predictive of SWB. Furthermore, based on other studies Santos et al. (2019) stated that friendships are essential for well-being during childhood and that positive relationships with peers can lead to building supportive friendships that reduce the chances of experiences of peer exclusion and victimization that can decrease SWB. These results are consistent with the theoretical and empirical literature that emphasises the association between relational aspects and children's well-being (Goswami, 2012; McAuley et al., 2012; Rubin et al., 2006, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2005).

The studies showed that positive peer relationships contribute to SWB and conflicting or aggressive relationships decrease it. Lee and Yoo (2015) identified that, the frequency with which peers carry out school activities, such as talking, studying and having fun together, have a positive association with SWB. Alcantara et al. (2017) found that the support of friends was a dimension positively correlated with all measures of well-being, assessed by different instruments. Reinforcing these



lable 1 Instruments used to assess the constructs	
Instruments used to assess aspects related to SWB, peer relationships and	Constructs evaluated n (%)
resilience	

Instruments used to assess aspects related to SWB, peer relationships and resilience	Constructs evaluated	u (%)
International Survey of Children's Well-Being – (ISCWeB)	Children's subjective well-being and their perceptions of their ecological development contexts in childhood (home environment, quality of family relationship, parental involvement, quality of the neighborhood, relationship with the teacher, school climate, life satisfaction, affections, relationship with peers)	10 (33.3%)
Student' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS, Huebner 1991)	Life Satisfaction (as a whole, without dividing into domains)	4 (13.8%)
Personal Well-Being Index School Children, PWI-SC (Cummins et al. 2003)	Life Satisfaction (standard of living, health, life achievements, relationships with the community, future security, personal relationships and personal security)	3 (10%)
A-Peer Victimization and Aggression Scale, EVAP (Orpinas and Frankowski, $2001)$	Victimization and Peer Aggression (direct aggression, relational aggression, indirect aggression and victimization)	2 (6.6%)
Overall Life Satisfaction, OLS (Campbell et al. 1976)	Life Satisfaction (overall satisfaction)	2 (6.6%)
General Domain Satisfaction Index (GDSI) developed by Casas et al. (2013)	Life Satisfaction (family and home; material things, interpersonal relationships, area / location, health, use of time, school/frequency of peer activities, personal satisfaction)	2 (6.6%)
Social Support Appraisals Scale, SSA (Vaux et al. 1986)	Social Support (family, friends and others)	1 (3.3%)
School Climate Scale (School Climate Questionnaire) Veiga, F. H., Antunes, J., Guerra, T. M., Moura, H. M., Fernandes, L., & Roque, P. (2004)	School climate (physical, pedagogical and social environment, rules/acceptance, interpersonal relationships/relational environment, use of time, indiscipline)	1 (3.3%)
Resilience Scale (Wagnild& Young, 1993)	Resilience (positive psychosocial adaptation levels in adverse events)	1 (3.3%)
Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002)	Subjective well-being	1 (3.3%)
Student Aggression and Victimization Questionnaire, SAVQ (Skrzypiec,2015)	Student victimization and aggression	1 (3.3%)



	Constructs evaluated	
Table 1         (continued)	Instruments used to assess aspects related to SWB, peer relationships and resilience	

Instruments used to assess aspects related to SWB, peer relationships and resilience	Constructs evaluated	u (%)
Mental Health Continuum, MHC (Keyes, 2009)	Subjective, emotional and psychological well-being	1 (3.3%)
The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson,	Resilience	1 (3.3%)
2003)	(resilient potential in coping with a trauma experience)	
Total		30 (100%)

The original and adapted versions have been pooled



**Table 2** Information of the reviewed articles (n=14)

		-		
Year Nature	Factor associated to SWB Approach Country	Approacn	Country	Sample size
014 Theoretica	l Resilience	Quali	USA	without sample
2015 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	South Korea	12.077
2015 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	USA	1.568
2015 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	USA	1.286
2015 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	Algeria	1.452
2017 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	USA	502
2017 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	Spain	910
018 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	USA	25.906
2018 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	Brazil	6.747
2018 Empirical	Resilience	Quanti	China	1.449
2019 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	Spain	910
019 Empirical	Peer relationship	Quanti	Brazil	2.280
2019 Empirical	Resilience	Quanti	Brazil	500
2020 Empirical	Resilience	Quanti	Greece	558
014 015 015 015 017 017 018 018 019 019	Theoretical Empirical	Theoretical Empirical	Theoretical Resilience Empirical Peer relationship Empirical Resilience	Theoretical Resilience Quali Empirical Peer relationship Quanti Empirical Resilience Quanti



Table 3 Thematic axes and references of the included studies

Thematic axes	References
Influence of peer relationships on children's SWB  (2015, 2017); Sarriera et al. (2015, 2017); Alcantara et al. (2019)	Lee and Yoo (2015); Tiliouine (2015); Newland et al., (2015, 2018); Lawler et al., (2015, 2017); Sarriera et al. (2018); Santos et al. (2019); Alcantara et al. (2019)
<ul> <li>Contribution of personal and contextual variables in the association between Tiliouine (2015); Lee and Yoo (2) peer relationships and children's SWB</li> <li>Lawler et al., (2015, 2017); Alce et al. (2019); Santos et al. (2019)</li> </ul>	Tiliouine (2015); Lee and Yoo (2015); Newland et al. (2015); Newland et al. (2018); Lawler et al., (2015, 2017); Alcantara et al. (2017); Sarriera et al. (2018); Alcantara et al. (2019); Santos et al. (2019)
3 Contributions to the study and promotion of children's subjective well-being Newland (2014); Tiliouine (2015) 2018) Chai et al. (2018); Alcant et al. (2020)	Newland (2014); Tiliouine (2015); Lawler et al., (2015, 2017); Newland et al., (2015, 2018) Chai et al. (2018); Alcantara et al. (2017); Alcantara et al. (2019); Andreou et al. (2020)
4 Influence of individual and contextual aspects of resilience on children's SWB Newland (2014); Chai et al. (2018); Andreou et al. (2020)  5 Challenges of assessment and measurement of the constructs  All of them	lewland (2014); Chai et al. (2018); Andreou et al. (2020) all of them



results, Tiliouine (2015) found that students who do not reveal involvement with bullying and who have positive interactions have higher rates of SWB, general satisfaction with life, satisfaction with their peers, security at school, and a sense of freedom.

Analyzing the influence of negative interactions, Lee and Yoo (2015) and Tiliouine (2015) identified that the experience of bullying significantly affects children's SWB. Being hit or being left out by mates, defined by Tiliouine (2015) as active and passive bullying, lower children's SWB rates. Also investigating this phenomenon, Alcantara et al. (2017) identified that, for all measures of well-being and satisfaction with life, the people involved with bullying, either victims or aggressors, had lower SWB averages than those who were not involved. It was observed that the victims had significantly lower SWB averages and a lower evaluation of support from friends. In an investigation with children and adolescents,

Alcantara et al. (2019) found that, for victims and aggressors, bullying was the variable that had the most negative impact on SWB, both isolated and associated with other factors, such as school climate and perception of the home, school and neighborhood contexts.

These results resonate with Savahl et al. (2020), who found significant contributions of friendship relationships with SWB in a sample of 3,284 children aged between 8 and 12 years from schools located in urban centers and rural areas in South Africa. This result was also verified in Goswami's (2012) study in a sample of 4,673 English children with an average age of 13 years (M=13.69), which demonstrated that children's supportive friendships increase their levels of subjective well-being, while experiences of peer bullying and bullying or being treated unfairly by adults negatively affects their SWB and satisfaction with school.

# 3.2.2 The Contribution of Personal and Contextual Variables in the Association between peer Relationships and Children's SWB

Other variables were identified in the studies as impacting or mediating the interaction between peer relationships and SWB. Regarding contexts, the authors stated that the quality of relationships in microsystems is directly related to children's SWB, having more influence than macrosystemic contexts (Lee & Yoo, 2015; Newland et al., 2018). The school context proved to be a relevant microsystem for assessing the relationship between well-being and peer relationships.

Satisfaction with the school environment assessed based on the children's perception of the quality of interactions with classmates proved to be significantly associated with SWB (Sarriera et al., 2018). School satisfaction was also a predictor of SWB in a sample of children living in rural areas in the United States (Newland et al., 2015), results also found by Lawler et al., (2015, 2017) with samples of children from ten different countries. It was also found that the social context of the school provides different experiences which influence these assessments. Alcantara et al. (2017) identified that public school students had lower levels of well-being, social support and satisfaction with development contexts (school, family, neighborhood) than those in private schools. In the study by Alcantara et al. (2019) students



in the seventh year of public schools who were victims of bullying had a lower SWB average, while in private schools, the aggressors had the lowest SWB average.

The influence of other contexts was identified by Alcantara et al. (2019) who observed that the positive assessment of the neighborhood for non-bullied students was associated with higher SWB averages, while students who made a negative assessment of the neighborhood and who were victims of bullying had lower averages. This result suggests that the risk or protection factors of the context and the experience in the interaction with peers, when combined, can influence well-being. Supporting these arguments, from a qualitative perspective, the study by Rogers (2012), through visual (photos, drawings and illustrative charts), oral (interviews and focus groups) and written (records of activities) activities, points to an understanding of children's own perspectives on their relationships and experiences as an essential understanding to measure their well-being. The results reveal that friends and supportive relationships with the neighborhood were considered fundamental elements for the children's sense of satisfaction.

Personal variables also influence well-being and peer relationships. Santos et al. (2019) demonstrated that peer interpersonal relationships and SWB can be affected by variables such as gender. The study found that girls were more satisfied with their relationships than boys. On the other hand, Tiliouine (2015), identified that increasing age and passive bullying negatively affected the children's satisfaction with life at significant levels.

These arguments are in agreement with Oberle et al. (2011), who checked the influence of personal and contextual aspects on adolescents' SWB. They demonstrated that optimism and a strong sense of belonging to school, as well as positive relationships with peers and adults in the community are positively associated with life satisfaction. The authors also highlight the relationship between the school environment and the students' well-being suggesting interventions to promote well-being. In this direction, Schütz et al. (2016) investigated the contribution of satisfaction with school and family to well-being in 2,105 children aged between 10 and 12 years. The participants were students from public and private schools in Brazil and the results highlighted satisfaction with school and family as factors as predictors of children's life satisfaction.

#### 3.2.3 Contributions to the Study and Promotion of Children's Subjective Well-Being

This review addressed important aspects to be taken into account in the studies of children's SWB. Topics such as the promotion of actions to strengthen peer relationships, well-being and resilience during infancy were focused as priorities. Alcantara et al. (2019) argued that studying the contexts from the children's point of view provides more insight about which risk and protection factors are present in their lives. Lawler et al., (2015, 2017) defend the relevance of a global ecological model based on relationships and SWB as it highlights the bidirectional influences between children and their immediate contexts. This conceptual model has its roots in Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory (1989), which is the foundation that supports the studies of Newland et al., (2015, 2018).



Santos et al. (2019) focused on school context as an important environment for creating supportive relational bases Alcantara et al. (2019) also reinforces the need to foster a positive school climate with relational quality to influence the entire school community and result in better levels of SWB for everyone. Chai et al. (2018) also considered that the promotion of children's SWB influences their positive and healthy development. Newland (2014) emphasized that involving the family and identifying its strengths and difficulties can help in implementing new actions in favor of child resilience and well-being.

With regard to the prevention of school violence and the promotion of healthy attitudes and relationships, Alcantara et al. (2017) pointed out that a healthy social and emotional support network is associated with the prevention of violence between peers and sense of belonging. It is emphasized the importance of listening to the children inside and outside the school. Andreou et al. (2020) suggested that these interventions should approach aspects of resilience (e.g. self-efficacy, adaptability), however, considering the singularities of each one's experiences. Alcantara et al. (2017) also indicated the involvement of the community where a school is located through interdisciplinary actions with professionals from social areas who know the region, the problems, the opportunities and the values present there, as well as the access to educational, cultural, health, culture and leisure activities. Furthermore, Tiliouine (2015) pointed out that intervention programs that help victims of bullying can provide social skills to help resolving social conflicts, functioning as protective and supportive factors in school systems.

## 3.2.4 The Influence of Individual and Contextual Aspects of Resilience on Children's SWB

In a theoretical study of literature review, Newland (2014) presented children's resilience associated with the idea of overcoming adverse conditions which is a consensual reference among classic studies on resilience (Masten, 2014). The factors that predict children's resilience living in risk situations are pointed out and related to individual and contextual aspects. Regarding the individual aspects, the author cited: social competence, self-esteem, adaptability, active coping skills, sense of control in life, autonomy, intelligence, safe attachment style, and sense of humor. The contextual variables mentioned and referred as protective factors are: quality home environment, positive parenting, other supportive people in the child's life who assume a role of parenting or mentoring, positive extracurricular activities, relationships with supportive peers, safe and caring school environments children and other positive aspects of a child's neighborhood, community and culture. Again this study of Newland (2014) highlights the relevance of family well-being, the quality of the dynamics of the family system and the investment of its members in supporting and strengthening mechanisms of well-being in the family system. The focus on positive parenting practices is claimed by the author as a factor that impacts children's SWB and resilience.

In a study on the SWB of children victims of parental abandonment in rural China, Chai et al. (2018) identified that children "left behind" are impacted by the migration of parents (farmers) to urban centers for economic reasons. The study was



based on the Positive Development Theory (Lerner et al., 2017) and it was analyzed how ecological environments (neighborhood and relationships with caregivers) and resilience (treated in their individual aspects) influenced the SWB of children. The results showed that higher levels of neighborhood social cohesion and trusting relationships with caregivers significantly predicted the SWB of the children. Chai et al. (2018) highlight that a high social cohesion, a strong social network and bond in the community are important to improve the SWB of these children. The effects of social cohesion and relationships with caregivers were mediated by children's resilience, helping them to deal with adversity and the negative effect of their parents' migration. The authors indicated prevention and psychosocial intervention programs based on promoting resilience for these children.

This study conceptualizes resilience in a multi-systemic approach based on the principles of the Developmental Systems Theory (Lerner, 2006) which integrates various areas of knowledge with a focus on the development of living systems. In this sense, resilience is understood by its individual and contextual/socio ecological aspects (relationships with family, peer group, school, culture and community). These aspects are considered to be interdependent and therefore should be analyzed under the scope of various levels of analysis. During childhood, the importance of a nurturing context stands out and the quality of relationships either in the family and at school influences and promotes the sense of belonging along with resilience processes (Masten, 2021).

These reflections are reinforced by the work of Andreou et al. (2020) who examined the role of psychological resilience in bullying experiences and SWB. This study was the only one that showed the interface of the three investigated constructs in this review. This research examined the peer victimization of children in the school context. The results points out that "components of resilience such as levels of optimism, self-efficacy, adaptability, tolerance and sensitivity decrease the probability of student's victimization" and affect their well-being (Andreou et al., 2020, p. 1203). It was highlighted that resilience is associated with peer relationships (aggression and victimization) and SWB. Victimization among peers was negatively and weakly correlated with resilience and moderately correlated with well-being. Boys reported greater well-being and resilience than girls. Regarding the moderating role of resilience among victims of school bullying and their well-being, this effect was not conclusive and further studies on this theme are necessary.

#### 3.2.5 Challenges of Assessment and Measurement of the Constructs

It was observed that the majority of the instruments to access SWB in the selected studies of this review evaluate the cognitive component – life satisfaction as the single one (Lee & Yoo, 2015; Tiliouine, 2015; Newland et al., 2018; Sarriera et al., 2018; Alcantara et al., 2017, 2019; Santos et al., 2019;). The concept of life satisfaction is complex and involves both the assessment of life as a whole, as well as some specific dimensions (friends, life as a student, appearance, family, etc.). Yet, the studies did not examine the affective component of SWB (positive and negative affects).



Other studies considered mental health and self-image as subjective indicators of well-being in addition to cognitive aspects (Lawler et al., 2015, 2017; Newland et al., 2015). One of the studies used only the mental health scale to access SWB (Andreou et al., 2020). Finally, one study used a scale that refers to the measurement of happiness to access SWB (Chai et al., 2018). It is important to note that the scale used to measure mental health covers also children's emotional well-being.

To evaluate the peer relationships and the quality of the relationships through the used scales—described in Table 1—it was found that some studies focused on the frequency of interactions in activities performed together and on satisfaction resulting from relationships with friends that showed supportive interactions (Lawler et al., 2015, 2017; Newland et al., 2015, 2018; Sarriera et al., 2018;). Other studies included further aspects such as the frequency of aggressive interactions between peers (Santos et al., 2019). In this sense, bullying received a particular attention (Alcantara et al., 2017, 2019; Andreou et al., 2020; Lee & Yoo, 2015; Tiliouine, 2015) as it is a behavior that by definition focus on negative interactions.

With regard to the instruments used to assess resilience, scales were created to measure resilience in adults based in their individual aspects (e.g. personal competence, acceptance of themselves and life). These instruments were adapted for children (Andreou et al., 2020; Chai et al., 2018). However, these studies did not report adaptations for the children's context. Oliveira et al. (2019) developed an instrument called Resilience Markers for Children (RMC), which presented significant evidence of validity. The development of RMC was based on the theoretical model of del Castillo et al. (2016) using the concept of resilience as a complex process involving six elements: vulnerability, coping, emotional intelligence, SWB, locus of control and skill. When approaching SWB as one of the elements of resilience, this instrument indicates the link between these two constructs. However, further studies must be carried out to test the effectiveness of this new measure and its psychometric characteristics.

The most used instrument in the studies reviewed was the questionnaire that is part of the international project named "Children's Worlds". The Children's Worlds is responsible for the International Survey of Children's Well-Being – ISCWeB, which aims to investigate children's well-being, rights and satisfaction with their life contexts in different population groups, including peer interactions. The first wave of this project (2012–2013) had about 34,500 children included in the sample and the data were gathered in an international database. The second wave, which took place between 2013 and 2014, was completed with more than 56,000 children. The validity and reliability of the measures are well established. This international survey is the most comprehensive study on children's lives from their own perspectives (Ben-Arieh et al., 2017; Dinisman et al., 2015). The third wave is still in progress and started in 2016 (https://isciweb.org/the-project/history/).



#### 4 Final Considerations

This integrative review of scientific literature on children's SWB and its relation to peer relationships and resilience focused on articles published in Portuguese and English from 2014 to 2020 and aimed to investigate how the articles associate these themes. There was a predominance of international articles (empirical, cross-sectional, of quantitative nature) in the school context. A gap in the exploration of children's perceptions of their well-being based on qualitative methodologies and in assessments of interactions with peers in other contexts was evident.

North American and Brazilian publications stood out, and the ISCWeB was frequently used for assessing children's SWB with their perceptions of the ecological developmental contexts. The theoretical Bioecological approach to Human Development was emphasized, which considers individual and contextual factors to lead to a better understanding of children and adolescent's SWB, corroborating with other studies (Lima & Morais, 2018).

The influence of peer relationships on children's SWB was verified, with the contribution of personal and contextual variables. The individual and contextual aspects of resilience were shown to influence children's SWB. The potential of positive peer relationships during childhood as predictors of both SWB and resilience was also observed. Given the relevance of interpersonal relationships for the development of children and adolescents, the present integrative analysis of articles showed that positive relationships between peers can be a support mechanism in coping with changes and is a protection in the face of possible risk situations experienced at certain stages of children's developmental cycle. In this perspective, a practice dedicated to strengthening the relational and emotional bonds between peers can be a profitable ground for cultivating children's resilience tutors.

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