

CHILDREN'S WORLDS REPORT 2020

CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON THEIR LIVES AND WELL-BEING IN 35 COUNTRIES:
A REPORT ON THE CHILDREN'S WORLDS SURVEY, 2016-19

Children's views on their lives and well-being in 35 countries: A report on the Children's Worlds study, 2016-19

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About this report

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Further information

Further information about the Children's Worlds project can be found on the project website at www.isciweb.org.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Few people would disagree with the notion of promoting child well-being. And yet there are many different ideas about what exactly this means. Some view childhood as a developmental phase in preparation for adulthood; this view focuses on future well-being, sometimes referred to as well-becoming. The Children's Worlds project takes a different outlook. It focuses on childhood as a life stage in its own right, and on children's own views on their lives and well-being in the present.

Children's Worlds is the first global study of childhood from a child's perspective. It began in 2010 with a small unfunded pilot project and has developed, with the Jacobs Foundation's support, to gather the views of more than 200,000 children in over 40 countries across five continents. This report presents the first findings from the third and largest wave of the study undertaken between 2016-2019, covering 35 countries with such diverse contexts as Namibia, Nepal and Norway.

Central to the project is the concept of 'well-being'. Children's Worlds focus is children's day-to-day feelings of happiness and sadness; their satisfaction with their life as a whole and different aspects of it; their feelings of safety, being cared for, autonomy, and being listened to; and their hopes and expectations for the future.

The subjective well-being of adults has been extensively researched for at least half a century, from the seminal work of Wilson (1967) and Andrews and Withey (1976) in the US, to the World Happiness Reports summarising adult life satisfaction across the globe (Helliwell et al., 2020). Research on children's subjective well-being has lagged behind. In the first decade of the new millennium this gap began to be filled by studies in individual countries (see Proctor et al., 2009 for a review). It is only in the last ten years that this field has expanded to include comparative work across many countries.

Studies such as the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study (HBSC) (Currie et al., 2012) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have included several subjective questions in recent waves. However, neither covers the full range of aspects of children's lives and neither includes a broad selection of countries across continents and different levels of national economic wealth. The current wave of the Children's Worlds study addresses both of these evidence gaps.

This report provides an initial descriptive overview of several key topics covered in the third and most recent wave of the survey.

Notes to this report:

1. Binary gender options were provided in this survey for scientific purposes of comparison. Participants identified themselves as 'boy' or 'girl', thus these terms are used here.
2. Children participated in this survey in three age groups of 8, 10 and 12; reference to these ages is not an accurate reflection of children's actual age, rather to their age group.
3. Due to the 10-year-old age group being the most complete, many comparisons are based upon this sample. Tables and figures relate children 10 years of age unless otherwise stated. Details appear in the text.
4. In many of the 35 countries, this survey was conducted in a specific area/s and results do not reflect the entire country; this is noted in Table 1.1 in parentheses. Henceforth, all reference to countries indicates the defined area/s, even in the absence of specific mention.

The final data set

The number of children included in the final data set in each country and age group is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Final sample by country/region and age group after data cleaning

	Country (region)	8yo	10yo	12yo	Total
AL	Albania	0	1,176	1,163	2,339
DZ	Algeria (Western)	1,185	1,137	1,054	3,376
BD	Bangladesh (Cities)	790	946	1,012	2,748
BE	Belgium (Flanders)	1,134	1,112	1,076	3,322
BR	Brazil (Cities)	887	886	901	2,674
CL	Chile (Cities)	916	913	1,016	2,845
HR	Croatia	1,117	1,240	1,155	3,512
EE	Estonia	1,058	1,013	1,079	3,150
FI	Finland	1,112	1,067	1,075	3,254
FR	France (Cities)	0	2,184	0	2,184
DE	Germany	945	829	1,524	3,298
GR	Greece (Epirus)	0	822	0	822
HK	Hong Kong SAR	0	709	816	1,525
HU	Hungary	1,016	1,035	994	3,045
IN	India (City - Kolkata)	994	946	977	2,917
ID	Indonesia (West Java)	7,684	7,680	8,038	23,402
IL	Israel	1,487	1,637	1,465	4,589
IT	Italy (Liguria)	1,044	1,074	1,181	3,299
MY	Malaysia	967	992	0	1,959
MT	Malta	567	630	824	2,021
NA	Namibia (Khomas)	0	1,065	1,099	2,164
NP	Nepal (Selected)	0	1,005	1,041	2,046
NO	Norway	0	801	817	2,222
PL	Poland	964	1,192	1,156	3,312
RO	Romania	1,082	1,241	1,145	3,468
RU	Russia (Tyumen)	0	953	951	1,904
ZA	S Africa	0	3,415	3,699	7,114
KR	S Korea	3,170	3,174	3,395	9,739
ES	Spain (Catalonia)	2,329	2,209	2,088	6,626
LK	Sri Lanka (Central)	0	1,156	1,221	2,377
CH	Switzerland	0	1,229	0	1,229
TW	Taiwan	1,230	1,337	1,511	4,078
EN	UK (England)	0	717	0	717
WA	UK (Wales)	0	959	1,668	2,627
VN	Vietnam (North)	930	946	1,080	2,956
	Total	32,608	49,427	46,149	128,184

The questionnaires

As in previous waves, the survey questionnaires were structured into sections focusing on different aspects of children's lives, such as home, friendships and school; and on life as a whole.

The questionnaires cover:

- Children's characteristics
- Economic / material context
- Home context
- Overall well-being
- Self
- Family
- Friends
- School
- Neighbourhood
- Time use
- Country
- Children's rights

Some were core questions all countries were expected to include (barring an ethical or cultural reason not to) and others were optional.

Three different versions of the questionnaire were composed for the different age groups. The questionnaires for the two older age groups were very similar, with only a few of the more abstract or complex questions being excluded for the 10-year-olds. The questionnaire for 8-year-olds was shorter and some types of questions given a different format as discussed below.

The questionnaires consisted mainly of four types of questions:

1. **Satisfaction/happiness:** These asked children to evaluate particular aspects of their lives such as their home or their health. For the two older age groups these questions had an 11-point response scale from 0 (Not at all satisfied) to 10 (Totally satisfied). Some countries felt this scale was too long for the 8-year-olds and therefore, as in the second wave, a shorter five-point emoticon scale was used. This variation precludes comparison between responses of the younger age group with those of the two older age groups.
2. **Agreement:** These questions took the form of a statement, such as 'I feel safe at home', to which children were asked to respond on a five-point scale from 'Not agree' to 'Totally agree'. Questions were asked in exactly the same way across all three age groups. A few of the agreement questions about overall subjective well-being discussed in Chapter 3, used a longer 11-point response scale for the two older age groups, and the five-point emoticon scale for the youngest age group.
3. **Frequency:** These questions asked children how often they did something or something happened to them. They included a series of questions about daily activities as well as experiences, such as being bullied or witnessing violence. There was some variation in response scales depending on the exact question.
4. **Fact-based:** Finally there were questions regarding factual aspects of children's lives, such as who they lived with and whether their family owned a television.

Cutting across these themes, and in particular the main different environments that children spend time in – home, school and the neighbourhood, the agreement questions were also designed to enable exploration of themes, such as safety and participation, across different aspects of children's lives.

International comparison of children's subjective well-being

One of the challenges of international comparative work on subjective well-being, whether with adults or children, is understanding the extent to which it is reasonable to compare responses given by participants in different countries and contexts. This is a controversial area in research on subjective well-being. On the one hand, some studies have found evidence of cultural response differences in questions about subjective experience (Diener et al., 2000, 2003); there are also difficulties in finding appropriate translations for abstract concepts. On the other hand, researchers have argued (Diener et al., 1995) that a substantial amount of variation in mean adult subjective well-being across countries, may be explained by other known country characteristics, such as national wealth or levels of corruption and trust. For children the picture is even less clear. First, there is surprisingly little correlation between mean life satisfaction of adults and children at country level (Casas, 2017); second, it has not been possible to definitively identify factors that explain much of the variation in mean child subjective well-being between countries.

This does not indicate that international research on people's subjective experience is of no value. As discussed in Chapter 3, it may still be possible to create subjective measures suitable for comparing regression analyses between countries. This means that we can gain an understanding of the similarities and differences in factors that explain variations between countries in children's subjective well-being. Additionally, as we show in Chapter 8 we can still use mean scores for satisfaction with different aspects of life to gain insights into relative strengths and weaknesses in each country. This can only be achieved through international comparisons and may potentially provide guidance to policymakers on potential areas for improvement.

Statistical analysis in this report

The analysis presented in this report was conducted in Stata and SPSS, and took account of weighting and sample design (clustering and stratification) in each country. All significance testing uses robust standard errors due to the clustered nature of school-based surveys. All results discussed as statistically significant refer to a p-value of less than 0.05 (95% confidence); a single asterisk in tables and figures denotes a p-value of less than 0.05, a double asterisk denotes a p-value of 0.01. The analysis in this report is relatively simple and consists mainly of bivariate analysis of gender and age differences, using chi-square tests, t-tests and ANOVA. Reference is also made to confirmatory factor analysis of some multi-item scales.

For many aspects of the analysis we focus on the 10-years-old age group, as (as shown in Table 1.1) this was the only age group surveyed in all 35 countries. We provide key information for the other two age groups in participating countries and make age-related comparisons where possible.

Study design

Additional details about the study design are provided in the Appendix.

Chapter 2

The context of children's lives

Overview

In this chapter, we provide information on the context of children's lives. This includes questions about the type of home children live in, their family structure, and their material circumstances. This background information provides an important context to the findings presented in the subsequent chapters in this report. For example, the chapter on family life includes children's satisfaction with the people they live with. The findings on different levels of family life satisfaction across the countries, need to be viewed within the context of family structure and/or number of sibling variations.

The survey asked 10- and 12-year-olds a number of questions about their living arrangements, the people they live with, and their material circumstances, shown in Box 2.1.

Box 2.1: Questions on children's home circumstances

Which of the following best describes the home you live in?

- I live with my family
- I live in a foster home
- I live in a children's home
- I live in another type of home

Please tick all of the people who live in your home

- Mother
- Father
- Stepmother
- Stepfather
- Grandmother
- Grandfather
- Brothers and sisters
- Other children
- Other adults

In total, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

In the last year, did either of your parents live or work away from home for more than a month?

(Note: this question was only included in 22 countries)

- Mother – No, Yes in another part of the country, Yes in a different country
- Father – No, Yes in another part of the country, Yes in a different country

As the 10-year-olds' survey was the only one that covered all 35 countries, we focus on the findings for this age group in order to draw comparisons.

Children's home circumstances

The vast majority of children in all countries said they lived with their family. There were only four countries where fewer than 95% of children did so: Brazil (93.8%), Namibia (93.5%), Nepal (94.8%) and South Africa (93.9%). In these countries, some children lived in a mixture of alternative settings including foster care, residential care, and other types of homes. The following analysis focuses on children who live with one or more family members, and does not include Namibia and Poland where detailed questions about who the child lived with were not asked.

It is increasingly common for some children to spend time living in two homes, usually with different parents after a parental separation. In 11 countries children were asked whether they sometimes or often stayed in a second home. In eight of these countries, all in Europe, this is more than 10% of the children in the 10-year-old survey: Belgium (Flanders) (14%), UK (England) (13%), Germany (16%), Italy (12%), Malta (10%), Norway (18%), Switzerland (14%), and Wales (16%). This topic would be worth further exploration in these countries. The analysis below considers only children who lived in whichever home they identified as their primary home.

Figure 2.1 shows the proportion of 10-year-old children who lived with both, one or neither birth parents in their single or primary home. In seven countries more than 90% of children lived with both birth parents, while in five countries less than 70% did. The 'one parent' category includes children living with a birth parent and a stepparent. There was no discernible geographical pattern in terms of the findings - different countries from different continents appear together in the chart. The proportion of children living with neither parent was highest, at approximately 8% in South Africa and Namibia. Indonesia was the only other country where more than one in twenty children (6%) did not live with a parent.

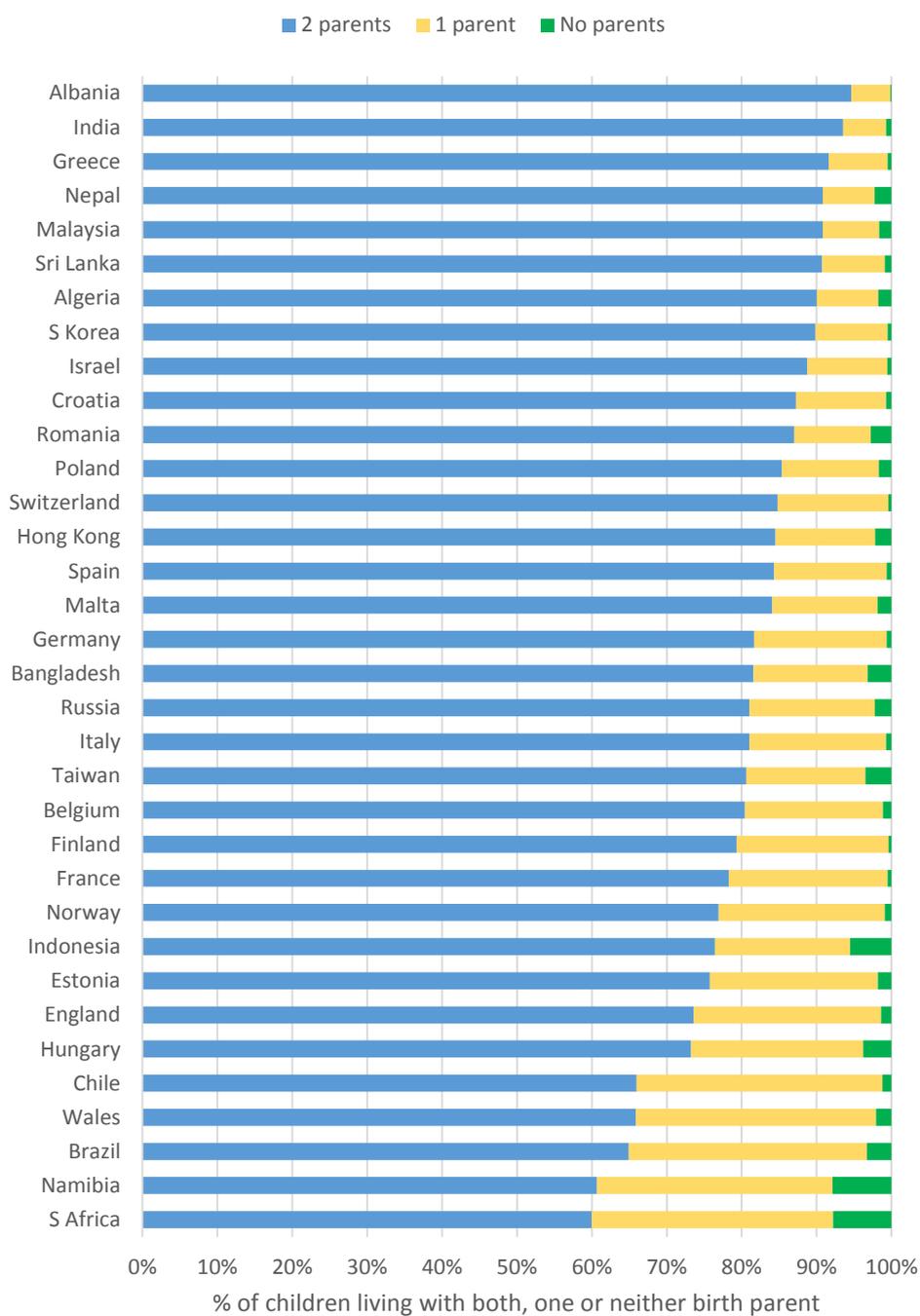
In four countries, Israel, Algeria, Norway and Malaysia, over 90% of children lived with a sibling or other child in the household (Figure 2.2). The proportion of children who did not live with a sibling or other child was above 30% in Italy, Brazil, and Hong Kong SAR.

Children were also asked if a grandparent lived with them (Figure 2.3). There were significant differences between countries in this respect. In India and Albania more than half of children lived with a grandparent – primarily also with a parent, in multi-generational households. This proportion was less than 2% in Finland and Norway.

In 21 countries children were asked whether their mother or father had worked away from home for more than a month in the past year, either in the country or abroad. Here we focus on children who had a parent who worked abroad. Over a quarter of children in Romania and Albania had a parent who worked abroad for more than a month in the last year; this figure was above 10% in five other countries (Figure 2.4).

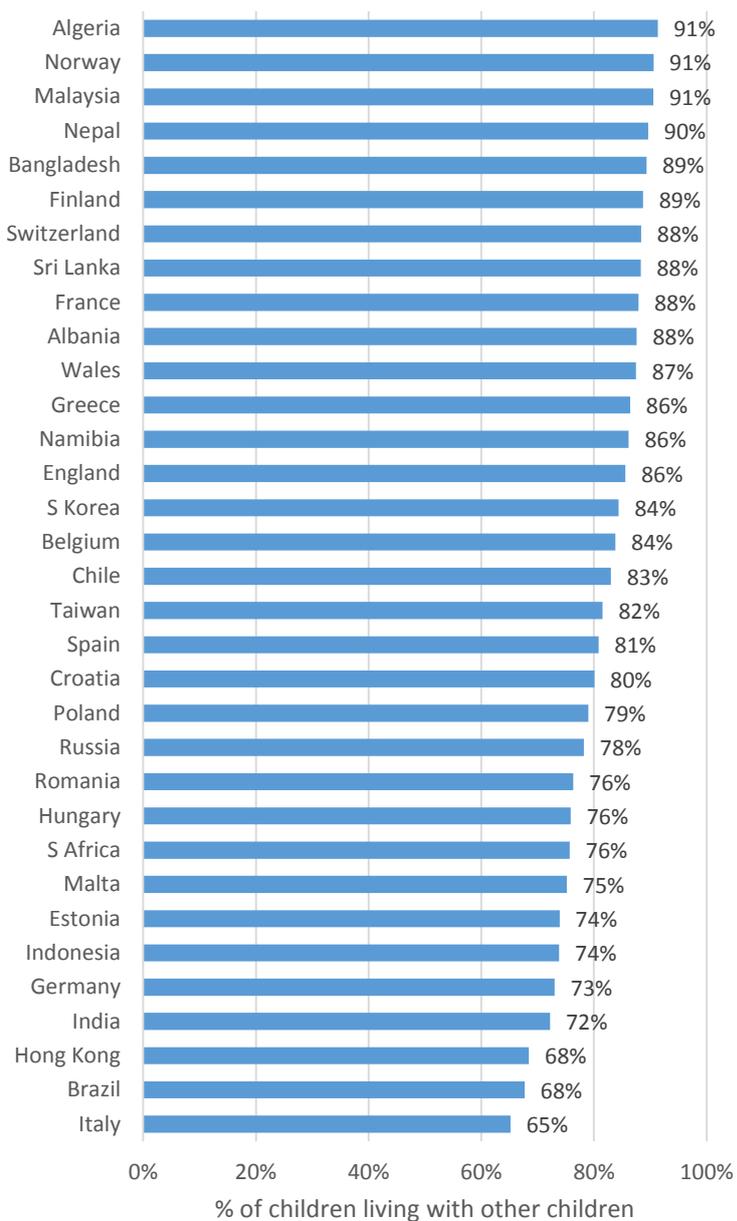
These summary statistics illustrate the wide range of children's home contexts in both the same and different countries surveyed, and paint a picture of one aspect of the diversity in children's lives around the world, within which their experiences and well-being should be understood.

Figure 2.1: Children living with both, one, or no birth parents in single or first home



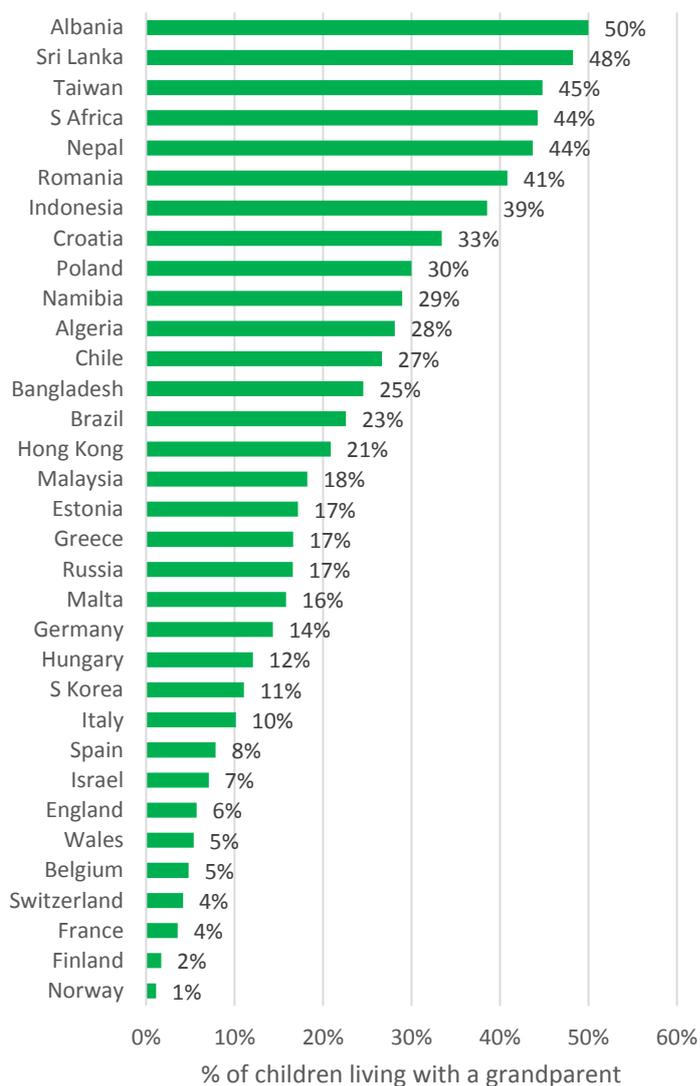
10 years olds

Figure 2.2: Children living with a sibling or other child

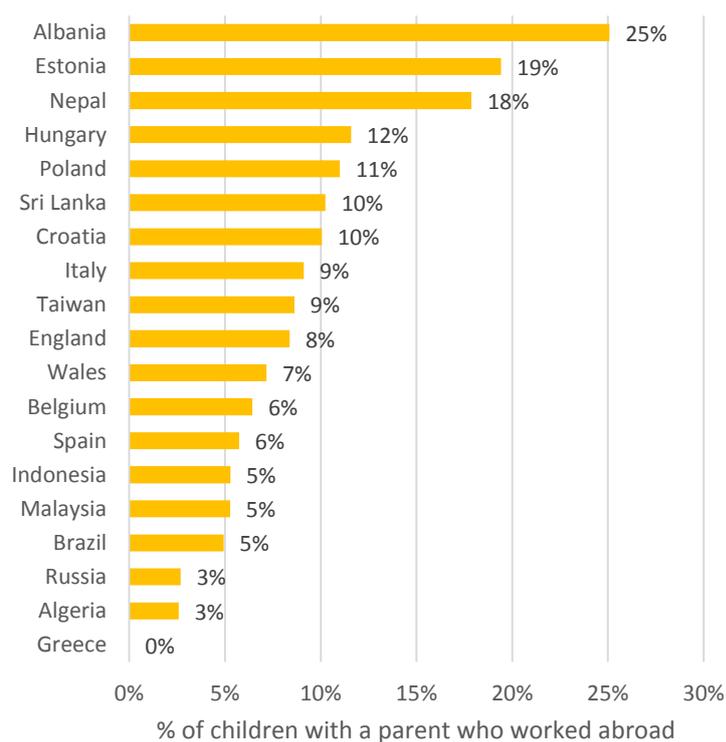


10 years olds

Figure 2.3: Children living with a grandparent in the household



10 years olds

Figure 2.4: Parent working abroad for at least one month in the past year

10 years old

Material circumstances

Children were asked a set of eight questions about things they have (Box 2.2). This list was developed in consultation with children and researchers across countries during the piloting phase of the current survey wave. Children were also asked about household material items and conditions. These varied across countries and for this reason are not presented here. Further work will be done using those items. Finally, children were asked if they had enough food to eat each day, and how often they worried about how much money their family had.

Box 2.2: Questions about material circumstances

Which of the following things do you have?

- Clothes in good condition
- Enough money for school trips and activities
- Access to the internet at home
- The equipment you need for sports and hobbies
- Pocket money / money to spend on yourself
- Two pairs of shoes in good condition
- A mobile phone
- The equipment you need for school

Response options were 'Yes' and 'No'.

Do you have enough food to eat each day?

Four-point frequency scale response: Never, Sometimes, Often, Always plus 'Don't know' option

How often do you worry about how much money your family has?

Four-point frequency scale response: Never, Sometimes, Often, Always plus 'Don't know' option

Children's responses in the 10-years-old survey to the eight questions about material items are shown in Table 2.1.

- In all but one country, at least 90% of children said that they had clothes in good condition. (The low score in Belgium [73%] may be due to a variation in the question wording). In four countries – Indonesia, Namibia, Nepal and South Africa, – around 8% to 10% of children said that they did not have clothes in good condition to go to school.
- The patterns were similar for the question about having two pairs of shoes in good condition. There were ten countries where more than one in ten children indicated that they did not have two pairs of good shoes.
- Not being able to participate in school activities is a key potential element of social exclusion for children. In 13 countries more than one in ten children said that they did not have enough money to take part in school trips.
- In general, the proportion of children who had enough money for school equipment was higher than for school trips, but there were still some countries – Namibia, Nepal and South Africa, – where more than one in ten children said that they did not have this.
- A substantial minority of children in most countries said that they did not have the equipment they needed for sports and hobbies. In nine countries, more than one in five children were in this situation; again, these children may experience social exclusion.
- Having some money of one's own can give children a sense of autonomy. Most children in Vietnam and Nepal did not receive pocket money. The next two countries, with just over half of children receiving money to spend, were Italy and Spain. More than 90% of children in South Korea, Norway, Hungary, Germany, and Estonia had some pocket money. The next highest countries were Finland and Malaysia, both at 88%. The data shows a range of situations in different countries that suggests that this item reflects different approaches and attitudes to giving children pocket money.
- Internet access has become a key aspect of children's material circumstances. Children who cannot access the internet may experience social exclusion, as well as not being able to access information like other children. Debates have intensified in many countries as a result of school closures and the use of digital learning in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In 13 countries, 12 of which were in Europe plus South Korea, more than 95% of children in the 10-year-old age group had access to the internet at home. In Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Nepal fewer than half of children did. These data highlight substantial inequalities both within and between countries. Information poverty may constitute a new form of disadvantage experienced by children in lower-income countries, potentially affecting their possible future directions.
- Mobile phone ownership is also key to information access and social inclusion. The highest rates (above 95%) were in Croatia, Estonia, Finland, and Norway. The lowest rates (below 50%) were in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The rates were also just over 50% in some European countries such as France, Greece and Belgium (Flanders). Given the very different rates of phone ownership in two relatively high-income countries such as France and Norway, it seems likely that whether children have their own mobile phone partly reflects cultural norms and parental choices as well as economic constraints.

Overall, this set of data suggests that it probably does not make sense to use children's levels of access to material items to compare material circumstances across countries, as patterns may be explained by cultural as well as economic factors. However, this set of items may be useful in exploring within-

country differences in children's experiences of life, depending on their level of access to material items.

Table 2.1: Children having each item by country

	Good clothes	Good shoes	School trips	Equip school	Equip hobbies	Pocket money	Internet access	Mobile phone
Albania	99%	96%	94%	96%	82%	86%	86%	76%
Algeria	96%	89%	78%	95%	81%	81%	66%	66%
Bangladesh	96%	91%	69%	97%	68%	69%	40%	47%
Belgium (Flanders)	(77%)*	86%	97%	98%	94%	73%	98%	56%
Brazil	99%	97%	84%	96%	71%	56%	93%	83%
Chile	99%	97%	86%	98%	84%	80%	89%	85%
Croatia	99%	95%	98%	99%	94%	76%	97%	95%
Estonia	100%	98%	97%	100%	92%	90%	98%	98%
Finland	98%	96%	94%	99%	94%	88%	97%	99%
France	100%	97%	93%	99%	98%	85%	95%	50%
Germany	98%	97%	97%	98%	93%	90%	98%	90%
Greece	100%	97%	95%	99%	93%	76%	92%	53%
Hong Kong SAR	99%	98%	95%	98%	90%	76%	92%	78%
Hungary	100%	99%	98%	99%	95%	93%	98%	93%
India	98%	92%	70%	93%	87%	66%	56%	60%
Indonesia	91%	88%	85%	95%	68%	83%	46%	74%
Italy	100%	97%	97%	99%	92%	53%	91%	67%
Malaysia	95%	92%	78%	97%	84%	88%	72%	58%
Malta	98%	98%	97%	98%	91%	85%	98%	61%
Namibia	92%	86%	72%	81%	71%	65%	66%	57%
Nepal	91%	76%	56%	76%	60%	46%	33%	37%
Norway	99%	99%	97%	99%	98%	93%	99%	97%
Poland	100%	98%	96%	98%	87%	80%	97%	93%
Romania	98%	95%	91%	96%	90%	87%	90%	88%
Russia	99%	96%	84%	96%	86%	83%	93%	95%
S Africa	92%	86%	76%	84%	75%	80%	67%	69%
S Korea	100%	98%	97%	99%	96%	95%	97%	92%
Spain	98%	98%	97%	99%	96%	53%	96%	68%
Sri Lanka	96%	88%	78%	92%	77%	60%	52%	33%
Switzerland	100%	99%	97%	99%	96%	84%	98%	57%
Taiwan	99%	94%	96%	99%	89%	79%	90%	62%
UK (England)	99%	97%	97%	98%	94%	81%	97%	73%
UK (Wales)	100%	96%	97%	96%	92%	83%	97%	83%
Vietnam	97%	88%	88%	90%	59%	26%	57%	50%

10 years old

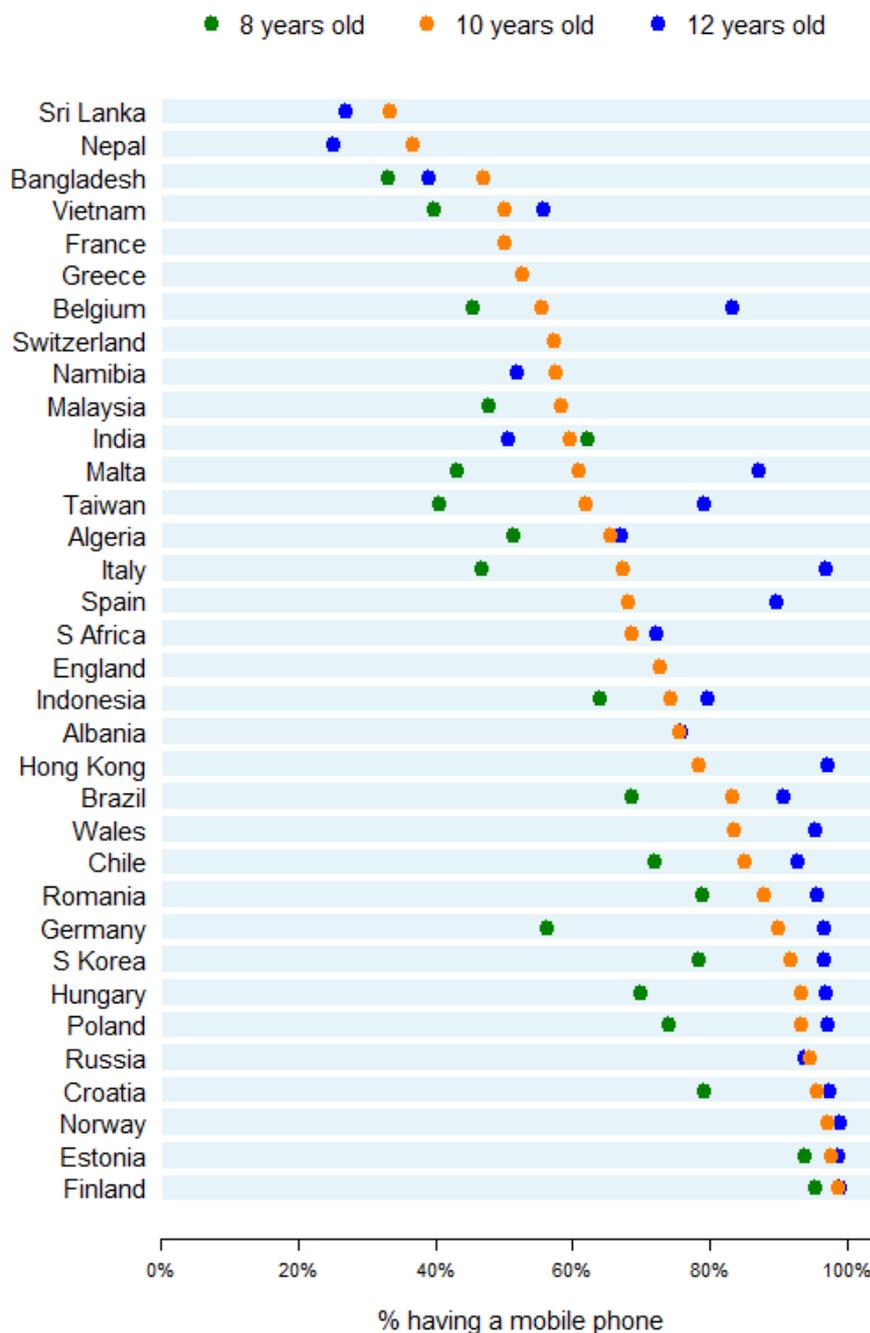
Israel excluded as question was not asked in all schools.

*Wording of the first question differed slightly in Belgium (Flanders) questionnaire, thus this figure should not be seen as directly comparable.

Interesting age-related patterns emerged in terms of children's access to mobile phones. In most countries this increased with age between 8 and 12 years of age (Figure 2.5). However, there were a few countries, Bangladesh, India, Namibia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, where 10-year-olds had greater

access than 12-year-olds. These are all countries with relatively low proportions of children with mobile phones. It may be that there is a cohort effect in these countries, with mobile phone usage increasing more rapidly in younger age groups.

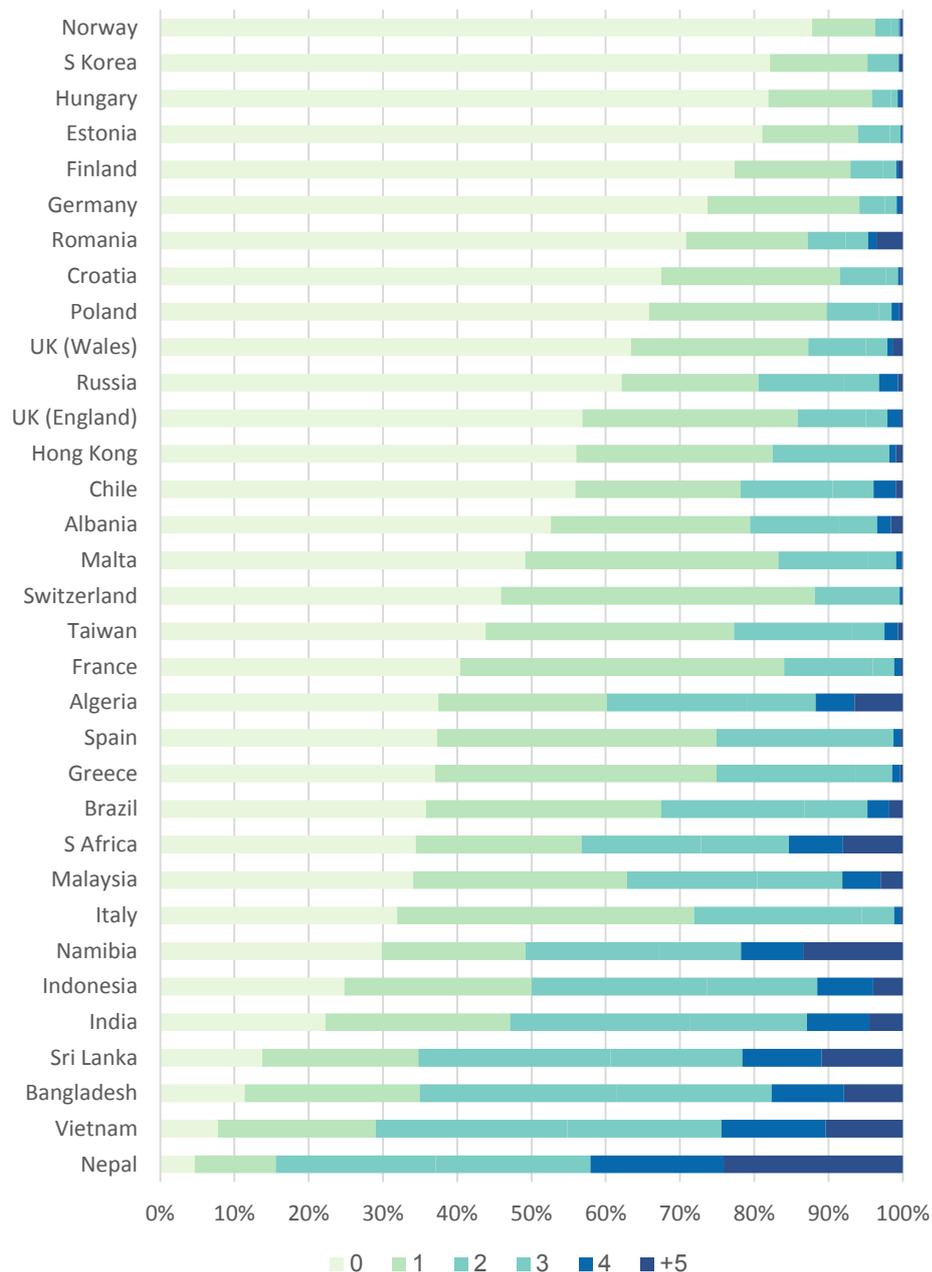
Figure 2.5: Children having a mobile phone by age group



Countries ordered by proportion of 10-year-old children having a mobile phone. Israel excluded as question was not asked in all schools

Figure 2.6 shows the distribution of the total number of items children lacked (i.e. said they did not have) in each country. In four countries, Norway, South Korea, Hungary, and Estonia, less than one in five children lacked any items at all. In most countries very few children lacked more than half of the items, but in seven countries this percentage was above one in 20 children – Nepal (24%), Namibia (13%), Sri Lanka (11%), Vietnam (10%), Bangladesh (8%), South Africa (8%), and Algeria (6%).

Figure 2.6: Children lacking items by country



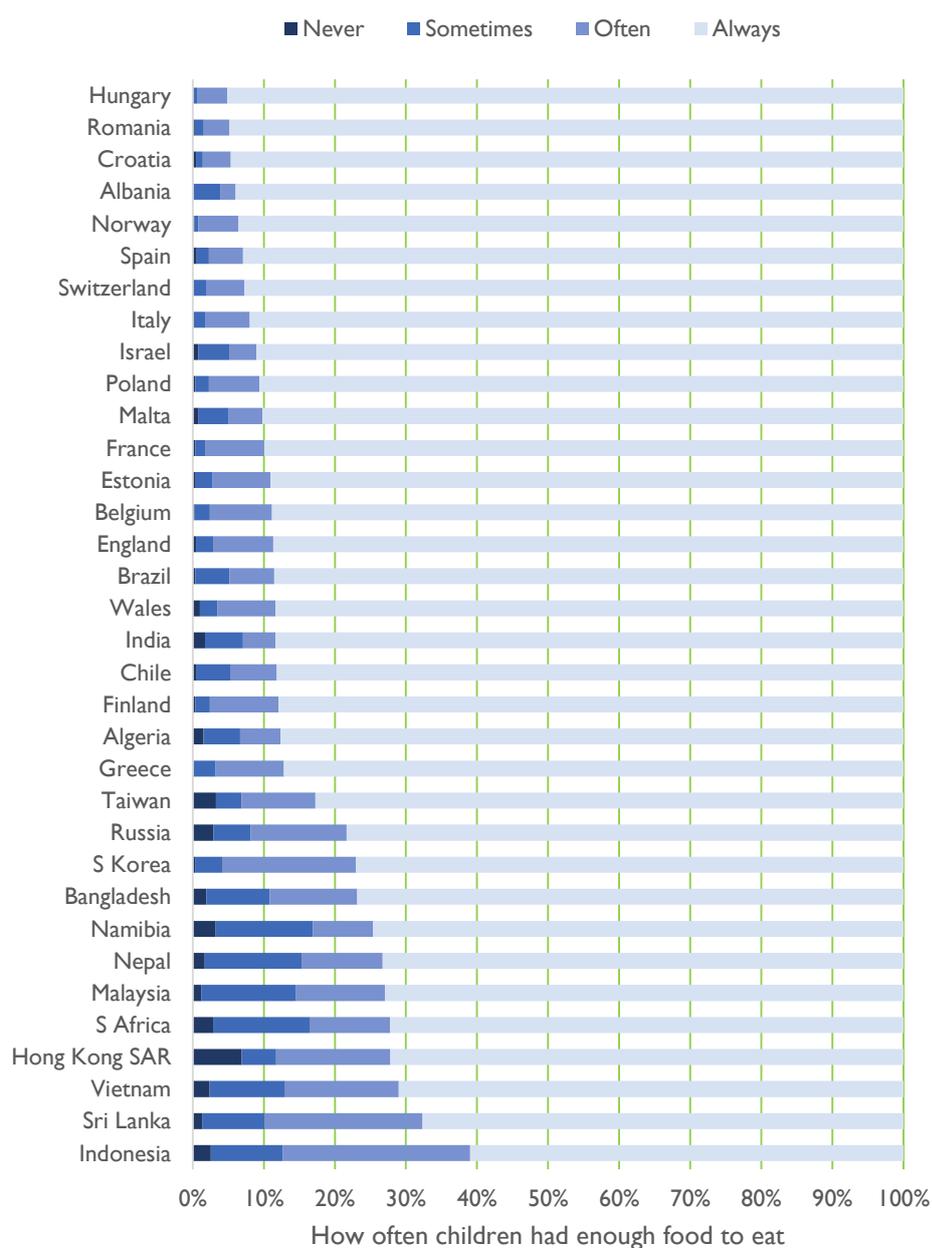
10 years old

Belgium (Flanders) excluded due to different wording of one question as noted above

We now turn to the two other questions children were asked about their material circumstances – how often they had enough food to eat, and how often they worried about how much money their family had.

In 12 countries more than 90% of children in the 10-year-old age group said they had enough food to eat each day. In eight countries/regions, from Indonesia to Namibia in Figure 2.7, at least a quarter of children said this was not always the case. In these eight countries plus Bangladesh, more than 10% of children said they never, or only sometimes had enough food to eat each day. The highest percentage of children who reported they never had enough to eat presented in Hong Kong SAR, at approximately 7% of children.

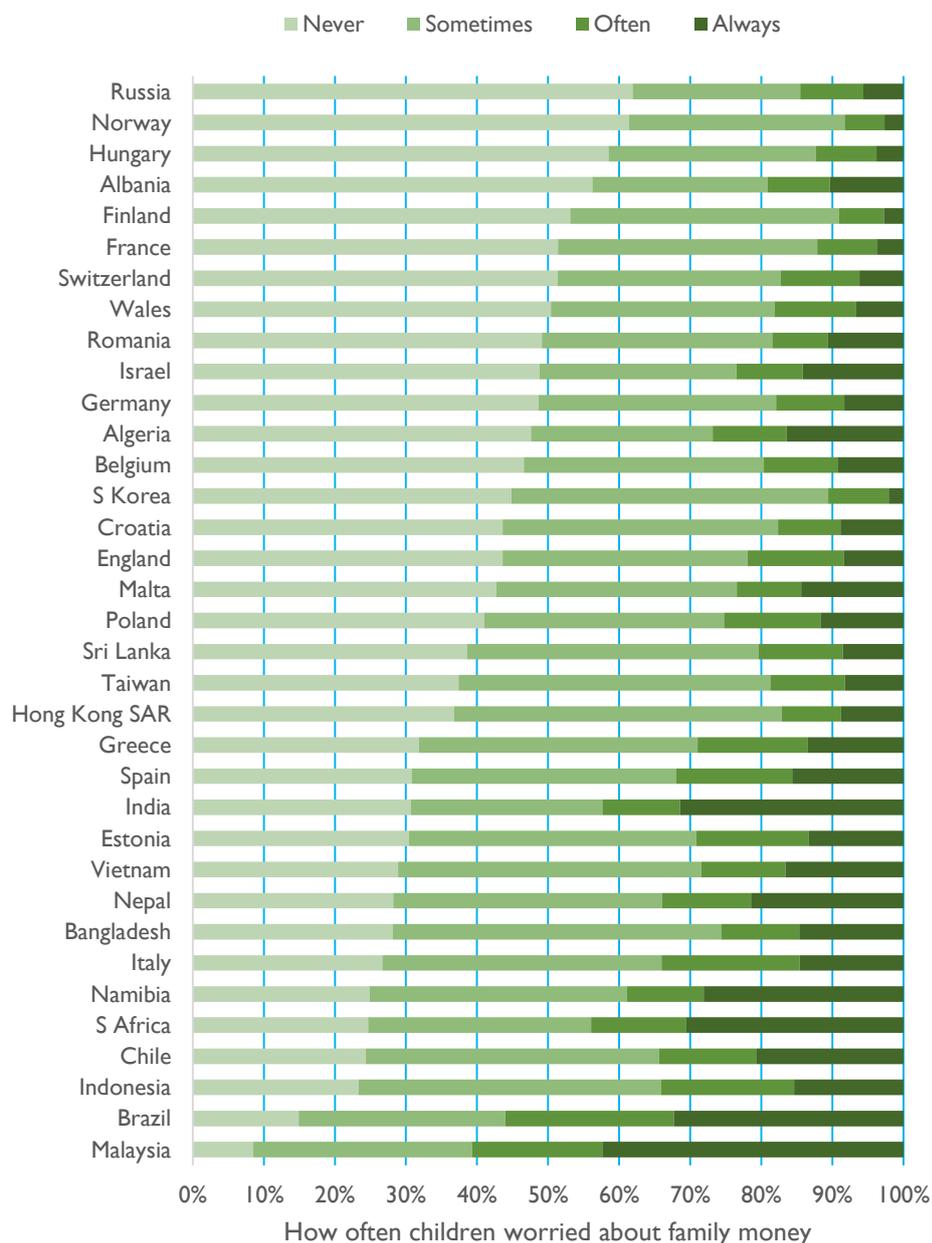
Figure 2.7: Children having enough food to eat each day



10 years old

Figure 2.8 shows the frequency of children worrying about how much money their family had in the 10-year-old survey. In eight countries, from Russia to Wales on the chart, more than half of children never worried. In Malaysia and South Africa more than half of children worried about family money 'often' or 'always'. The presence of Italy, Spain, and Greece as European countries with the highest level of worry is notable, given the lasting impact of the recent global recession on these three countries.

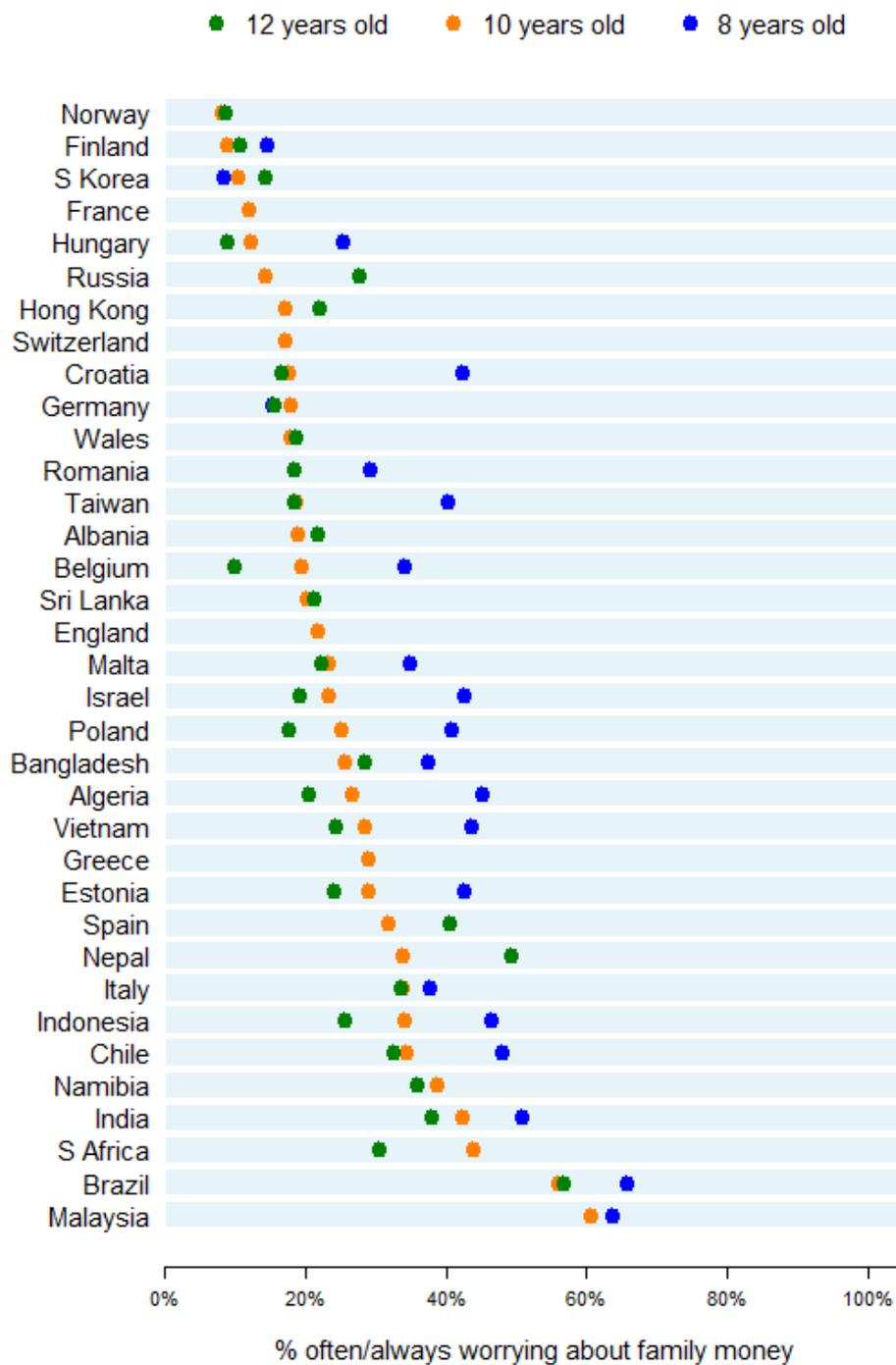
Figure 2.8: Children worrying about how much money their family had



10 years old

In the last wave of the survey we noted a striking pattern of children aged 8 years worrying more about this aspect of life than children in older age groups. This finding is broadly replicated in the current wave (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9: Children worrying often or always about how much money their family has



Chapter 3

Overall well-being

Introduction

Concepts

Studies have found that experiences of overall well-being encompass various aspects. In research literature on this topic, it is important to consider the distinction between 'hedonic' and 'eudaimonic' well-being; both approaches having roots in Greek philosophy.

Hedonic or subjective well-being (SWB) is often defined as an overarching concept referring appraisals that individuals make about their lives in general (Diener, 2001). The tripartite SWB model was originally proposed by Andrews and Withey (1976) and developed by Diener (2001). It includes a cognitive component, referring to perceptions of global and domain-specific life satisfaction; and an affective component comprising positive and negative moods and emotions (Diener, 2009). Positive and negative affect are important components of the SWB conceptual model. Research on affect has consistently demonstrated that they are two separate components with each making a unique contribution to SWB. Positive Affect (PA) generally refers to the experience of positive moods and emotions such as happiness, joy, alertness, and enthusiasm, while Negative Affect (NA) refers to aversive moods such as sadness, and feelings stress and boredom.

Eudaimonic well-being, used synonymously with psychological well-being (PWB) and positive functioning, focuses instead on living 'the good life' and functioning well. There are various conceptualisations and definitions of this concept. Ryan & Deci (2001) refer to three basic psychological needs namely, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, that they see as prerequisites for well-being. Ryff (1989) on the other hand, conceptualises PWB as comprising six components namely: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. In this chapter we provide an analysis of the three components of subjective well-being and psychological well-being..

Previous research

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study (HBSC) in the WHO Europe region has for several years included a question on life satisfaction and other subjective questions (Currie et al., 2012). The 2009-2010 wave of this survey showed a general decline in life satisfaction across age and gender, particularly at older ages; girls tended to have lower life satisfaction than boys.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted with children aged 15 years old in mainly high-income countries, asked several subjective questions in recent waves. The 2018 survey (OECD, 2019) found that boys had higher life satisfaction than girls in most countries, and a

general link between socio-economic advantage and higher life satisfaction. This study also included measures of sense of purpose and positive and negative affect.

The second wave of the Children's Worlds study, found the lowest and highest mean life satisfaction scores ranging from 77 out of 100 in South Korea to 95 out of 100 in Romania, among children aged 10 and 12 years old. The study also used measures of positive affect and psychological well-being; the same countries ranked highest and lowest for these measures. Life satisfaction and positive affect scores typically declined between the ages of 10 and 12 in most countries. There were few gender differences in life satisfaction, but boys showed significantly higher levels of positive affect in five out of 18 countries. Psychological well-being scores were significantly higher for boys in five countries, and significantly higher for girls in two others.

Questions asked

The scale used for life satisfaction in the first two waves of the survey was based on Huebner's (1991) Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS). Testing of the second wave data raised doubts about its use for international comparisons (Casas, 2016). In the third wave we amended the measure, based on discussions with children in diverse contexts. The revised items are shown in Box 3.

Another innovation in the current wave is the inclusion of questions on both positive and negative affect. We selected three items for each – three positive affect states (happy, calm, and full of energy) and three negative (sad, stressed, and bored). These items reflect activated, deactivated, and neutral affect as proposed by Feldman Barrett & Russell (1998).

We used the same scale for psychological well-being as in the second wave. It had six questions, tapping into the components of Ryff's (1989) conceptualization of psychological well-being, discussed above. Due to its more abstract wording, this scale was included only in the 12-year-old questionnaire.

Box 3: Questions on overall well-being

Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-SWBS)

Please say how much you agree with each of the following sentences about your life as a whole.

- I enjoy my life
- My life is going well
- I have a good life
- The things that happen in my life are excellent
- I like my life
- I am happy with my life

10- and 12-year-olds responded on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not agree' and 10 labelled 'Totally agree'. 8-year-olds responded on a 5-point emoticon scale.

Positive and Negative Affect (CW-PNAS)

Below is a list of words that describe different feelings. Please read each word and tick a box to say how much you have felt this way during the last two weeks. 0 means that you have not felt this way at all over the last two weeks. 10 means that you have felt this way 'extremely' over the last two weeks.

- Happy
- Sad
- Calm
- Stressed
- Full of energy
- Bored

10- and 12-year-olds responded on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not at all' and 10 labelled 'Extremely'. 8-year-olds responded on a 5-point emoticon scale. In the affect items, only 'happy' and 'sad' were asked, with response on a four-point verbal frequency scale.

Psychological Well-Being Scale (CW-PWBS)

Please say how much you agree with each of the following sentences about your life as a whole.

- I like being the way I am
- I am good at managing my daily responsibilities
- People are generally friendly towards me
- I have enough choice about how I spend my time
- I feel that I am learning a lot at the moment
- I feel positive about my future

These questions applied to 10- and 12-year-olds only. Responses were on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not agree' and 10 labelled 'Totally agree'.

Cognitive subjective well-being

Reliability analysis was conducted for the five items on the CW-SWBS. For the 8-year-old sample, we obtained a Cronbach alpha of 0.85; for the 10- and 12-year-old samples we obtained Cronbach alphas of 0.92 and 0.94 respectively, with all countries presented with acceptable levels. We further tested the validity of the CW-SWBS using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) across the three age groups. The initial confirmatory factor model using all six items did not have an acceptable model fit. However, the fit was acceptable across the three age groups when the item 'I like my life'¹ was excluded, and therefore we used only the other five items listed in Box 3. We conducted measurement invariance testing of the cross-country comparability of the scale, using multi-group CFA (Meredith, 1993; Millsap and Olivera-Aguilar, 2012). The results indicate that correlation and regression coefficients can be compared across countries for each age group, but do not support cross-country comparisons of mean scores for any of the three age groups.²

Figure 3.1 presents mean scores and percentages of low satisfaction (less than '2' for 8-year-olds, less than '5' for 10- and 12-year-olds) for the CW-SWBS across the three age groups. The 8-year-olds mean score ranged from 3.11 out of 4 in Indonesia, to 3.65 in Hungary. Hungary also had the smallest percentage (1.7%) of children with low life satisfaction, while Bangladesh had the highest (12.5%). An apparent geographical pattern showed that countries with the highest means and lowest percentages of low-satisfaction were all located in Europe; while countries with the lowest means and highest percentages of low satisfaction were all located in Asia. Girls had significantly higher mean scores than boys in Estonia, Indonesia, and Malta.

Mean scores for the 10-year-olds ranged from 7.94 in Vietnam to 9.71 in Albania, with apparent geographical patterns. The countries ranking in the top six (Albania, Romania, Greece, Malta, Spain, and Croatia) were all located in Europe, while the five lowest ranking countries/regions (Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong SAR, and Vietnam) were all in Asia. Boys scored significantly higher than girls in Belgium (Flanders), Chile, Hungary, Norway, and South Korea; while girls scored significantly higher in Algeria, Estonia, Indonesia, and Russia (Table 3.2).

In the 12-year-old age group Albania again ranked highest (9.55), while Hong Kong SAR ranked lowest (7.25) and there were stronger gender differences. Boys scored significantly higher than girls in Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Namibia, Poland, Romania, South Korea, Spain, UK (Wales), and Vietnam. In Algeria, girls scored significantly higher than boys (Table 3.2).

Across the two older age groups, there was a significant decline in mean scores from 10-year-olds to 12-year-olds in 21 countries. Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Norway, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Vietnam did not show significant differences, while there were small non-significant increases in Belgium (Flanders) and Israel.

¹ Detailed results of each CFA are available on request

² Detailed results of each Multi-group CFA are available on request

Figure 3.1: Subjective well-being mean and low satisfaction percentage

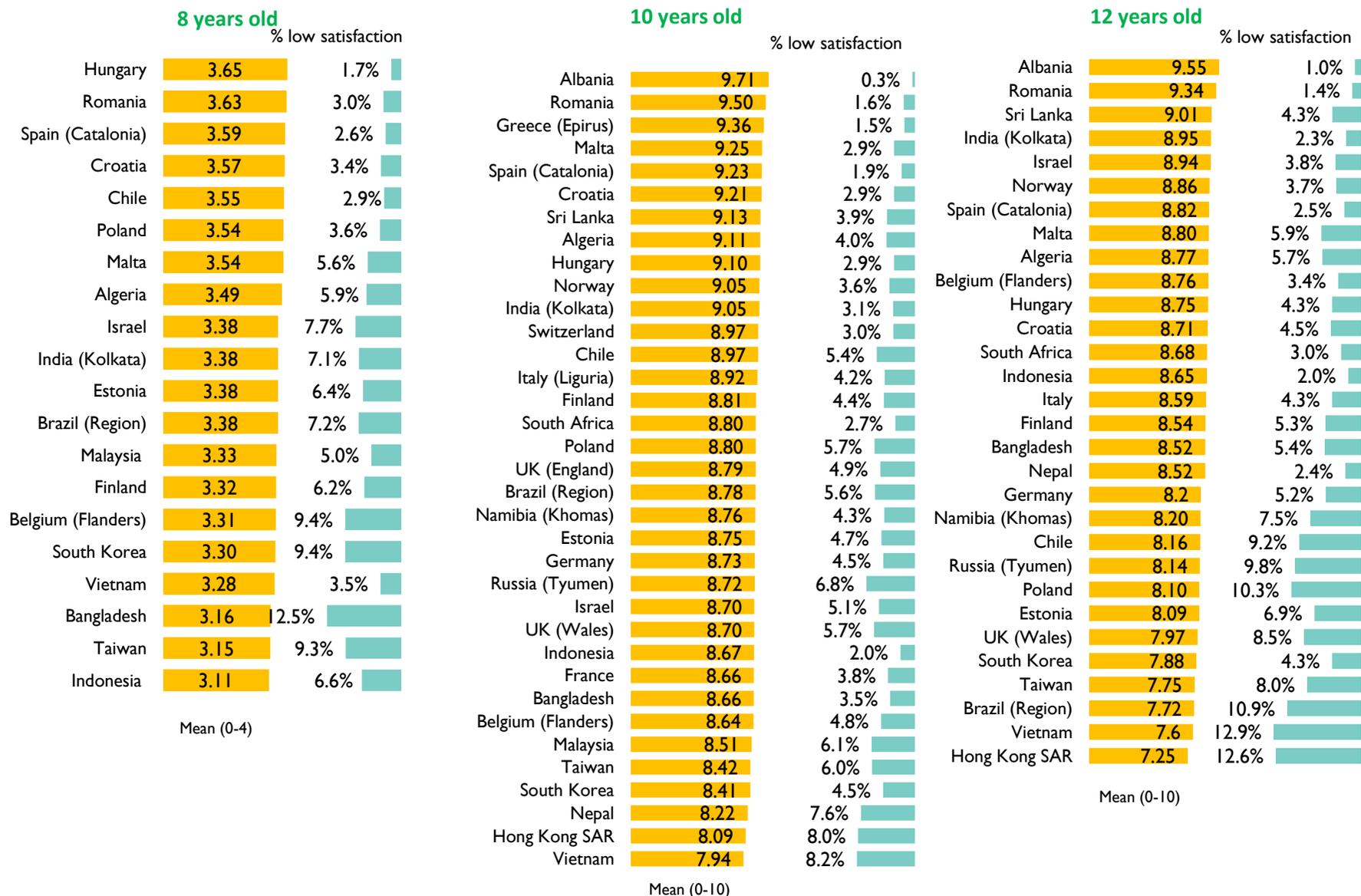


Table 3.2: Subjective well-being by gender and age

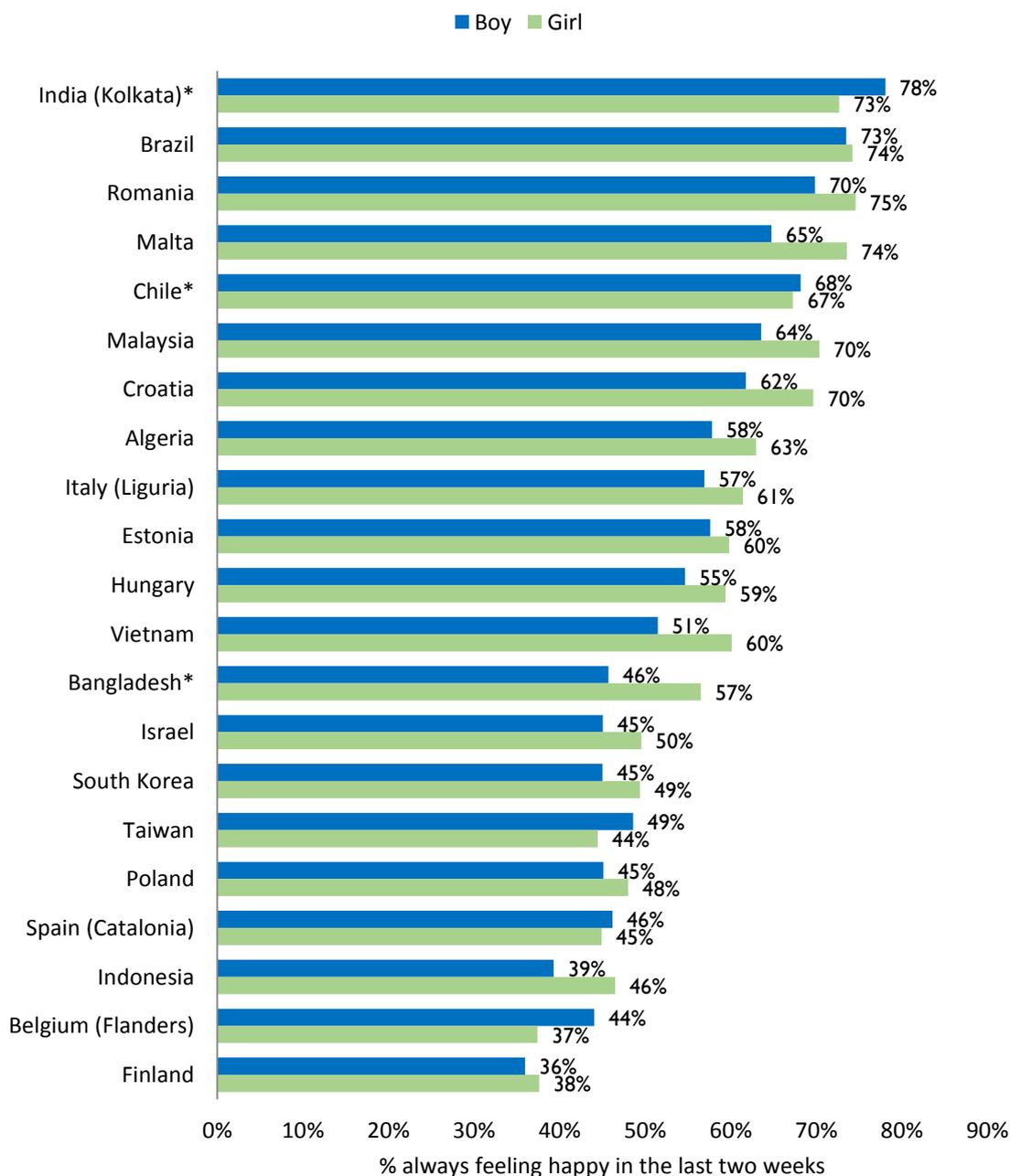
Country	Girls	Boys		10yo	12yo	
Albania	9.76	9.67		9.71	9.55	10>>12
Algeria	9.35	8.85	G>>B	9.11	8.77	10>>12
Bangladesh	8.77	8.53		8.66	8.52	
Belgium (Flanders)	8.48	8.80	B>>G	8.64	8.76	
Brazil	8.67	8.92		8.78	7.72	10>>12
Chile	8.86	9.12	B>G	8.97	8.16	10>>12
Croatia	9.27	9.15		9.21	8.71	10>>12
Estonia	8.86	8.63	G>B	8.75	8.09	10>>12
Finland	8.84	8.77		8.81	8.54	10>>12
France	8.59	8.72				
Germany	8.77	8.69		8.73	8.21	10>>12
Greece	9.40	9.30				
Hong Kong SAR	8.14	8.05		8.09	7.25	10>>12
Hungary	8.96	9.24	B>>G	9.10	8.75	10>>12
India	9.11	8.98		9.05	8.95	
Indonesia	8.78	8.56	G>>B	8.67	8.65	
Israel	8.82	8.59		8.70	8.94	
Italy	8.98	8.85		8.92	8.59	10>>12
Malaysia	8.60	8.39				
Malta	9.21	9.27		9.25	8.80	10>12
Namibia	8.74	8.79		8.76	8.20	10>>12
Nepal	8.33	8.11		8.22	8.52	10>12
Norway	8.94	9.16	B>G	9.05	8.86	
Poland	8.90	8.71		8.80	8.10	10>>12
Romania	9.44	9.57		9.50	9.34	10>12
Russia	8.91	8.49	G>>B	8.72	8.14	10>>12
South Africa	8.80	8.81		8.80	8.68	
South Korea	8.31	8.51	B>>G	8.41	7.88	10>>12
Spain	9.26	9.20		9.23	8.82	10>>12
Sri Lanka	9.04	9.23		9.13	9.01	
Switzerland	8.89	9.06				
Taiwan	8.39	8.46		8.42	7.75	10>>12
UK (England)	8.82	8.79				
UK (Wales)	8.81	8.59		8.70	7.97	10>>12
Vietnam	8.03	7.84		7.94	7.63	

Gender differences relate to 10-year-old sample

Positive affect

The 8-year-old survey asked children a single question about frequency of feeling happy, with four response options – never, sometimes, often and always. Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of children who indicated they were 'always happy' by country and gender. Scores ranged widely across countries, from a 36% (boys) in Finland to over 78% (boys) in India.

Figure 3.2: Children 'always' feeling happy by gender



10 years old

For the 10- and 12-year-olds, positive affect was measured with three items (happy, calm, full of energy) on a 0-10 point frequency scale with verbal anchors of 'never' to 'always' (Figure 3.3). The proposed combined measure of positive affect based on these items does not seem to have worked equally well in all countries. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were low in some countries. Multi-group CFA testing indicated that this scale may not be suitable for direct comparisons between all countries, for correlations and regressions, or for means. In this section we therefore present scores for each item individually. We will undertake and publish further work on testing of the scale and its potential uses and limitations in the future.

Table 3.3 shows mean scores out of 10 for each of the three positive affect items in the 10-year-old's survey that included all countries/regions. Some countries, such as Albania and Greece, scored relatively high on all items, while others such as Bangladesh, Hong Kong SAR, and Taiwan scored consistently low. In other countries there is more variation; for example Estonia ranked 3rd for feeling calm, but much lower for the other two items, whereas Indonesia ranks much lower on happiness than on the other two items.

Figure 3.4 provides a summary of the three-item scale. As expected from the individual item scores, Albania and Greece (10-year-old age group only) feature at the top of the ranking, while Bangladesh, Hong Kong SAR, and Taiwan rank at the bottom.

Boys scored significantly higher than girls in the 10-year-olds' survey in Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, Hungary, South Korea, Norway, and Switzerland; while girls scored significantly higher in Albania, Algeria, Estonia, Indonesia and Italy. In the 12-year-olds' survey there were a greater number of significant mean differences. Boys scored significantly higher in Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, South Korea, Namibia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Vietnam, Spain, UK (Wales); girls scored significantly higher in Algeria, Nepal and Norway.

There was a general pattern of declining positive affect between 10 and 12 years of age, and this pattern was statistically significant in most countries.

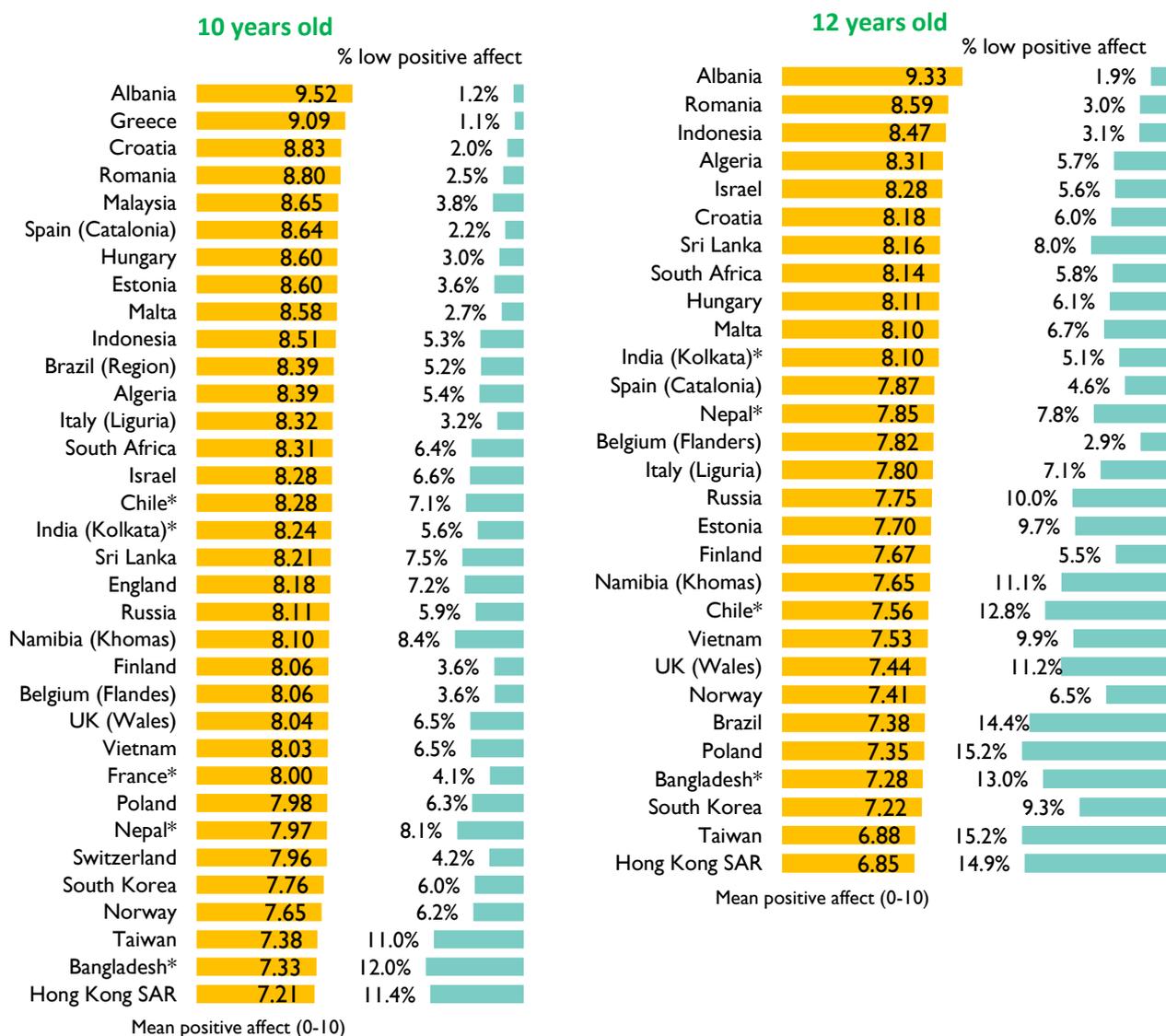
Table 3.3: Positive affect items mean and country ranking

	Happy		Calm		Full of energy	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Albania	9.84	1	9.10	1	9.57	1
Algeria	9.12	8	7.74	12	8.32	21
Bangladesh	8.21	34	7.18	25	6.62	34
Belgium (Flanders)	8.72	19	6.95	29	8.50	16
Brazil	9.01	12	7.44	21	8.74	10
Chile	8.70	21	7.63	14	8.53	15
Croatia	9.32	3	8.10	7	9.04	4
Estonia	8.91	15	8.44	3	8.44	17
Finland	8.56	26	7.38	22	8.27	22
France	8.77	17	6.63	31	8.62	13
Germany	8.51	31	7.20	24	(a)	
Greece	9.38	2	8.52	2	9.33	2
Hong Kong SAR	8.15	35	5.97	35	7.51	31
Hungary	8.89	16	8.21	5	8.72	11
India	9.17	7	7.52	17	8.04	27
Indonesia	8.53	28	8.15	6	8.84	8
Israel	8.55	27	7.49	18	8.79	9
Italy	9.06	10	6.88	30	9.02	5
Malaysia	9.04	11	8.23	4	8.68	12
Malta	9.22	5	7.54	16	8.99	7
Namibia	8.53	29	7.38	23	8.40	18
Nepal	8.61	24	7.90	9	7.37	32
Norway	8.51	30	6.61	32	7.83	29
Poland	8.93	13	7.75	11	7.20	33
Romania	9.25	4	8.04	8	9.11	3
Russia	8.62	23	7.77	10	7.95	28
S Africa	9.07	9	7.47	20	8.33	20
S Korea	8.61	25	6.30	33	8.36	19
Spain	9.20	6	7.71	13	9.00	6
Sri Lanka	8.92	14	7.14	26	8.56	14
Switzerland	8.77	18	7.02	28	8.10	26
Taiwan	8.29	33	6.05	34	7.81	30
UK (England)	8.72	20	7.57	15	8.26	23
UK (Wales)	8.66	22	7.12	27	8.25	24
Vietnam	8.39	32	7.48	19	8.21	25

10 years old

(a) Query for data in Germany

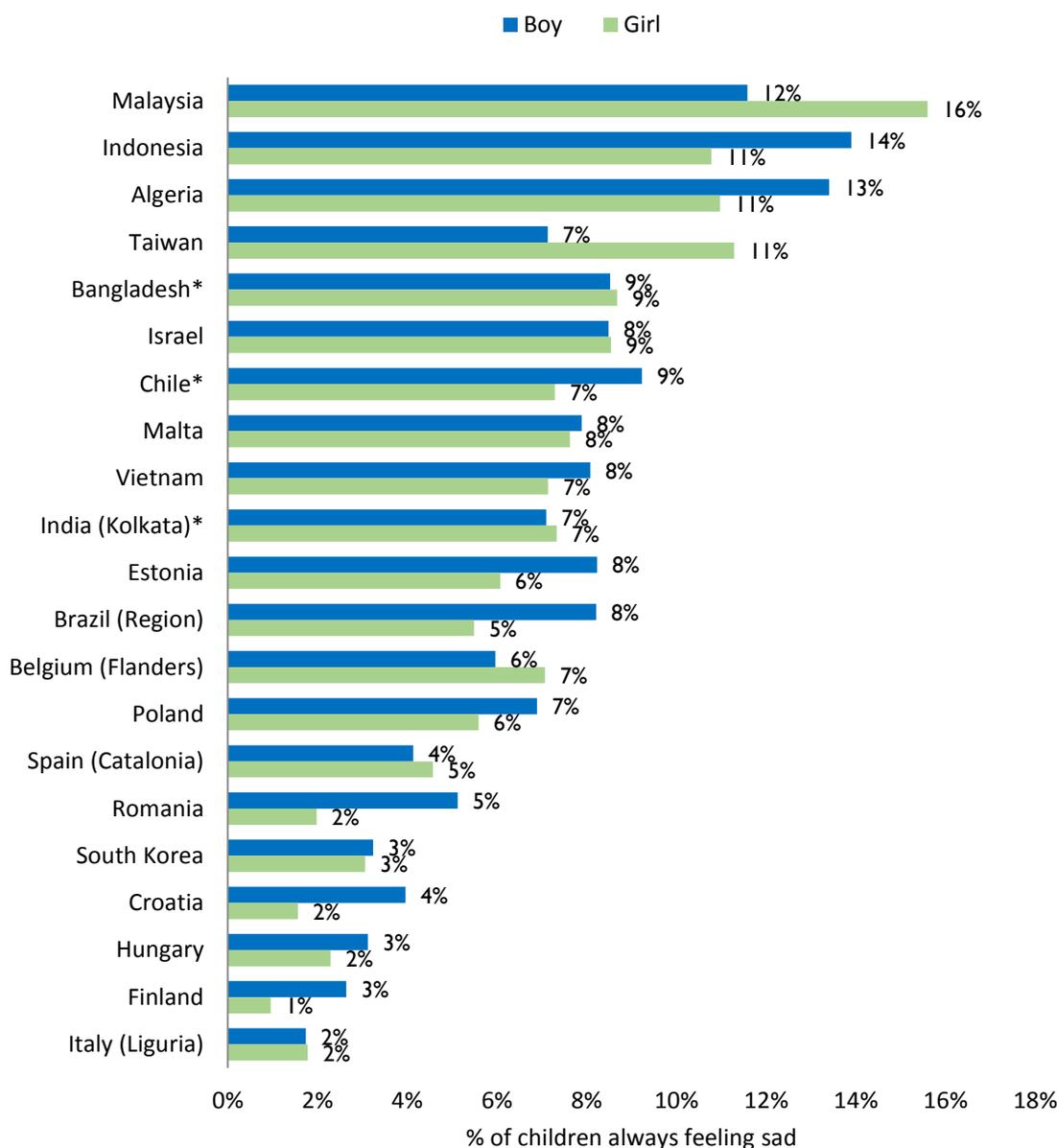
Figure 3.3: Positive affect mean and percentage low affect



Negative affect

For the 8-year-olds' survey we used one item ('sad') as a representation of negative affect. We asked participants to indicate the frequency of feeling 'sad' over the past two weeks on a 4-point response scale (never, sometimes, often, and always). Figure 3.4 shows the percentage of children who said they were 'always' sad. Less than 2% of children responded this way in Italy and Finland, however, in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Algeria over 10% did. There was no clear gender pattern, with boys and girls presenting with higher percentages in 11 countries.

Figure 3.4: Children 'always' feeling sad by gender



10 years old

Negative affect was measured in the 10- and 12-year-olds with three items (sad, stressed, bored), on a 0-10 point frequency scale with anchors 'never' to 'always' anchors. As with positive affect, we are not yet certain of the statistical properties of this three-item scale for international comparative purposes; thus we present the individual items as well as the scale.

Table 3.4 shows mean scores and ranking for the individual items. Note that in negative affect, a high mean score indicates high negative affect, therefore countries are ranked in reverse order. Albania consistently ranks high, with low mean scores for each item. Greece, however, with high positive affect scores, also had more mixed scores for negative affect, ranking 30th with a relatively high score of 4.9 for feeling stressed. There was variation in other countries as well, such as Romania and Wales – both had higher levels of boredom than sadness or stress.

Figure 3.5 shows mean scale scores and proportions of high negative affect. Albania had the lowest mean score of negative affect in both age groups (1.9 and 2.0). Malaysia had the highest score for the 10-year-olds' (5.5), while Brazil had the highest mean for the 12-year-olds' (5.1). More than one in ten children had a high level of negative affect (score >5) in all countries. In many countries in the 10-year-olds' survey and more than one third in the 12-year-olds' survey, more than half had high levels of negative affect.

Across gender, there were significant mean differences in nine countries in the 10-year-olds' sample. Girls scored significantly higher in Belgium (Flanders), Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, South Korea, Norway and Switzerland; while boys scored significantly higher in Indonesia. In 15 countries there were significant mean differences in the 12-year-olds. Of these, in 14 countries/regions, girls scored significantly higher than boys did, namely: Bangladesh, Belgium (Flanders), Chile, Croatia, Finland Hong Kong SAR, Hungary, Israel, Italy, South Korea, Poland, Romania, Spain and UK (Wales). Boys only scored significantly higher in Norway.

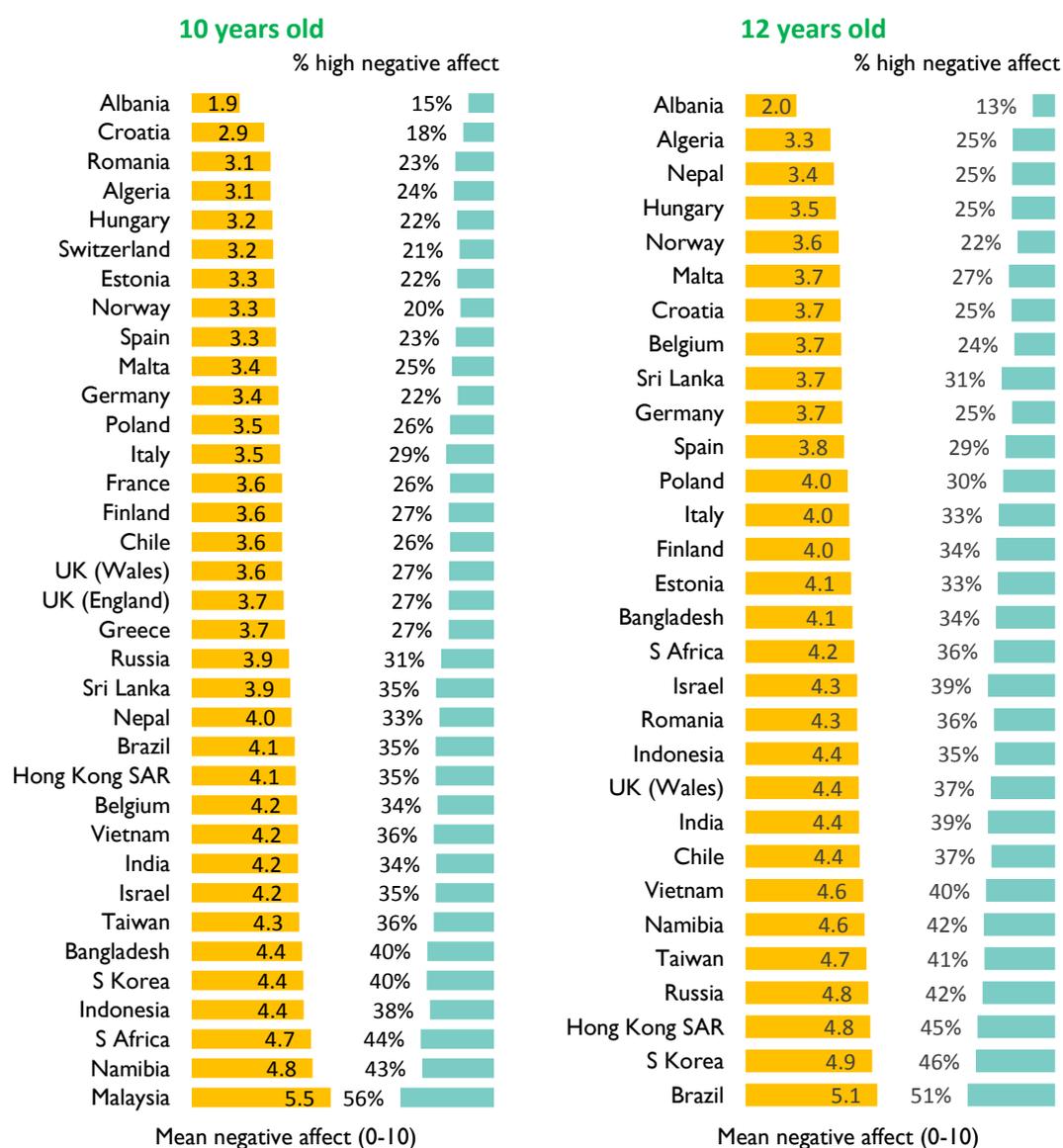
Across age in the countries that included both the 10- and 12-year-olds, while a decrease in mean scores for negative affect was observed in eight countries, a general increase was observed in 22.

Table 3.4: Negative affect item means and country rankings

	Sad		Bored		Stressed	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Albania	1.74	1	1.69	1	2.24	1
Algeria	2.28	2	3.57	10	3.40	7
Bangladesh	4.42	33	4.46	27	4.27	21
Belgium (Flanders)	3.35	22	3.99	21	5.17	34
Brazil	3.24	21	4.53	28	4.44	23
Chile	2.87	12	4.43	26	3.44	8
Croatia	2.46	4	3.43	5	2.71	2
Estonia	2.70	8	3.20	2	3.92	17
Finland	3.39	23	4.14	22	3.24	5
France	2.96	16	3.64	11	4.13	19
Germany	2.97	17	3.49	7	3.80	14
Greece	2.93	14	3.29	4	4.90	30
Hong Kong SAR	3.69	26	3.79	15	4.91	31
Hungary	2.84	11	3.86	18	2.87	3
India	2.94	15	5.00	32	4.72	26
Indonesia	4.84	34	4.62	29	3.87	16
Israel	3.14	19	4.76	31	4.81	29
Italy	3.00	18	3.77	13	3.75	13
Malaysia	5.39	35	5.69	35	5.50	35
Malta	2.74	9	3.24	3	4.16	20
Namibia	4.25	32	5.22	34	4.93	32
Nepal	3.50	24	3.70	12	4.67	24
Norway	2.68	7	3.79	14	3.45	9
Poland	2.82	10	3.50	8	4.11	18
Romania	2.40	3	3.83	16	3.05	4
Russia	3.86	28	4.39	24	3.35	6
S Africa	4.01	31	5.14	33	5.03	33
S Korea	3.95	30	4.69	30	4.68	25
Spain	2.62	6	3.55	9	3.86	15
Sri Lanka	3.57	25	3.84	17	4.36	22
Switzerland	2.60	5	3.45	6	3.65	11
Taiwan	3.69	27	4.39	25	4.73	27
UK (England)	3.23	20	3.97	20	3.73	12
UK (Wales)	2.89	13	4.32	23	3.50	10
Vietnam	3.94	29	3.92	19	4.77	28

10 years old

Figure 3.5. Negative affect mean and percentage high negative affect



Psychological well-being

The Cronbach's alpha for the CW-PWBS was 0.84 for the overall 12-year-old age group, with all countries/regions presenting with acceptable coefficients. The results of the CFA on the scale, however, revealed some doubt about the use of the scale for cross-country comparisons. As with affect, we therefore present the individual items as well as the overall scale score.

Table 3.6 shows the pattern of mean scores for individual items. Albania scored particularly high across all items, while Wales scored lowest. Some countries scored higher or lower on one particular item; for example, Brazil and Chile scored notably lower for managing responsibilities than other items. Low scores for people being friendly in Namibia, and for learning a lot in Hungary and Poland also stand out; this suggests that more may be learned from a detailed analysis and contextual understanding of these different patterns.

Table 3.6: Psychological well-being mean score by item

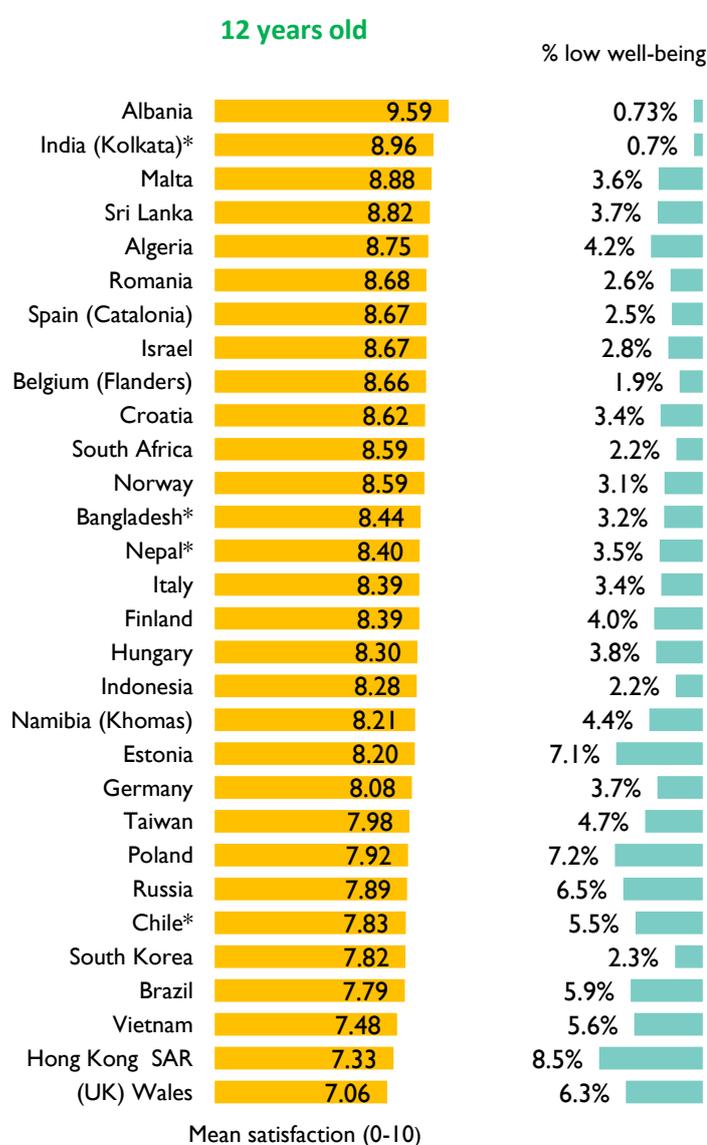
	Like way I am	Manage my responsibilities	People are friendly	Choice time	Learning a lot	Positive re: future
Albania	9.62	9.55	9.63	9.53	9.56	9.58
Algeria	9.05	8.83	8.43	8.28	8.98	8.77
Bangladesh	8.57	8.32	7.93	7.95	8.80	9.01
Belgium (Flanders)	8.85	8.63	8.84	8.92	7.95	8.77
Brazil	8.00	7.20	7.97	7.67	7.92	7.91
Chile	8.20	7.08	8.07	7.96	7.70	7.99
Croatia	9.05	8.33	8.74	8.57	8.33	8.69
Estonia	8.36	8.15	8.20	8.30	7.84	8.36
Finland	8.14	8.57	8.54	8.67	7.91	8.53
Germany	8.03	7.65	8.43	8.23	7.75	8.21
Hong Kong SAR	7.45	6.98	7.65	7.27	7.39	7.25
Hungary	8.05	8.59	8.76	8.75	7.13	8.42
India	9.30	8.77	8.92	8.49	9.03	9.24
Indonesia	8.67	7.84	8.43	7.88	8.46	8.36
Israel	9.05	8.62	8.81	8.82	7.96	8.97
Italy	8.64	8.15	8.53	8.21	8.39	8.43
Malta	9.10	8.78	8.72	8.72	8.93	8.98
Namibia	8.86	8.05	7.06	7.80	8.79	8.73
Nepal	8.65	8.63	8.21	8.09	8.43	8.33
Norway	8.85	8.38	8.86	8.78	7.97	8.71
Poland	8.15	8.19	8.14	8.25	6.81	7.95
Romania	9.13	8.46	8.84	8.82	7.65	9.05
Russia	7.83	7.90	7.83	7.95	7.80	8.02
S Africa	8.97	8.47	7.98	8.29	8.81	8.92
S Korea	7.74	7.34	7.98	7.84	8.05	7.96
Spain	9.04	8.28	8.77	8.51	8.59	8.77
Sri Lanka	8.99	8.70	8.60	8.61	8.98	8.96
Taiwan	8.53	7.56	8.22	7.79	7.94	7.80
UK (Wales)	6.90	6.94	7.06	7.37	6.89	7.14
Vietnam	7.78	6.81	7.71	7.24	7.95	7.43

10 years old

There was a relatively wide range in mean scores on the overall scale, from a low of 7.06 in UK (Wales) to a high of 9.59 in Albania (Figure 3.6). Other countries that ranked high in mean scores were India (8.96), Malta (8.88), Sri Lanka (8.82), and Algeria (8.75). These countries/regions also tended to have lower percentages of low psychological well-being. Albania, which had the highest mean score, also presented with the second lowest percentage of low psychological well-being (0.73%); while Hong Kong SAR, which presented with the second lowest mean score (7.33), also had the highest percentage of low psychological well-being (8.5%). There does not appear to be an obvious geographical pattern, with diverse countries featuring in the top half of the rankings.

Across gender, there were significant mean differences in eight countries. Boys scored significantly higher than girls did in Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, Finland, Hungary, South Korea, Poland, and Russia; while girls scored significantly higher in Algeria.

Figure 3.6: Psychological well-being mean and percentage low well-being



Chapter 4

Family life

Overview

Family is one of the key factors associated with subjective well-being (Joronen and Åstedt-Kurki 2005). The positive family experience influences children's subjective well-being, and is identified as a stronger predictor of life satisfaction than peer experience (Gilman and Huebner 2003; Dew and Huebner 1994). A good relationship with a close person in the family is an important factor for children's subjective well-being. A harmonious family atmosphere is also conducive to children's positive development and well-being.

The family in its diverse forms, provides an intimate environment where children can feel cared for and protected. It is also a place where children have opportunities to develop agency and autonomy in age-appropriate ways as they mature. For this reason, Children's Worlds asks questions not only about care, support, and safety, but also about children's feelings of being listened to by their parents and being given opportunities to be involved in making decisions about their own lives.

Questions asked

In the survey children were asked about satisfaction with the people they live with, and how much they agree with some statements about their family life. The questions asked are shown in the box below.

Box 4: Questions about the people you live with

Satisfaction question

How satisfied are you with the people you live with?

10- and 12-year-olds responded on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not at all satisfied' and 10 labelled 'Totally satisfied'. 8-year-olds responded on a 5-point scale with emoticons.

Agreement questions

How much do you agree with each of these sentences?

- There are people in my family who care about me
- If I have a problem, people in my family will help me
- We have a good time together in my family
- I feel safe at home
- My parent/s listen to me and take what I say into account
- My parent/s and I make decisions about my life together (only 10- and 12-year-olds asked)

Response options were on a unipolar 5-point agreement scale from 'Not agree' to 'Totally agree'.

Overall satisfaction

We use the question about satisfaction 'with the people you live with' as the key measure for this domain. Figure 4.1 summarizes children's responses to this question by country and age group. Overall satisfaction levels of children were mostly high. In the 10-year-old age group, mean satisfaction levels ranged from 7.9 in Vietnam to 9.8 in Albania. The proportion of children who were dissatisfied with the people they live with (a score of less than five on the 11-point scale) ranged from approximately 1% in Croatia, Hungary, and Estonia, to 18% in Vietnam.

Though overall satisfaction levels were high, there was an apparent geographical pattern. Most of the countries towards the top of the chart are in Eastern Europe, namely: Albania, Croatia, Romania, and Hungary. Further, four Asian countries/regions, Vietnam, Indonesia, Hong Kong SAR, and Nepal as well as Namibia were at the bottom of the table.

The geographical patterns in the other two age groups are mostly similar. Notable exceptions were Finland and Israel, with relatively low satisfaction ratings for the 8-year-old, and higher rankings for the older two age groups.

Table 4.1. presents gender and age differences for this indicator. Girls had higher mean satisfaction in ten countries: Algeria, Bangladesh, Croatia, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Poland and Spain.

In 12 of the 30 countries that included the 10- and 12-year-olds, satisfaction with family decreased significantly between the ages of 10 and 12 years. The only exception was Indonesia, where it was significantly higher at 12 years old.

Figure 4.1: Satisfaction with 'people you live with' mean and percentage low satisfaction

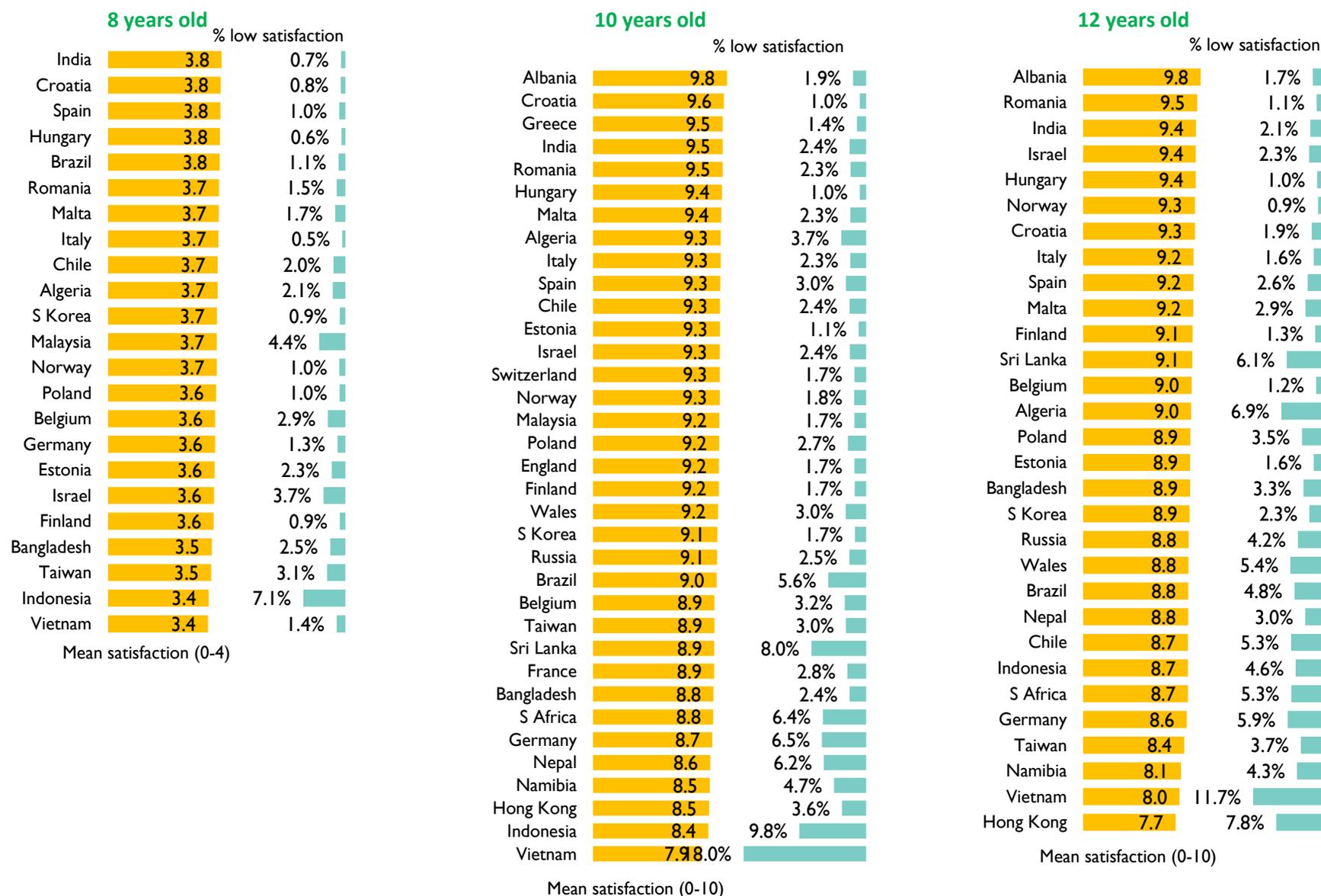


Table 4.1: Satisfaction with 'people you live with' by gender and age

	Girls	Boys		10yo	12yo	
Albania	9.84	9.77		9.80	9.79	
Algeria	9.46	9.23	G>B	9.35	9.01	10>>12
Bangladesh	8.99	8.60	G>B	8.80	8.91	
Belgium (Flanders)	8.91	8.88		8.89	9.03	
Brazil	9.12	8.92		9.04	8.76	10>>12
Chile	9.35	9.25		9.29	8.73	10>>12
Croatia	9.65	9.51	G>B	9.58	9.31	10>>12
Estonia	9.36	9.21		9.29	8.92	10>>12
Finland	9.30	9.09		9.20	9.11	
France	8.95	8.77	G>B			
Germany	8.82	8.59		8.72	8.63	
Greece	9.62	9.35	G>>B			
Hong Kong SAR	8.45	8.51		8.48	7.70	10>>12
Hungary	9.39	9.46		9.43	9.39	
India	9.60	9.38	G>B	9.49	9.41	
Indonesia	8.63	8.25	G>>B	8.44	8.73	12>>10
Israel	9.36	9.17	G>B	9.27	9.39	
Italy	9.43	9.26		9.34	9.21	
Malaysia	9.27	9.19				
Malta	9.46	9.30		9.38	9.19	
Namibia	8.67	8.40		8.55	8.14	10>>12
Nepal	8.67	8.51		8.59	8.75	
Norway	9.32	9.21		9.27	9.31	
Poland	9.38	9.06	G>>B	9.22	8.93	10>>12
Romania	9.41	9.58		9.48	9.50	
Russia	9.23	8.91		9.08	8.80	10>>12
S Africa	8.84	8.73		8.79	8.73	
S Korea	9.10	9.09		9.09	8.88	10>>12
Spain	9.44	9.19	G>>B	9.32	9.20	
Sri Lanka	8.96	8.85		8.87	9.09	
Switzerland	9.31	9.22				
Taiwan	8.82	8.94		8.89	8.42	10>>12
UK (England)	9.26	9.19				
UK (Wales)	9.21	9.10		9.15	8.77	10>>12
Vietnam	8.03	7.83		7.93	8.03	

Perceptions of family life

We used six agreement questions to measure children's perception of family life. These questions were optional, and some were asked in one age group within all countries/regions, except Bangladesh.

Table 4.2 shows the percentage of 10-year-olds who totally agreed with the six questions in the survey.

- The highest levels of agreement were for safety at home (76%) and feeling cared about (75%). The lowest levels of agreement were for parents listening (56%) and making joint decisions about their lives (55%).
- Across countries, Sri Lanka and Estonia had the highest level of agreement, and they ranked in the top ten for all six questions.
- Ten countries/regions ranked in the bottom half for all ten questions, namely: Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, France, Germany, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Italy, Russia, South Africa and Vietnam.
- Very few children indicated they did not agree at all with the statements. For example, there was no country in which more than one in 20 children did not agree that they felt safe at home. In ten countries: Algeria, Brazil, Germany, Malaysia, Namibia, Nepal, Russia, South Africa, and Vietnam, the proportion was above one in 50 children.
- The highest levels of not agreeing at all were for the statement about children being involved in decisions about their lives. Among the 10-year-olds, this proportion was above one in 20 children in most countries, and above one in 10 in Brazil (Figure 4.2).

There were relatively few significant gender differences in the 10-year-old age group for the family life questions. There was, however, a pattern of girls being more likely than boys to feel they made decisions together with parents about life. In six countries/regions boys reported making more decisions together with parents: Hong Kong SAR, Malta, Sri Lanka, Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, and Russia; while girls reported making more decisions together with parents in all other countries (Figure 4.3).

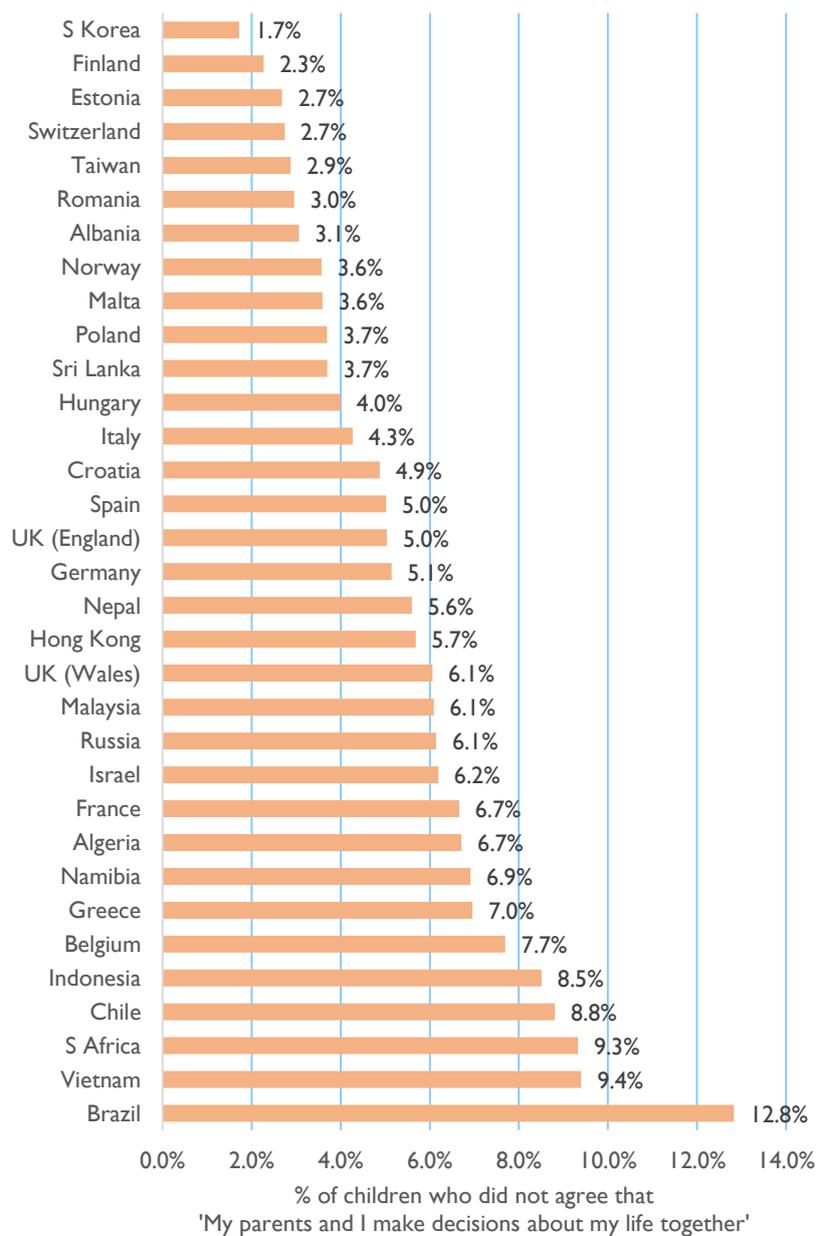
A fairly consistent of increasing agreement across age groups for all questions about family life was observed. Figure 4.4 provides an illustration of age group patterns for the question about safety at home. The increasing pattern was most obvious between ages 8 and 10, with the average percent totally agreeing percentage increasing from 54% for the 8-year-olds to 68% for the 10-year-olds.

Table 4.2: Children totally agreeing with questions about family – percentages and country ranking

	Family care	Help with problems	Have a good time	Feel safe	Parents listen	Parents joint decisions
	% rank	% rank	% rank	% rank	% rank	% rank
Albania	83% 6	81% 4	80% 3	85% 4	57% 17	68% 2
Algeria	77% 18	72% 15	75% 6	80% 14	65% 6	65% 5
Belgium (Flanders)	72% 24	69% 20	68% 18	79% 17	50% 25	46% 28
Brazil	67% 28	66% 23	63% 24	67% 30	34% 33	42% 31
Chile	82% 8	76% 13	71% 13	82% 12	62% 8	52% 20
Croatia	82% 9	78% 7	74% 7	83% 7	55% 19	59% 15
Estonia	87% 1	77% 10	81% 1	88% 2	60% 9	66% 4
Finland	77% 17	64% 26	70% 16	83% 9	62% 7	57% 17
France	74% 21	70% 19	69% 17	73% 23	51% 24	51% 21
Germany	71% 25	64% 27	60% 25	76% 21	53% 22	27% 33
Greece		82% 2	73% 9	83% 8		50% 24
Hong Kong SAR	54% 32	51% 32	48% 32	66% 31	37% 31	46% 27
Hungary	83% 5	77% 9	76% 4	87% 3	67% 4	53% 19
India	80% 13		70% 15	76% 20	68% 2	
Indonesia	48% 33	43% 33	50% 31	50% 34	46% 28	38% 32
Israel	78% 16	67% 22	63% 23	80% 15	68% 3	64% 9
Italy	77% 19	70% 17	45% 33	73% 24	42% 30	47% 26
Malaysia	66% 29	61% 28	53% 30	69% 28	37% 32	64% 10
Malta	80% 14	73% 14	73% 10	74% 22	57% 18	62% 13
Namibia	69% 26	58% 29	65% 21	71% 26	51% 23	64% 8
Nepal	67% 27	66% 25	56% 28	70% 27	59% 15	62% 12
Norway	83% 7	77% 11	75% 5	84% 5	67% 5	65% 6
Poland	85% 3	80% 5	73% 8	90% 1	55% 20	65% 7
Romania	79% 15	77% 12	65% 20	79% 16	60% 12	67% 3
Russia	65% 30	55% 30	53% 29	68% 29	50% 26	45% 30
S Africa	61% 31	53% 31		63% 33	48% 27	55% 18
S Korea	73% 22	79% 6	64% 22	72% 25	58% 16	51% 22
Spain	83% 4	82% 3	72% 11	82% 11	60% 11	50% 23
Sri Lanka	86% 2	86% 1	81% 2	83% 10	78% 1	78% 1
Switzerland	81% 11	77% 8	72% 12	83% 6	60% 10	48% 25
Taiwan	73% 23	70% 18	60% 26	78% 19	53% 21	62% 11
UK (England)	81% 12	71% 16	71% 14	82% 13	60% 14	60% 14
UK (Wales)	81% 10	69% 21	66% 19	79% 18	60% 13	58% 16
Vietnam	74% 20	66% 24	59% 27	63% 32	45% 29	46% 29
	75%	70%	66%	76%	56%	55%

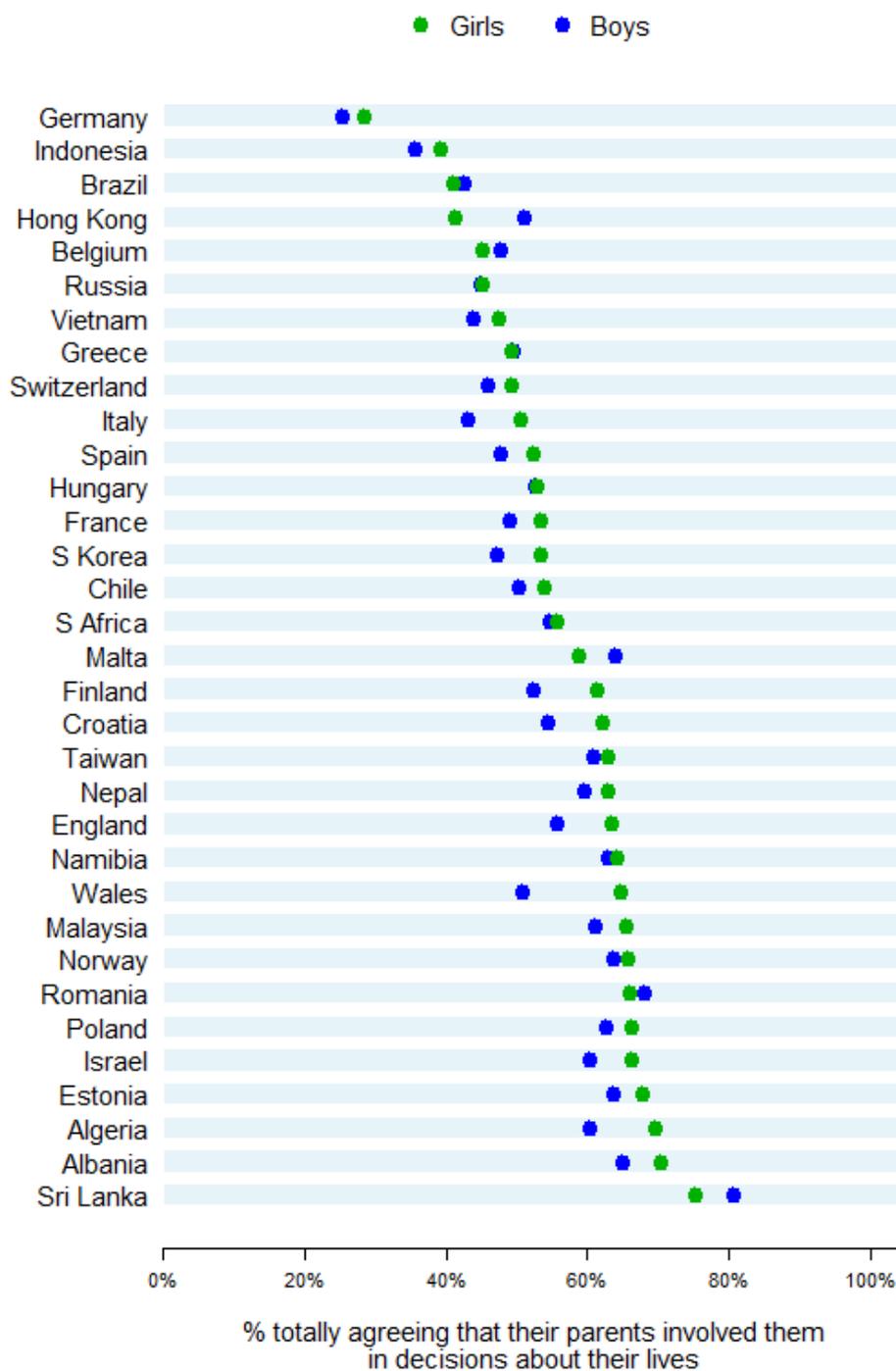
10 years old

Figure 4.2: Children who did not agree 'my parents and I make decisions about my life together'



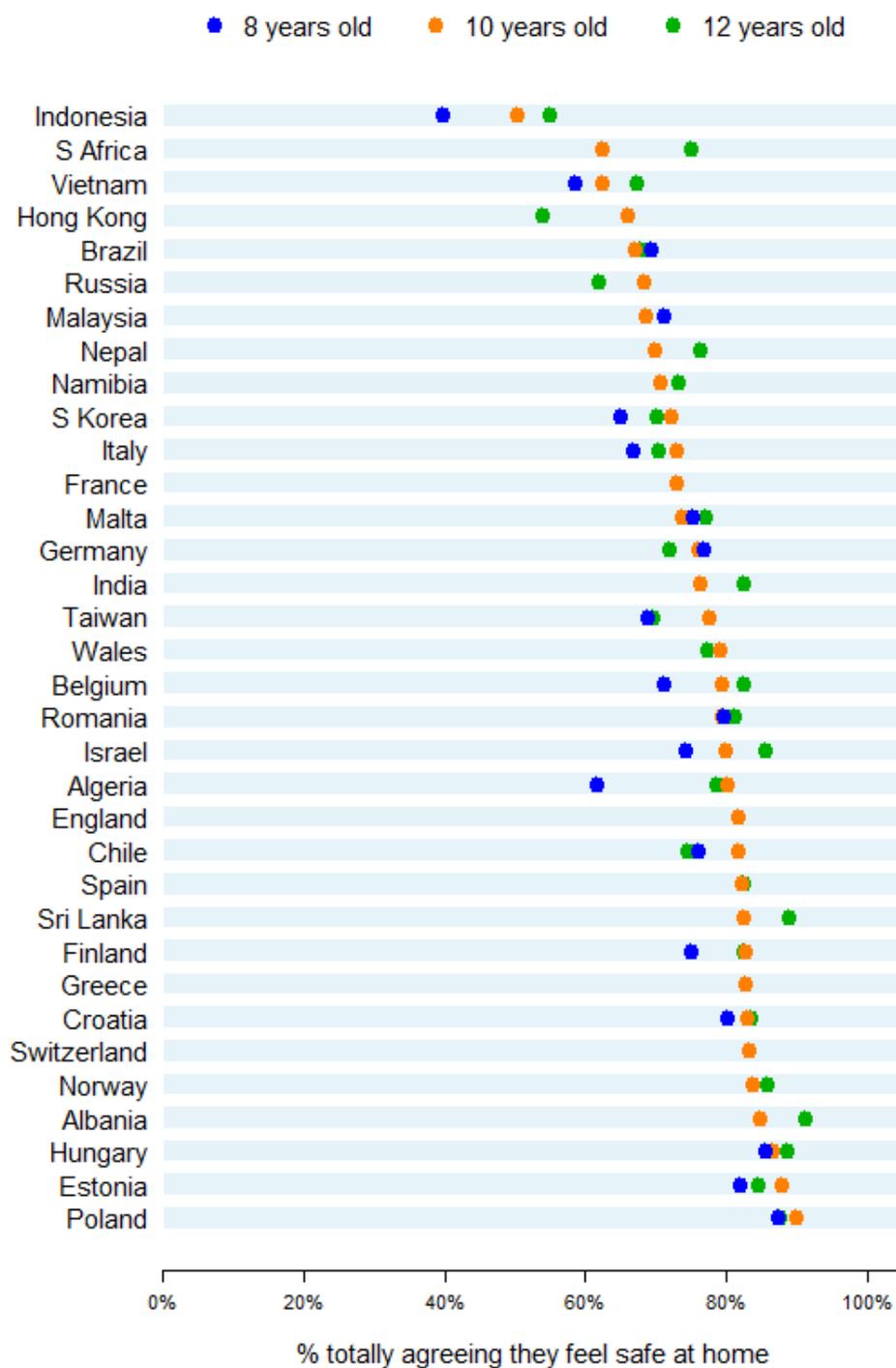
10 years old

Figure 4.3: Children totally agreeing 'my parents and I make decisions about my life together' by gender



10 years old
Question not asked in Bangladesh and India

Figure 4.4: Children totally agreeing they 'feel safe at home' by age



10 years old

Chapter 5

Friends and peers

Overview

School environments in which children spend a significant portion of their time affects their subjective well-being; with children's peer relationships, in particular having a strong effect. Pleasant relationships like talking and playing with peers have been shown to have positive effects on subjective well-being, while unpleasant relationships such as bullying have negative effects on subjective well-being (Huebner et al. 2004; Nickerson and Nagle 2004).

Questions asked

In the survey, children were asked about satisfaction with their friends and how much they agree with some statements about their relationship with friends, as shown in the box below.

Box 5: Questions about your friends

Satisfaction question

How satisfied are you with your friends?

10- and 12-year-olds responded on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not at all satisfied' and 10 labelled 'Totally satisfied'. 8-year-olds responded on a 5-point scale with emoticons.

Agreement questions

How much do you agree with each of these sentences?

- I have enough friends
- My friends are usually nice to me
- Me and my friends get along well together
- If I have a problem, I have a friend who will support me

Response options were on a unipolar 5-point agreement scale from 'not agree' to 'totally agree'.

Overall satisfaction

We used the question about satisfaction 'with your friends' as the key measure for this domain. Figure 5.1 summarizes children's responses to children to this question by country and age group.

These findings show that overall satisfaction levels of children were mostly high. In the 10-year-old age group, mean satisfaction levels ranged from 7.1 in Vietnam to 9.6 in Albania. The proportion of children who were not satisfied at all with their friends (less than five on 10-point scale) ranged from approximately 1% in Albania and Croatia, to approximately 20% in both Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

An apparent geographical pattern, and showed that countries with satisfaction scores of 9.0 and higher satisfaction scores were in all Europe: Albania, Croatia, Switzerland, Malta, Greece, Spain, Romania, France, Norway, and Finland; while five Asian countries (Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Nepal, and Bangladesh) had the lowest scores.

The geographical patterns in the other two age groups were mostly similar. One notable exception is South Korea, which had one of the lowest levels of satisfaction in the 8-year-olds, yet ranked in the middle in the two older age groups.

There were few significant gender variations for this indicator. Girls had higher mean satisfaction in Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, and Estonia, while boys had higher mean satisfaction in Croatia, Malaysia, Norway, and South Korea (Table 5.1).

Overall there was some tendency for lower satisfaction among 12-year-olds than 10-year-olds in 12 of 30 countries. However, Belgium (Flanders) showed the opposite pattern, 12-year-old children were significantly happier with their friends than 10-year-olds.

Figure 5.1: Satisfaction with friends mean and percentage low satisfaction

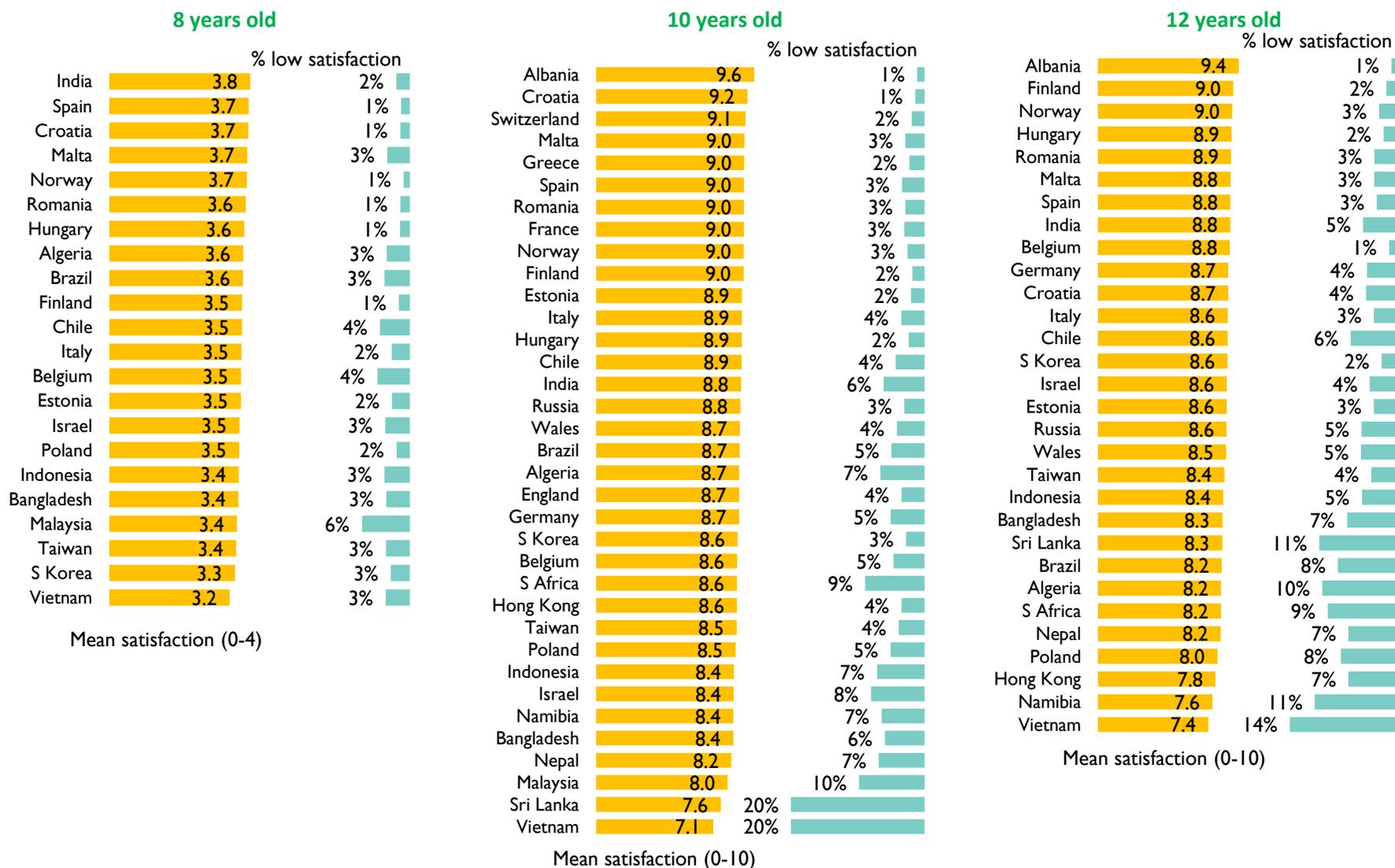


Table 5.1: Satisfaction with friends by gender and age

	Girls	Boys		10yo	12yo	
Albania	9.71	9.54	G>B	9.63	9.39	10>>12
Algeria	8.84	8.56	G>B	8.71	8.21	10>>12
Bangladesh	8.60	8.10	G>B	8.35	8.30	
Belgium (Flanders)	8.52	8.64		8.58	8.79	12>10
Brazil	8.68	8.82		8.74	8.25	10>>12
Chile	8.94	8.78		8.87	8.65	10>12
Croatia	9.14	9.30	B>G	9.21	8.68	10>>12
Estonia	8.98	8.75	G>B	8.87	8.58	10>>12
Finland	9.04	8.91		8.97	9.02	
France	9.06	8.91				
Germany	8.77	8.61		8.70	8.69	
Greece	8.99	9.06				
Hong Kong SAR	8.65	8.48		8.56	7.84	10>>12
Hungary	8.84	8.89		8.87	8.91	
India	8.92	8.73		8.83	8.82	
Indonesia	8.39	8.35		8.38	8.35	
Israel	8.37	8.37		8.37	8.58	
Italy	8.85	8.89		8.87	8.65	10>>12
Malaysia	7.81	8.24	B>>G			
Malta	9.14	8.89		9.02	8.83	
Namibia	8.22	8.53		8.36	7.63	10>>12
Nepal	8.30	8.16		8.23	8.18	
Norway	8.84	9.15	B>>G	8.99	8.95	
Poland	8.60	8.37		8.49	7.96	10>>12
Romania	9.03	8.97		9.00	8.87	
Russia	8.87	8.67		8.78	8.58	
S Africa	8.54	8.61		8.57	8.20	10>>12
S Korea	8.52	8.73	B>>G	8.62	8.64	
Spain	9.00	9.00		9.00	8.83	10>12
Sri Lanka	7.81	7.38		7.59	8.29	
Switzerland	9.05	9.16				
Taiwan	8.56	8.54		8.55	8.43	
UK (England)	8.58	8.88				
UK (Wales)	8.67	8.81		8.75	8.55	
Vietnam	7.36	6.94		7.14	7.37	

Perceptions of peer relationships

Several agreement questions were used to measure children's perception of peer relationships. These questions were optional, and some were asked in at least one age group in all countries, except Bangladesh.

Table 5.2 shows the percentage of 10-year-old children who totally agreed with the four questions in the survey.

- The highest levels of agreement were in response to having enough friends and having a friend supporting them if they had a problem. Twice as many children totally agreed that they have enough friends in Estonia (75%), compared to Indonesia (38%). In Albania, Hungary, and Poland, 77% of children reported that they have friends who will support them when they have a problem, while only 45% of children in Indonesia did.
- The lowest levels of agreement were in response to friends being nice. Albania ranked highest in terms of percentage of children totally agreeing (67%), which was more than double compared to Malaysia (32%).
- There was a similar pattern for friends getting along, as with the friends being nice, ranging from 38% in Malaysia to 77% in Albania.
- Overall, Albania, Sri Lanka, and Spain ranked in the top ten for all questions about perceptions of peer relationships. Seven other countries/regions, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia, Russia, South Africa, and Vietnam, ranked in the bottom half for all four questions.

The strongest gender differences in this set of question was for feeling supported by friends. In almost all countries (21) girls were more likely than boys to totally agree (Figure 5.2), while in Sri Lanka boys felt more supported than girls.

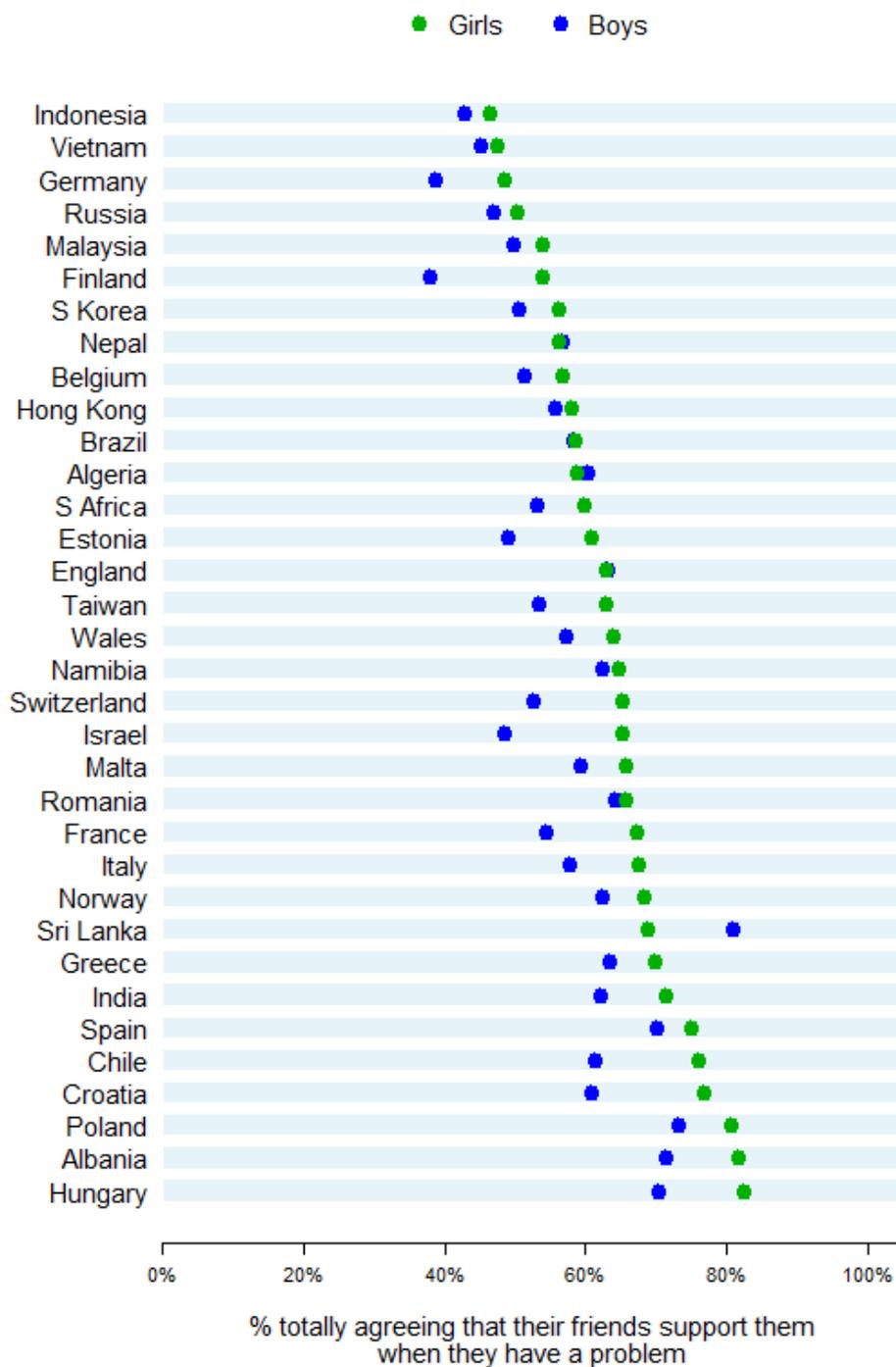
As demonstrated in Figure 5.3, children were more likely to feel that their friends were nice to them at a younger age; this indicates children felt less positive about their friendships as they got older.

Table 5.2: Children totally agreeing with questions about friends – percentage and country ranking

	Enough friends		Friends nice		Friends get along		Friends support	
	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Albania	71%	2	67%	1	77%	1	77%	3
Algeria	64%	14	60%	4	56%	13	60%	18
Belgium (Flanders)	64%	16	47%	26	45%	24	54%	27
Brazil	44%	33	48%	22	56%	14	58%	20
Chile	61%	18	57%	8	67%	2	69%	7
Croatia	70%	3	52%	13	61%	8	69%	6
Estonia	75%	1	54%	10	62%	6	55%	26
Finland	63%	17	45%	28	55%	15	46%	32
France	67%	8					61%	16
Germany	60%	21	52%	12			44%	34
Greece	65%	10	50%	19			67%	9
Hong Kong SAR	56%	26	47%	24	50%	22	57%	22
Hungary	66%	9	51%	16	64%	4	77%	2
India	65%	11	62%	2			67%	8
Indonesia	38%	34	44%	29	43%	25	45%	33
Israel	60%	19	50%	18			57%	23
Italy	53%	31	34%	32	55%	16	63%	14
Malaysia	55%	28	32%	33	38%	27	52%	29
Malta	57%	23	53%	11	60%	9	62%	15
Namibia	64%	15	48%	23	51%	21	64%	12
Nepal	56%	25	51%	14	53%	19	56%	25
Norway	65%	12	60%	5	63%	5	66%	10
Poland	67%	6	45%	27	54%	18	77%	1
Romania	54%	29	51%	15	58%	12	65%	11
Russia	51%	32	43%	30	48%	23	49%	30
S Africa	57%	24	49%	21			57%	24
S Korea	54%	30	47%	25	59%	11	54%	28
Spain	67%	7	58%	7	62%	7	73%	5
Sri Lanka	70%	4	62%	3	66%	3	75%	4
Switzerland	70%	5	58%	6			59%	19
Taiwan	65%	13	56%	9	60%	10	58%	21
UK (England)	60%	20	50%	17	55%	17	63%	13
UK (Wales)	56%	27	50%	20	52%	20	61%	17
Vietnam	59%	22	40%	31	41%	26	46%	31
	61%		51%		56%		61%	

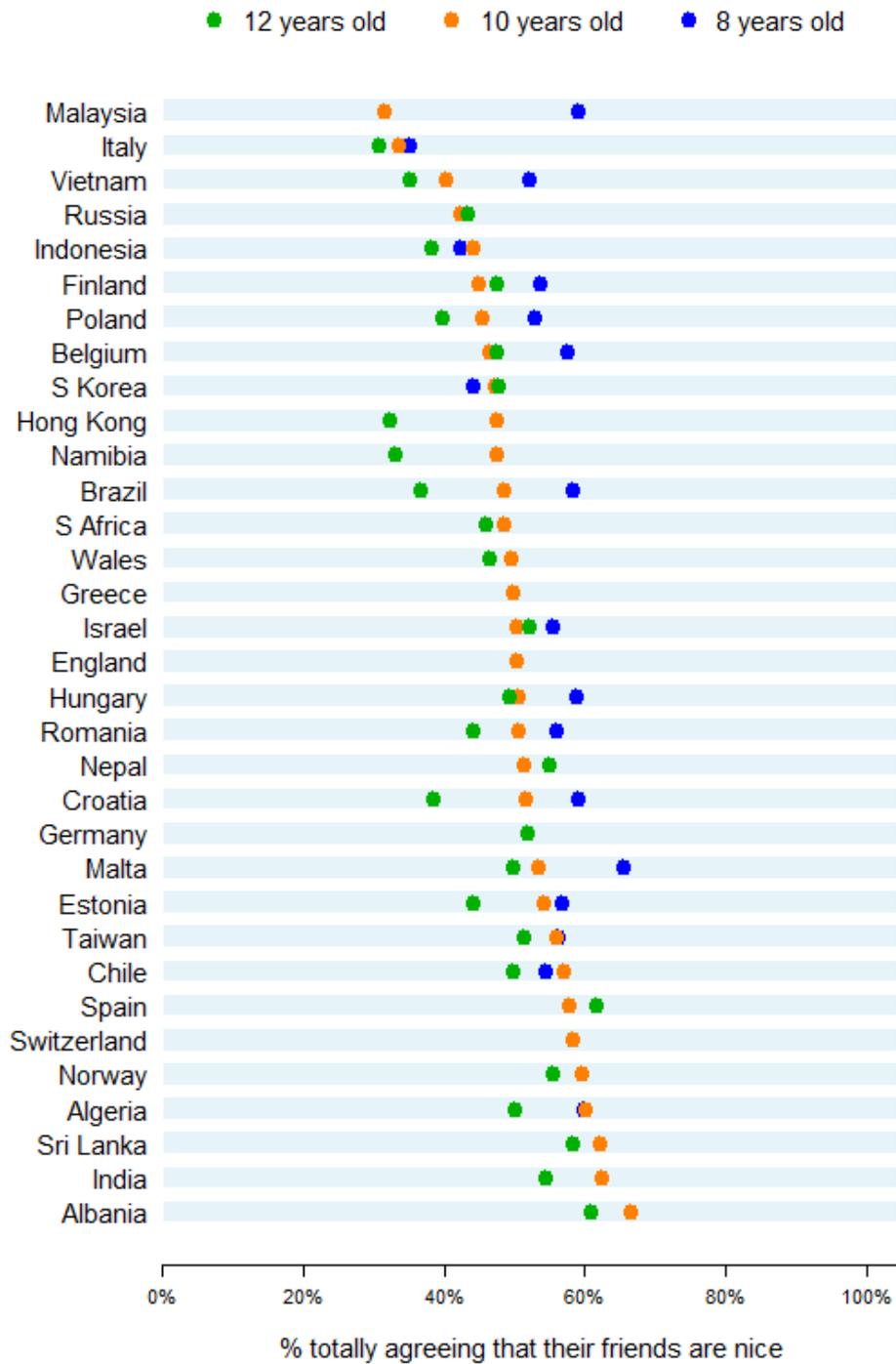
10 years old

Figure 5.2: Children totally agreeing friends would support them by gender



10 years old

Figure 5.3: Children totally agreeing friends are nice by age



10 years old

Chapter 6

School

Overview

Research on children's well-being over the past two decades, has demonstrated the importance of school and school-related variables on children's well-being. In particular, the school experience, satisfaction with school, relationships with teachers and classmates, safety and bullying, achievements and abilities, school marks and things learned at school, have demonstrated various strengths of association with overall life satisfaction and well-being (see reviews by Huebner et al., 2014; see also Casas & Gonzalez, 2017).

Recent trends in research on school-related variables and children's subjective well-being, have included large-scale samples using data made available by multinational studies, such as the Health Behaviour in School Children (HBSC), the Programme for International Students' Assessment (PISA), and the Children's Worlds International Survey on Children's Well-Being. Furthermore, cross-cultural multinational qualitative studies such as the Children's Understanding of Well-Being (CUWB) have provided a rich corpus of in-depth qualitative data (see Fattore, Fegter, and Hunner-Kreisel, 2018). The availability of these data have not only increased our understanding of how school-related variables influence children's subjective well-being, but has also initiated new debates, questions, and theorisations.

One area of research related to school experience that has received an increasing amount of empirical attention is *school climate*. While the concept lacks definitional consensus, it generally refers to "quality and character of school life" (Cohen et al., 2009), "quality of relationships amongst students, teachers and school staff" (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001), or more comprehensively as "social characteristics of a school in terms of relationships among students and staff/teachers, learning and teaching emphasis, values and norms, and shared approaches and practices" (Maxwell et al., 2017, pp. 1-2). In the latest round of the PISA (OECD, 2019), school climate was identified as a significant factor influencing students' academic achievements. Recent literature (e.g. Steinmayr et al., 2018) found school climate to be significantly related to students' subjective well-being. School climate and additional school related variables have also featured in other multinational studies.

The Children's Worlds study has highlighted the importance of school-related variables on children's subjective well-being, and made significant contributions to extant literature. Using data from the second wave of the study, Casas and Gonzalez (2017) proposed the 'two-world hypothesis' wherein school represents two separate domains: one related to experience and activity connected to learning and relationships with teachers; the other related to friends and classmates. They found strong support for this hypothesis in six out of 15 countries, and modest support in another three. Their

results suggest that in some countries, the use of a single-item for 'satisfaction with school' may not be sufficient. They propose 'satisfaction with your life as a student' as a potential alternative to capture both 'worlds', however, they caution that it may not be comparable across different socio-cultural contexts.

The third wave of the survey asked children across the various age groups 12 school-related questions (Box 6). These included three satisfaction, six agreement and three frequency questions, all relating to school climate, overall satisfaction with life as a student, learning-related student satisfaction, and classmate-related student satisfaction

Questions asked

Box 6: Questions about school-related variables

Satisfaction questions

How satisfied are you with each of the following things in your life?

- Your life as a student
- Things you have learned at school
- Other children in your class

10- and 12-year-olds responded on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not at all satisfied' and 10 labelled 'Totally satisfied'. 8-year-olds responded on a 5-point scale with emoticons.

Agreement questions

How much do you agree with each of these sentences?

- My teachers care about me
- If I have a problem at school my teachers will help me
- If I have a problem at school other children will help me
- There are a lot of arguments between children in my class
- My teachers listen to me and take note of what I say
- At school I have opportunities to make decisions about things that are important to me
- I feel safe at school

Response options were on a unipolar 5-point agreement scale from 'not agree' to 'totally agree'.

Satisfaction with life as a student

We use 'satisfaction with your life as a student' as the core indicator of this domain. Figure 6.1 presents the mean scores and percentage of children with low satisfaction (score under five out of 10) across age groups.

The 8-year-old sample mean scores ranged from 3.09 in Israel to 3.61 in Malaysia. India had the highest mean of 3.75. Israel (12.01%) and Belgium (Flanders) (8.72%) had the highest percentages of children with low satisfaction, while India (0.80%) and Indonesia (2.04%) had the lowest. 16 countries had significant gender differences.

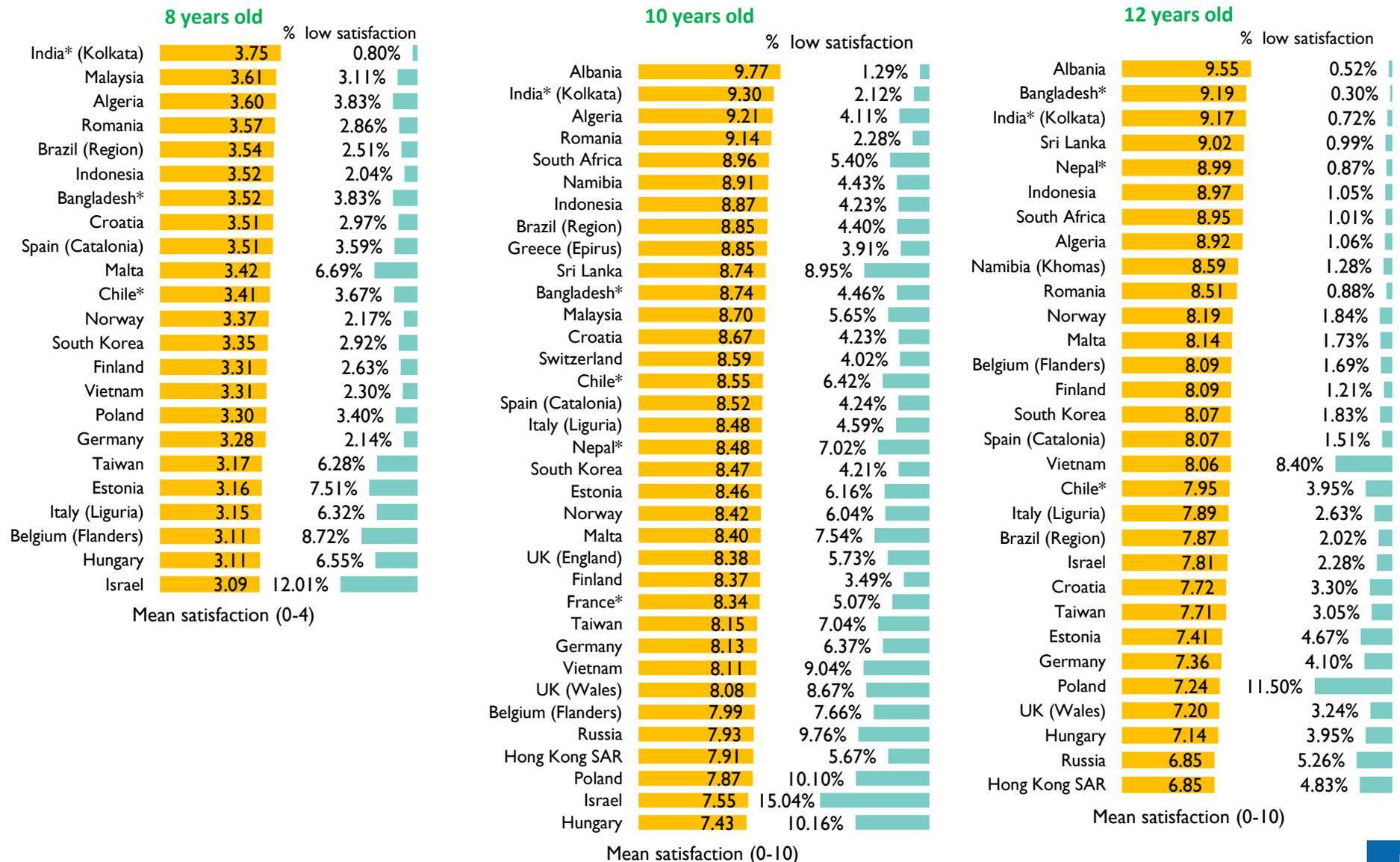
The 10-year-old sample mean scores ranged from 7.43 in Hungary to 9.77 in Albania. India (9.30), Algeria (9.21), and Romania (9.14) also had mean scores of over nine out of 10. In this age group, three African countries ranked in the top six. Six countries/regions (Hungary, Israel, Poland, Hong Kong SAR, Russia, and Belgium [Flanders]) had a mean score below 8. Israel and Hungary had the lowest mean scores (7.55 and 7.43) as well as the highest percentages of low satisfaction (15.04% and 10.16%, respectively). Across gender, girls' mean scores were significantly higher in 22 countries (Table 6.1).

In the 12-year-old sample, Albania (9.55), Bangladesh (9.19), India (9.17), and Sri Lanka (9.02) had mean scores of over 9 out of ten. Hong Kong SAR (6.85) and Russia (6.85) had the lowest mean scores,

while Vietnam had the highest percentage of low satisfaction (8.40%). Significant gender differences were found in 13 countries; in 10 countries mean scores for girls were significantly higher, in three mean scores for boys were significantly higher.

Patterns were apparent in countries/regions rankings across the 10- and 12-year-old age groups. Albania, Algeria, Indonesia, Namibia, Romania, South Africa and Sri Lanka ranked in the top 10 in both age groups – with Albania ranking highest. Hong Kong SAR, Russia, Taiwan, Vietnam and UK (Wales) ranked consistently in the bottom 10.

Figure 6.1. Satisfaction with life as a student mean and percentage low satisfaction



Children in the 12-year-old age group tended to score lower than the 10-year-olds for satisfaction with life as a student (Table 6.1.); this decrease was significant in 18 countries. In seven countries, however (Bangladesh, Belgium [Flanders]), Indonesia, Israel, Malta, Nepal and Sri Lanka), there was an increase in mean scores for the 12-year-olds, which was significant in Bangladesh and Nepal. In the 10-year-old group girls tended to score significantly higher than boys in most countries.

Table 6.1: Satisfaction with life as a student by gender and age

	Girls	Boys		10yo	12yo	
Albania	9.89	9.65	G>>B	9.77	9.55	10>>12
Algeria	9.47	8.95	G>>B	9.21	8.92	10>12
Bangladesh	8.85	8.61		8.74	9.19	12>>10
Belgium (Flanders)	8.07	7.92		7.99	8.09	
Brazil	8.91	8.76		8.85	7.87	10>>12
Chile	8.73	8.38	G>>B	8.55	7.95	10>>12
Croatia	9.03	8.29	G>>B	8.67	7.72	10>>12
Estonia	8.70	8.18	G>>B	8.46	7.41	10>>12
Finland	8.54	8.20	G>>B	8.37	8.09	10>>12
France	8.11	8.55	G>>B			
Germany	7.95	8.29		8.13	7.36	10>>12
Greece	9.20	8.46	G>>B			
Hong Kong SAR	8.10	7.72	G>>B	7.91	6.85	10>>12
Hungary	7.59	7.29		7.43	7.14	
India	9.47	9.12	G>>B	9.30	9.17	
Indonesia	9.00	8.75	G>>B	8.87	8.97	
Israel	8.04	7.08	G>B	7.55	7.81	
Italy	8.70	8.28	G>>B	8.48	7.89	10>>12
Malaysia	8.87	8.48	G>B			
Malta	8.87	7.97	G>>B	8.40	8.14	
Namibia	9.06	8.71	G>B	8.91	8.59	10>12
Nepal	8.55	8.39		8.48	8.99	12>>10
Norway	8.61	8.21	G>>B	8.42	8.19	
Poland	8.29	7.46	G>>B	7.87	7.24	10>>12
Romania	9.20	9.08		9.14	8.51	10>>12
Russia	8.33	7.46	G>>B	7.93	6.85	10>>12
S Africa	9.04	8.86		8.96	8.95	
S Korea	8.51	8.43		8.47	8.07	10>>12
Spain	8.78	8.24	G>>B	8.52	8.07	10>>12
Sri Lanka	8.75	8.76		8.74	9.02	
Switzerland	8.70	8.50				
Taiwan	8.02	8.28		8.15	7.71	10>>12
UK (England)	8.69	8.05	G>>B			
UK (Wales)	8.45	7.71	G>>B	8.08	7.20	10>>12
Vietnam	8.31	7.94		8.11	8.06	

Gender differences apply to 10-year-old sample

Teachers

The nature of children's relationships with their teachers has a significant impact on children's overall experience and satisfaction with school, as well as their overall subjective well-being. In the second wave of the survey, we asked children about their satisfaction with teachers, whether they felt that they were treated fairly and the extent to which they felt listened to by teachers. In the current wave, we asked children whether they agreed that teachers cared about them; whether teachers were available to help them if they were experiencing a problem; and whether teachers listened to them and took note of what they said. For the overall sample, results show a trend of positive experiences with teachers, with high levels of agreement in the three questions across the three age groups. There was evidence of a decrease with age amongst those who chose the 'totally agree' option.

Across the three items, the between-country analysis for the 10-year-olds presented with a clear pattern: Albania, Algeria, Malta, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam consistently had a high percentage of 'totally agree' (Table 6.2), while Malaysia and Russia ranked low across all three items. Other countries had more variation across the different items.

We also include here the question about having opportunities to make decisions at school (Box 6), which is likely to be linked to teachers and is a key aspect of children's rights to participation. Total agreement varied widely, from 19% in Germany to 63% in Sri Lanka.

Classmates

We asked children three questions about their relationships with peers at school: one about their feelings of satisfaction with children in their class, the other two about whether other children would help them if they had a problem, and whether there were often arguments between children in the same class

Figure 6.2 presents an overview of results for the first question. 8-year-old children had high levels of satisfaction with classmates, with mean scores on a 4-point scale ranging from 3.02 in Taiwan to 3.56 in India. Malaysia and Israel had the highest percentage of low satisfaction, with over 10% and 9% respectively. There were no significant gender differences in any of the countries.

Greater variation was observed among the 10- and 12-year-olds, with scores measured on a 11-point scale. 10-year-olds' mean scores ranged from 7.19 in Malaysia to 9.55 in Albania, with varying low satisfaction of more than 19% and less than 1%, respectively, in these countries. In the 12-year-old group, Albania again had the highest mean score (9.17), while Wales had the lowest (6.65) with low satisfaction in over 20% of children. A significant decrease in satisfaction with classmates between the ages of 10 and 12 was observed in 17 countries.

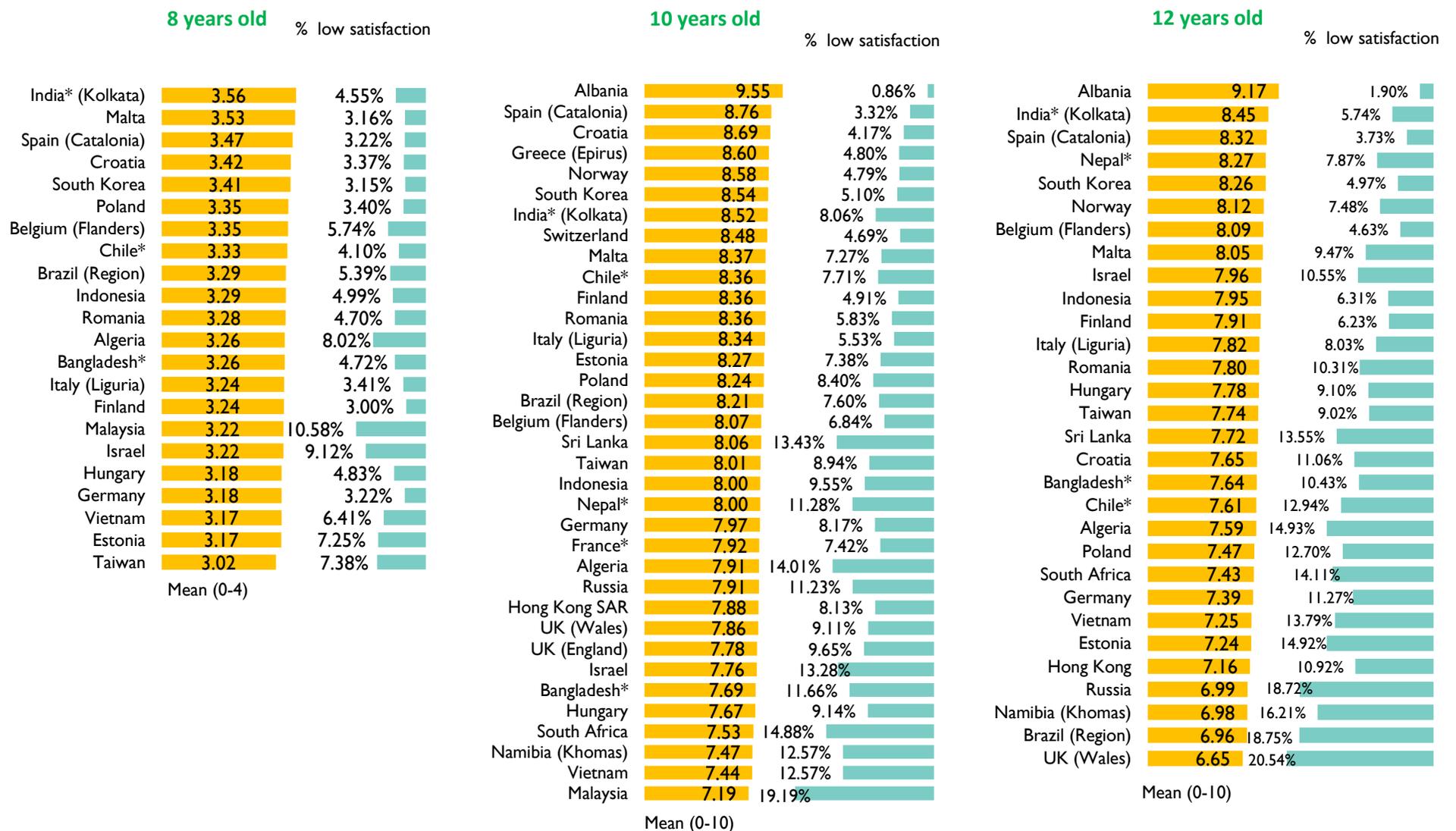
In the 10-year-old sample, girls scored significantly higher than boys in Bangladesh, Finland, Indonesia, and Hong Kong SAR, while boys scored significantly higher in Hungary, South Korea and Norway. In the 12-year-old group, boys scored significantly higher in Brazil, Croatia, Namibia, South Africa, Romania, South Korea, and UK (Wales), while girls scored higher in Albania and Algeria.

Table 6.2: Children totally agreeing with teacher variables – percentage and country ranking

	My teachers care		Teachers will help		Teachers listen and take note		Opportunities to make decisions	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Albania	82%	1	80%	2	67%	2	56%	7
Algeria	77%	3	65%	9	57%	7	46%	18
Belgium (Flanders)	46%	25	58%	19	47%	22	41%	25
Brazil	48%	23	48%	28	35%	32	47%	16
Chile	54%	16	57%	22	55%	11	58%	5
Croatia	46%	26	62%	13	47%	21	49%	14
Estonia	56%	13	67%	6	53%	13	52%	12
Finland	44%	28	60%	16	45%	24	45%	20
France	48%	21	56%	24	49%	16	46%	19
Germany	33%	32			40%	29	19%	33
Greece			59%	18	52%	14	41%	23
Hong Kong SAR	49%	20	55%	25	41%	28	40%	26
Hungary	44%	27	49%	27	48%	19	42%	22
Indonesia	48%	22	48%	29	43%	27	37%	31
Israel	49%	19			44%	26	44%	21
Italy	47%	24	55%	26	38%	30	38%	30
Malaysia	41%	30	47%	30	25%	33	40%	27
Malta	70%	5	70%	4	63%	3	51%	13
Namibia	53%	17	57%	23	45%	25	59%	2
Nepal	58%	11	57%	21	48%	20	48%	15
Norway	62%	8	63%	12	59%	5	41%	24
Poland	56%	14	66%	7	49%	18	53%	11
Romania	70%	4	67%	5	51%	15	56%	8
Russia	34%	31	44%	31	38%	31	33%	32
South Africa	58%	10	60%	15	49%	17	53%	10
South Korea	43%	29	58%	20	46%	23	39%	28
Spain	52%	18	64%	10	58%	6	58%	3
Sri Lanka	80%	2	82%	1	73%	1	63%	1
Switzerland	57%	12	64%	11	60%	4	47%	17
Taiwan	69%	6	71%	3	56%	8	58%	4
UK (England)	61%	9	61%	14	55%	10	56%	9
UK (Wales)	55%	15	60%	17	54%	12	57%	6
Vietnam	65%	7	65%	8	55%	9	39%	29

10 years old

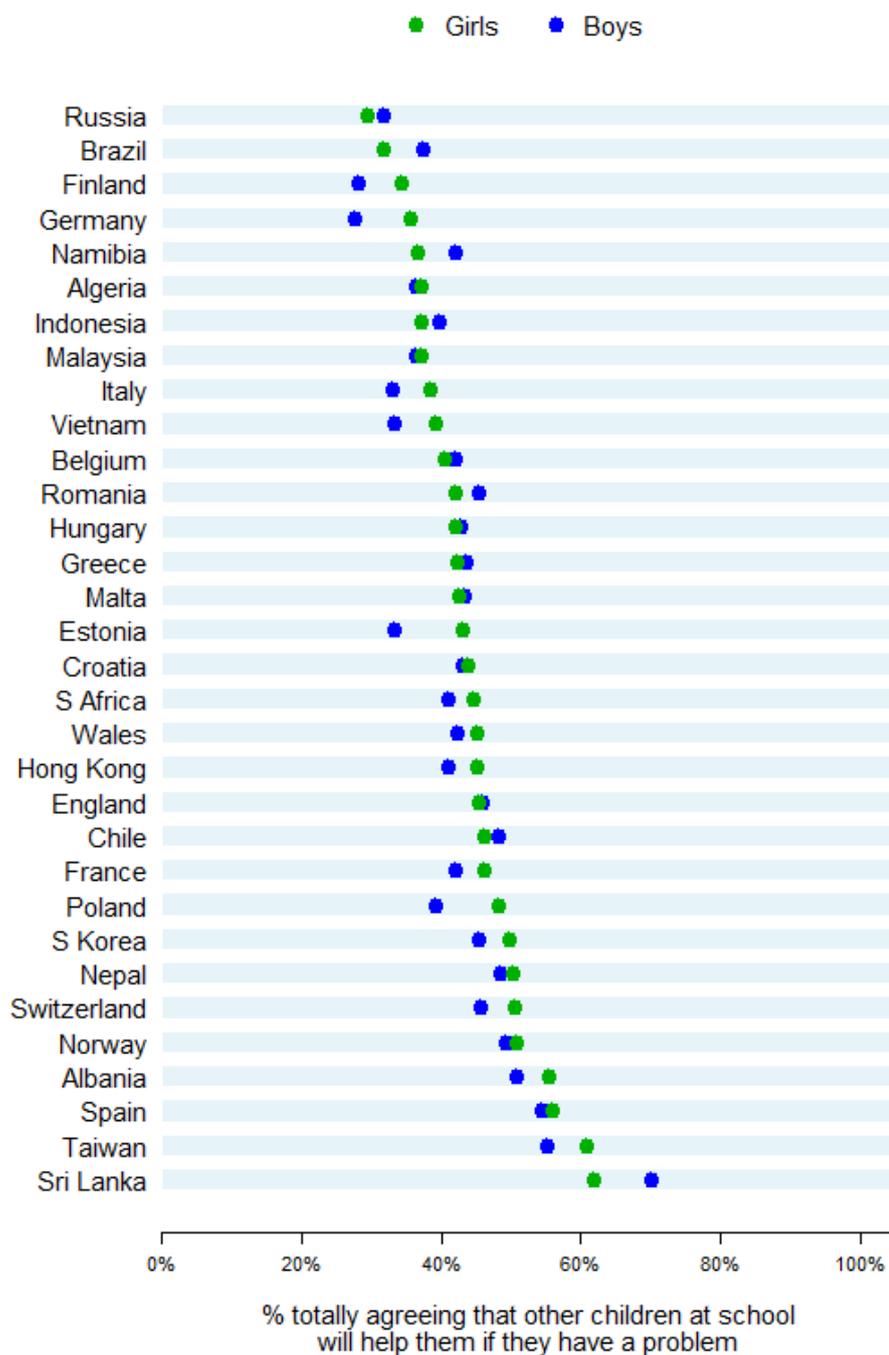
Figure 6.2. Satisfaction with other children in class mean and percentage low satisfaction



Similarly, a high level of agreement for 'other children will help me' was observed in the overall samples and across age groups. There was evidence of a decrease with age in the 'totally agree' option.

Across individual countries in the 10-year-old sample, Algeria, Namibia, Malaysia, South Africa, and Brazil presented with the highest percentages of 'not agree', while Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Spain, Albania, and Norway presented with the highest percentages for 'totally agree'. There was substantial variation in responses to this item; for example Algeria, Namibia, Malaysia, South Africa, and Brazil scored over 20% for the combined options of 'do not agree' and 'agree a little', with 30.01% of the Malaysian sample selecting these options. Other countries had higher levels of agreement, with Spain, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan presenting with more than 80% for the combined options of 'totally agree' and 'agree a lot'. Figure 6.3 depicts the percentage of 'totally agree' by gender across countries. In 21 countries a higher percentage of girls totally agreed that children would help, while in 10 countries a higher percentage of boys totally agreed. Sri Lanka, Poland and Estonia presented with the highest differences between boys and girls.

Figure 6.3. Children totally agreeing 'other children will help me' by gender



10 years old

Satisfaction with things learned at school

This question asked participants to consider their satisfaction with things they learned at school. We designed the question to tap into an aspect of school life directly related to their experience of school as a place of learning and as such, aligned the question to the learning-related domain of school life.

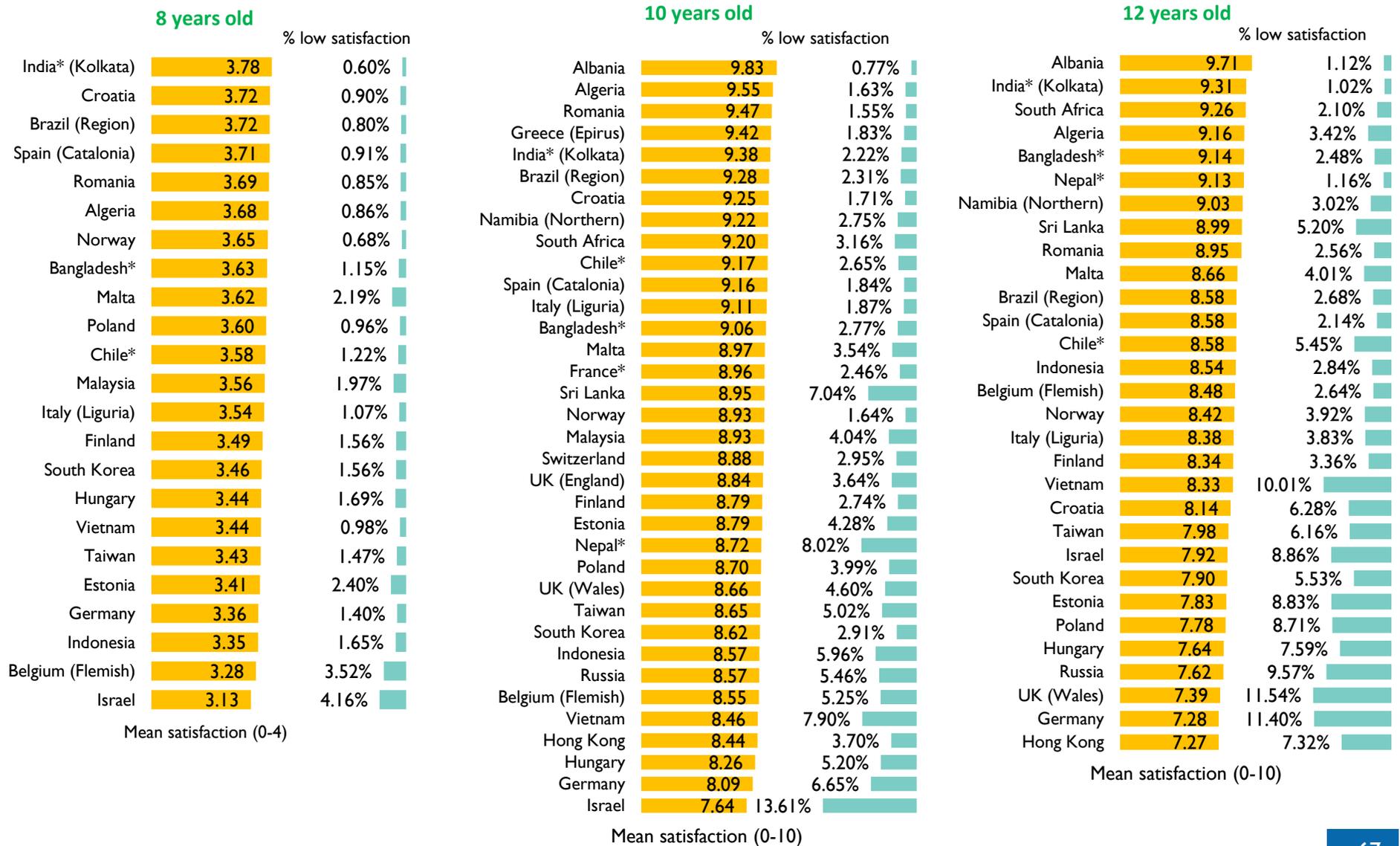
Figure 6.4 summarises mean scores and percentage of low satisfaction by country and across age. In the 8-year-old group most were quite satisfied with this aspect of their lives. Mean satisfaction scores (0-4 scale) ranged from 3.13 in Israel to 3.78 in India. We found significant gender differences in 13 countries, with girls scoring significantly higher than boys in 12 countries, and boys scoring significantly higher in India.

The 10-year-olds' mean scores (0-10 scale) ranged from 7.64 in Israel to 9.83 in Albania. Israel also had the highest percentage of children with low satisfaction. In 18 countries girls scored significantly higher than boys, while boys scored significantly higher in Hong Kong SAR.

The 12-year-olds' mean scores ranged from 7.27 in Hong Kong SAR to 9.71 in Albania. India had the lowest percentage of low satisfaction (1%), and Germany and UK (Wales) had the highest (both over 11%). Girls scored significantly higher than boys in 10 countries, while boys scored significantly higher in five.

There were significant age differences between the 10- and 12-year-old children in 19 countries. In 18 countries, satisfaction with learning was significantly lower among 12-year-olds, while in Nepal they scored significantly higher than 10-year-olds. There does not seem to be an obvious geographical pattern in country ranking, with the exception of the three African countries maintaining position in the top half. However, across the three age groups there was some consistency in country ranking. Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam all ranked in the bottom half across the three age groups, with Germany ranking in the bottom four and Hungary in the bottom six. Israel ranked lowest for both the 8- and 10-year-old samples, and also presented with the highest percentage of low satisfaction in both age groups. Of those with higher ranking, Algeria, Brazil, Norway, Romania, and Spain were positioned in the top half across the three age groups. Across the 10- and 12-year-old samples, Albania ranked highest and also had the lowest percentage of participants with low satisfaction.

Figure 6.4. Satisfaction with things learned at school mean and percentage low satisfaction



Safety

Extensive evidence points to a significant relation between children's perceptions and experiences of safety at school, and their subjective well-being.

Table 6.3 provides a summarised account of the percentage of participants who selected the 'totally agree' option across gender, age, and country. Girls tended to feel slightly safer at school than boys in most countries, with the largest gap in Nepal. We also found differences across age. Most countries presented with a decreasing percentage of 'totally agree' to feeling safe with the increase in age between 8 to 12 years. There were differences of more than 20 percentage points between 8 and 12 years of age in Brazil, Croatia, Malaysia, and Poland, and between 10 to 12 years for UK (Wales). Finally, we found an increase between 8 and 10 years in Algeria, and 10 to 12 years in Nepal (we note a similar result for Nepal in wave 2 of the survey).

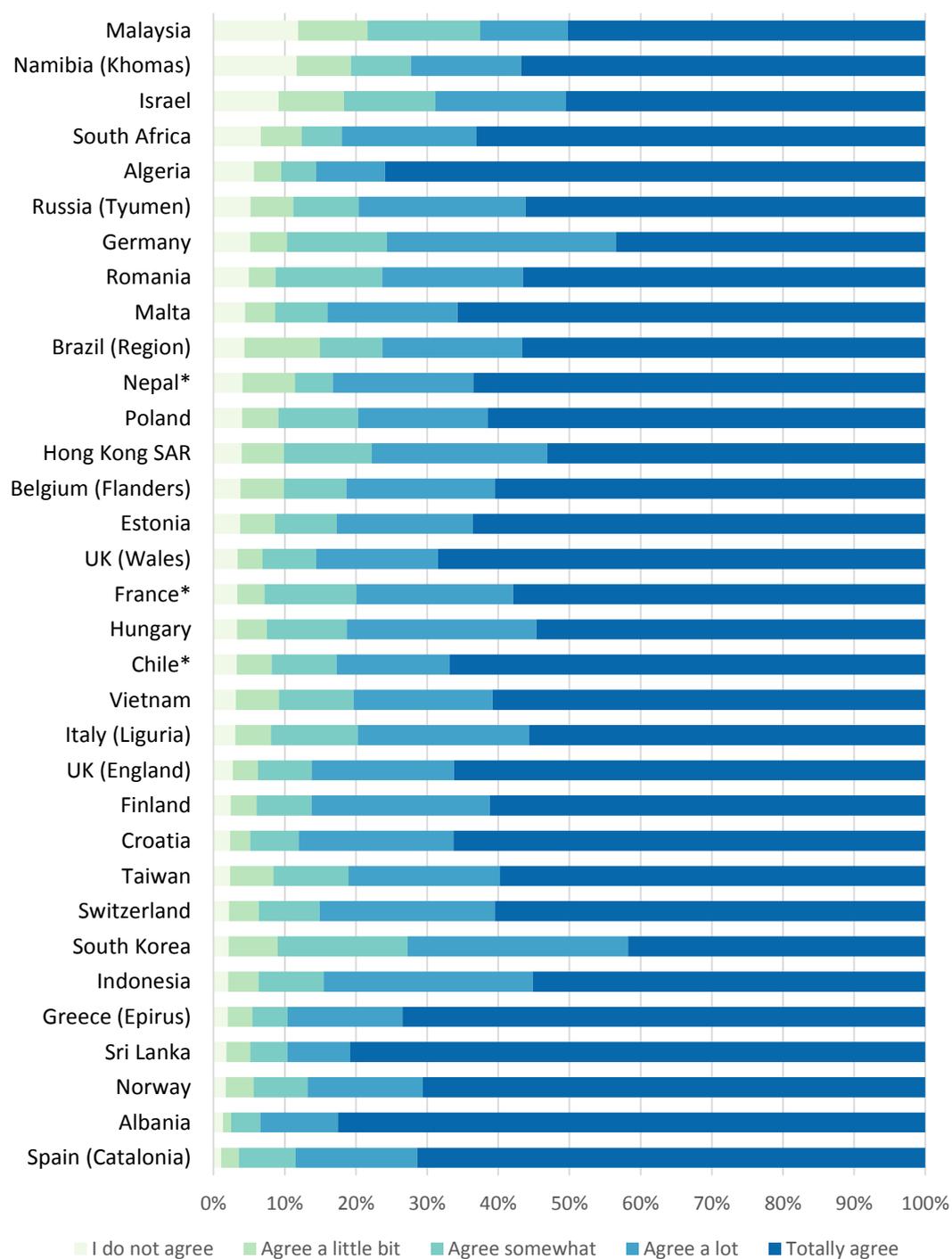
Table 6.3: Children agreeing they 'feel safe at school' – percentage by age

Country	Boys	Girls	8yo	10yo	12yo	Total
Albania	75%	82%		83%	74%	78%
Algeria	69%	70%	70%	76%	63%	70%
Belgium (Flanders)	64%	61%	67%	60%	61%	63%
Brazil	56%	55%	68%	57%	40%	55%
Chile	62%	66%	72%	67%	54%	64%
Croatia	62%	63%	75%	65%	48%	62%
Estonia	55%	59%	63%	64%	44%	57%
Finland	58%	63%	67%	61%	54%	61%
France	59%	61%		60%		60%
Germany	47%	49%	52%	43%	36%	42%
Greece	73%	73%		73%		73%
Hong Kong SAR	39%	44%		53%	31%	41%
Hungary	58%	58%	67%	54%	53%	58%
India						
Indonesia	51%	51%	46%	55%	51%	51%
Israel	49%	56%	59%	50%	47%	52%
Italy	51%	53%	59%	54%	44%	52%
Malaysia	59%	66%	75%	51%		63%
Malta	65%	65%	76%	63%	60%	65%
Namibia	53%	50%		56%	47%	51%
Nepal	64%	72%		64%	72%	68%
Norway	69%	67%	73%	71%	61%	68%
Poland	57%	62%	71%	61%	48%	59%
Romania	53%	55%	60%	57%	45%	54%
Russia	43%	48%		56%	35%	46%
S Africa	59%	64%		63%	60%	62%
S Korea	43%	37%	50%	42%	29%	40%
Spain	64%	68%		71%	60%	66%
Sri Lanka	83%	78%		80%	82%	81%
Switzerland	61%	61%		60%		60%
Taiwan	54%	57%	54%	60%	52%	55%
UK (England)	67%	66%		66%		66%
UK (Wales)	52%	51%		68%	43%	52%
Vietnam	56%	61%	65%	59%	52%	58%

10 years old

Figure 6.6 provides a comparison of the item 'I feel safe at school' between countries for the 10-year-old sample. Malaysia (11.86%), Namibia (11.66%), Israel (9.12%), South Africa (6.63%), and Algeria (5.66%) had the highest percentages of 'not agree'; while Spain (1.09%), Albania (1.31%), Norway (1.70%), Sri Lanka (1.78%), and Greece (1.98%) had the lowest percentages. Of those selecting the option 'totally agree', Albania (82.55%) and Sri Lanka (80.78) presented with the highest percentages; in four other countries more than 70% selected this option. The lowest percentages for this response were in South Korea (41.74 %) and Germany (43.47%).

Figure 6.6. Children feeling safe at school by country



10 years old

Chapter 7

Neighbourhoods

Overview

Beyond family and school, the local neighbourhood is a third important context that shapes children's quality of life. Unsafe environments have a negative impact on children's well-being, while and neighbourhoods that are friendly and have adequate facilities are integral for a happy childhood.

Early studies focusing on children's subjective well-being at the community level, show that neighbourhood characteristics and safety are the key factors influencing well-being (Coulton and Korbin 2007; McDonnell 2007; Jutras and Lepage, 2006). More recent studies have demonstrated the links between children's subjective well-being and neighbourhood support (Oberle, Schonerte-Reichel & Zumbo, 2011 in Canada), neighbourhood social capital (Aminzadeh et al. 2013 in New Zealand) and neighbourhood safety (Ben-Arieh and Shimon, 2014 in Israel; Adams & Savahl, 2016 in South Africa).

Using data from the first (pilot) wave survey, Lee and Yoo (2015) found that neighbourhood factors explained variations in children's life satisfaction, even after taking account of demographics and factors related to family and school. The second wave of the survey (Rees, 2017) showed consistently high ratings for neighbourhood aspects in Norway, and a generally positive picture in Finland and Israel as well. The countries that were towards the bottom ranking were South Korea, Germany and South Africa. It was found that girls tended to feel less safe than boys in their local area in six out of 18 countries. There were substantial age variations, with children tending to feel less satisfied with their local area as they got older (between 8 and 12 years old). An analysis of urban-rural variations in four countries (Rees et al., 2017) found different patterns across countries. For example, children felt safer in rural areas in two countries and safer in urban areas in one, with no significant difference in the fourth.

Questions asked

In this survey, children were asked about satisfaction with their neighbourhoods and how much they agree with statements about their local areas. The questions are shown in Box 7.

Box 7: Questions about the area where you live**Satisfaction question**

How satisfied are you with the area where you live?

10- and 12-year-olds responded on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not at all satisfied' and 10 labelled 'Totally satisfied'. 8-year-olds responded on a 5-point scale with emoticons

Agreement questions

How much do you agree with each of these sentences about your local area?

- I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in
- In my area there are enough places to play and have a good time
- If I have a problem, there are people in my local area who will help me
- Adults in my local area are kind to children
- Adults in my area listen to children and take them seriously

Response options were on a unipolar 5-point agreement scale from 'not agree' to 'totally agree'.

Overall satisfaction

We use the question about satisfaction 'with the area you live' as the key measure for this domain. Figure 7.1 summarizes the responses of children to this question by country and age group.

The findings in Figure 7.1 show that children's overall satisfaction levels were mostly high. In the 10-year-old age group, mean satisfaction levels ranged from 7.5 in Sri Lanka to 9.2 in Switzerland. The proportion of children who were not satisfied with their area (score of less than five on the 10-point scale) ranged from approximately 2% in Switzerland to more than 20% in Sri Lanka.

Despite high level of overall satisfaction, there was an apparent geographical pattern. The countries with satisfaction scores of 9.0 and higher were all in Europe, namely: Switzerland, France, Estonia, Greece, and Romania. One notable exception was Germany, which had one of the lowest levels of satisfaction with the neighbourhood in all three age groups. In the 10-year-old survey, Sri Lanka and Germany had the lowest mean satisfaction scores, below 8.0 out of 10. The geographical patterns in the other two age groups were similar. One notable exception was Israel, which had the highest satisfaction rating in the 12-year-olds, but ranked in the middle for the younger two age groups.

A strong age pattern was found in most countries, with children aged 12 years significantly less satisfied with their neighbourhood than children aged 10 years. There were no countries where satisfaction was significantly higher in the older age group.

There were few significant gender variations for this indicator (Table 7.1); with girls having higher mean satisfaction in seven countries.

Figure 7.1: Satisfaction with 'area where you live' mean and percentage low satisfaction

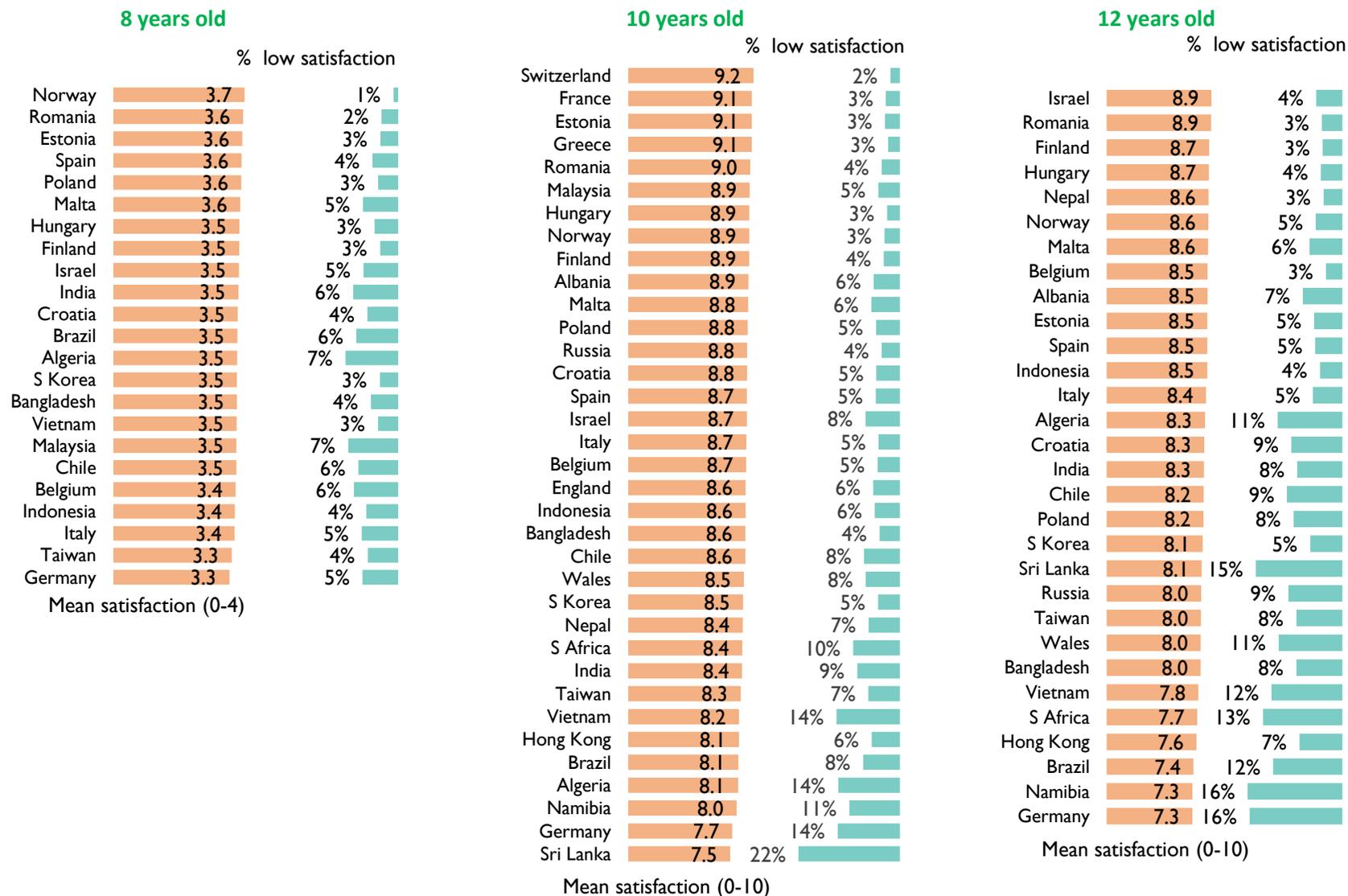


Table 7.1: Satisfaction with local area by gender and age

	Girls	Boys		10yo	12yo	
Albania	8.85	8.85		8.85	8.55	10>>12
Algeria	8.28	7.89		8.10	8.34	
Bangladesh	8.71	8.52		8.62	7.96	10>>12
Belgium (Flanders)	8.64	8.74		8.68	8.55	
Brazil	8.00	8.26		8.11	7.36	
Chile	8.60	8.66		8.62	8.22	10>12
Croatia	8.95	8.55	G>>B	8.76	8.27	10>>12
Estonia	9.17	9.01		9.10	8.54	10>>12
Finland	9.01	8.78	G>B	8.90	8.67	10>>12
France	9.08	9.13				
Germany				7.65	7.26	10>>12
Greece	9.12	9.05				
Hong Kong SAR	8.26	8.03		8.14	7.61	10>>12
Hungary	8.90	8.90		8.91	8.65	10>12
India	8.49	8.27		8.38	8.25	
Indonesia	8.75	8.51	G>>B	8.63	8.52	10>12
Israel	8.93	8.53		8.72	8.88	
Italy	8.80	8.58		8.69	8.42	10>12
Malaysia	9.04	8.82				
Malta	8.89	8.75		8.83	8.60	
Namibia	8.07	7.84		7.97	7.27	10>>12
Nepal	8.57	8.27	G>B	8.43	8.64	
Norway	8.87	8.94		8.91	8.62	10>12
Poland	8.87	8.71		8.79	8.20	10>>12
Romania	8.93	9.03		8.98	8.86	
Russia	8.97	8.51	G>>B	8.76	8.00	10>>12
S Africa	8.37	8.40		8.39	7.68	10>>12
S Korea	8.38	8.53		8.45	8.15	10>>12
Spain	8.91	8.55	G>>B	8.74	8.54	10>12
Sri Lanka	7.85	7.25		7.50	8.05	
Switzerland	9.23	9.27				
Taiwan	8.21	8.35		8.28	7.99	10>12
UK (England)	8.80	8.50				
UK (Wales)	8.72	8.31	G>B	8.51	7.97	10>12
Vietnam	8.23	8.08		8.16	7.76	

Perception of neighbourhoods

We used six agreement questions to measure children's perceptions of their neighbourhoods. These questions were optional, and some were asked in at least one age group in all countries except Bangladesh and Malaysia. Data for the question 'In my local area, I have opportunities to participate in decisions about things that are important to children', were missing (well above 10%) in many countries. The feedback from the national research teams suggest that this concept of participation in

local decision-making is unfamiliar to children in many countries. Due to the levels of missing data, responses to this question are not presented here.

For the remaining five questions, Table 7.2 shows the percentage of children in the 10-year-old survey who totally agreed.

- The highest average level of agreement was for 'places to play'. Twice as many children (70%) totally agreed there were enough places to play in their neighbourhood in Estonia, compared to South Korea (34%).
- The lowest average level of agreement was for 'adults listening'; in most countries only a minority of children totally agreed. Sri Lanka ranked highest for this question (57%), and South Korea lowest (20%).
- Estonia ranked highest (70%) for feeling safe, while in six countries (Brazil, Indonesia, Italy, Namibia, Russia, and South Korea) less than two in five children totally agreed that they felt safe in their neighbourhood.
- Overall, Switzerland and Chile stand out as ranking consistently high across this set of questions; while Sri Lanka ranks high for all questions, except safety.
- Five countries/regions – Brazil, Hong Kong SAR, Italy, South Korea, and Wales, ranked in the bottom half for all five questions.

There were relatively few significant gender differences observed in the 10-year-old group for the first four questions. There was, however, a pattern of girls feeling less safe than boys in their neighbourhood, which was significant in 11 countries.

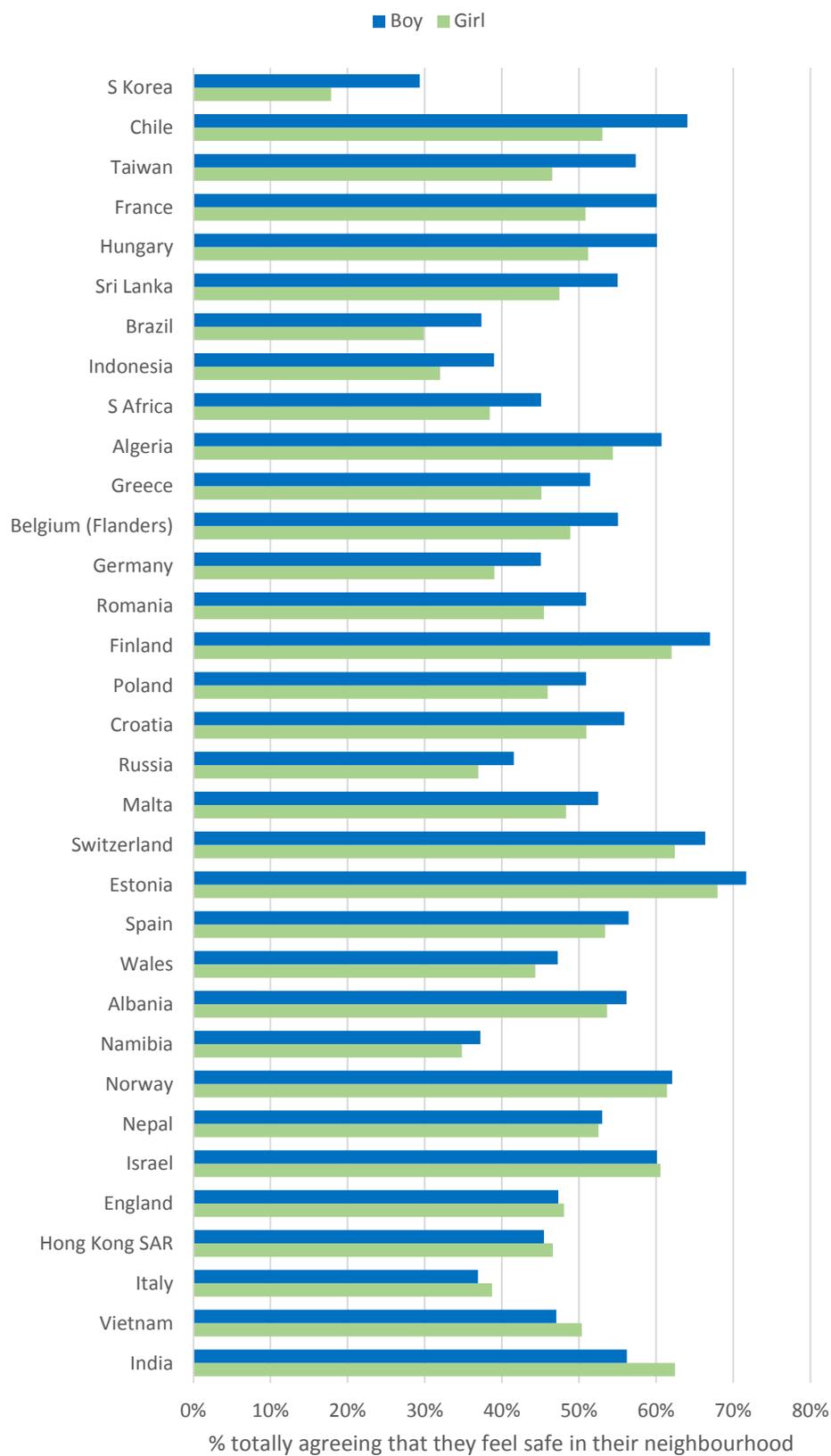
A fairly consistent pattern, with few exceptions, of decreasing agreement across age groups for all questions was found. Figure 7.3 provides an illustration of age group patterns for the question about places to play in the local area. In 12 out of 17 countries there was a significant decrease in agreement with age for children aged 8 and 10 years. In 20 out of 28 countries there was a significant age-related decrease in agreement for children aged 10 and 12 years.

Table 7.2: Children totally agreeing with questions about neighbourhood – percentage and country ranking

	Places to play % rank	Adults support % rank	Adults kind % rank	Adults listen % rank	Safe area % rank
Albania	60% 10	57% 3	62% 3	41% 11	55% 11
Algeria	55% 19	48% 10	56% 10	36% 17	58% 8
Belgium (Flanders)	57% 12	45% 15	59% 7	36% 15	52% 16
Brazil	41% 30	35% 23	37% 20	25% 20	33% 32
Chile	67% 3	57% 4	60% 6	52% 2	59% 7
Croatia	65% 5	49% 9	64% 1		53% 13
Estonia	70% 1	47% 12			70% 1
Finland	57% 13		62% 4		64% 2
France	45% 26	50% 8			55% 10
Germany	53% 21	37% 21	44% 18		42% 26
Greece	60% 9	46% 13			48% 22
Hong Kong SAR	44% 28	25% 24	31% 22	29% 18	46% 24
Hungary	65% 6	46% 14	51% 15	43% 8	55% 9
India	55% 18				59% 6
Indonesia	45% 27	41% 17	52% 13	43% 9	36% 31
Israel	61% 8				60% 5
Italy	42% 29	41% 18	42% 19	27% 19	38% 29
Malta	40% 31	44% 16	58% 8	46% 5	51% 18
Namibia	56% 17			41% 12	36% 30
Nepal	47% 25	52% 5	47% 17	44% 7	53% 14
Norway	53% 20				62% 4
Poland	63% 7				48% 20
Romania	36% 32				48% 21
Russia	56% 14				39% 28
S Africa	50% 24			45% 6	42% 27
S Korea	34% 33	36% 22	34% 21	20% 21	23% 33
Spain	59% 11	47% 11	55% 11	36% 16	55% 12
Sri Lanka	66% 4	59% 1	63% 2	57% 1	52% 17
Switzerland	70% 2	57% 2	61% 5	50% 4	64% 3
Taiwan	56% 15	51% 6	56% 9	51% 3	52% 15
UK (England)	52% 22	41% 19	53% 12	43% 10	48% 23
UK (Wales)	50% 23	41% 20	50% 16	39% 14	46% 25
Vietnam	56% 16	51% 7	52% 14	40% 13	49% 19
Average	54%	46%	52%	40%	50%

10 years old

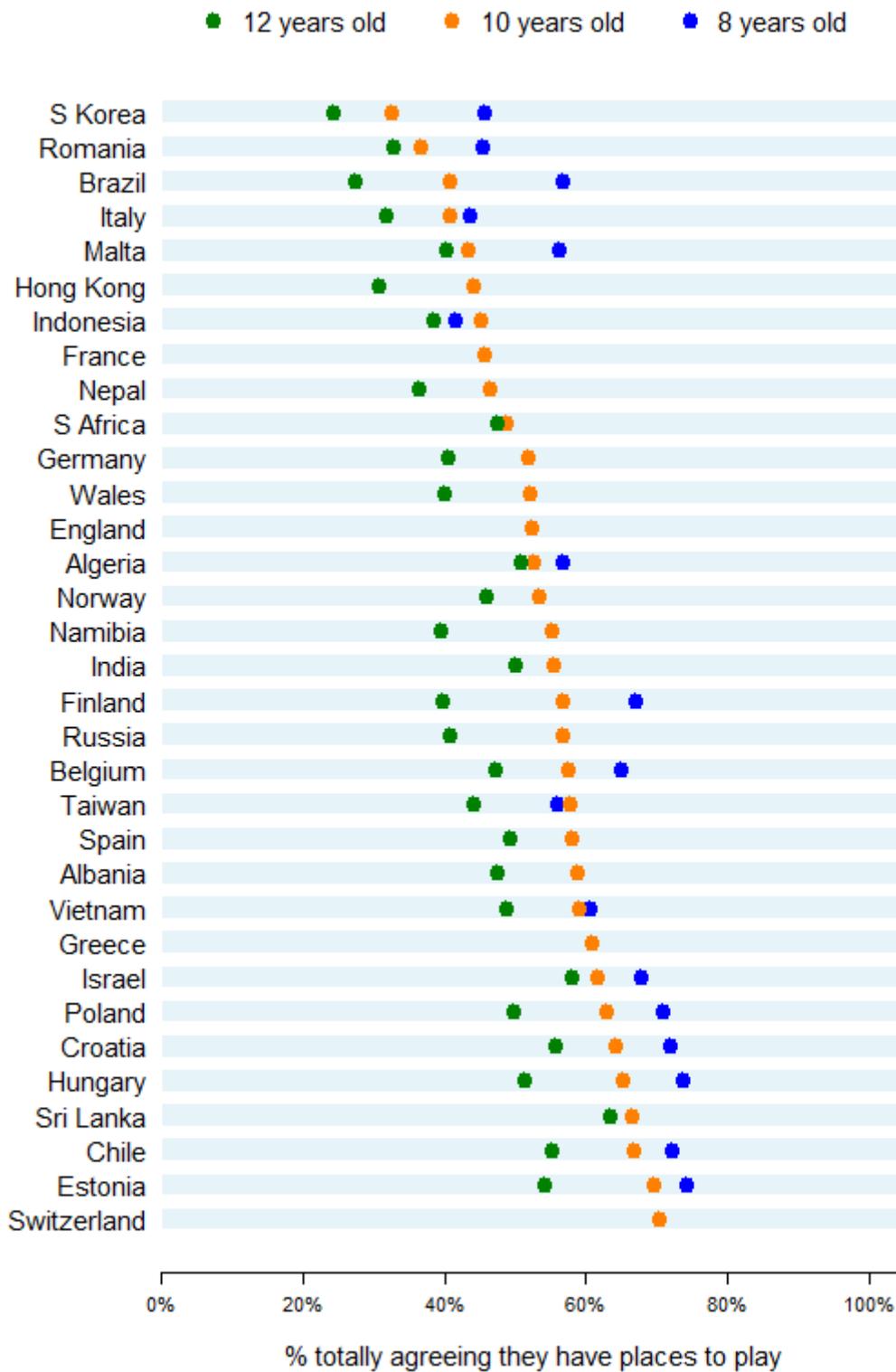
Figure 7.2: Children feeling safe in neighbourhood by gender



10 years old

Countries are sorted in descending order of the gap between boys and girls

Figure 7.3: Children totally agreeing there are enough places to play in the neighbourhood by age



Chapter 8

Overview of domains of well-being

Building on the discussion of children's views of the family, friends, school, and neighbourhood in the last four chapters, this chapter looks across the full range of aspects of children's lives covered in the survey. We relate to 15 questions, all using a satisfaction scale from zero to 10, as shown in Box 8. The abbreviated terms used in this chapter to discuss the questions are shown in blue and brackets. We focus on the 10-year-olds' survey as it covers all 35 countries/regions.

Box 8: 15 questions about children's satisfaction with different aspects of their lives

How satisfied are you with

- The people you live with [family]
- The home you live in [home]
- Your friends [friends]
- Your life as a student [school life]
- The things you have learned at school [learning]
- The other children in your class [classmates]
- The area where you live [neighbourhood]
- All the things you have [possessions]
- How you use your time [time use]
- Your health [health]
- How safe you feel [safety]
- The freedom you have [freedom]
- The way you look [appearance]
- How you are listened to by adults in general [listened to]
- What may happen later in your life [future]

Responses were on a unipolar 11-point scale from 0-10, with 0 labelled 'Not at all satisfied' and 10 labelled 'Totally satisfied'.

All questions were asked in all countries.

Our objective in this chapter is to identify the most and least positive aspects of life for children in each country. It is possible to gain initial insights by comparing mean scores for each aspect across countries; these are shown in Table 8.1. The table also highlights a potential challenge with this approach. In countries like Albania, Croatia, and Greece, they tend to have much higher mean scores across all aspects of life than other countries/regions, such as Hong Kong SAR, Nepal, and Vietnam

(summarised in the second column). This may reflect underlying differences in children's subjective experience in these countries. On the other hand, as discussed in chapter 1, these patterns may be attributable to linguistic issues, such as how a term like 'satisfaction' is translated into, and understood in, different languages. It may also be due to cultural differences in responding to subjective questions.

Table 8.1: Satisfaction with 15 aspects of life mean scores

	Mean	Family	House	Things	Friends	Student	Learning	Class- mates	Neighb' hood	Time use	Health	Appear- ance	Safety	Freedom	Listened to	Future
Albania	9.57	9.80	9.77	9.69	9.63	9.77	9.83	9.55	8.85	9.71	9.75	9.57	9.80	9.55	9.21	9.11
Algeria	8.84	9.35	8.97	8.90	8.71	9.21	9.55	7.91	8.10	8.60	9.33	8.87	9.19	8.28	8.84	8.77
Bangladesh	8.38	8.80	8.46	8.56	8.35	8.74	9.06	7.69	8.62	8.54	8.24	8.18	8.39	8.07	8.25	7.73
Belgium (Flanders)	8.68	8.89	9.15	9.34	8.58	7.99	8.55	8.07	8.68	8.89	9.02	8.49	8.93	8.77	8.36	8.57
Brazil	8.69	9.04	9.02	8.97	8.74	8.85	9.28	8.21	8.11	8.75	9.28	8.54	8.49	8.45	8.47	8.15
Chile	8.96	9.29	9.20	9.36	8.87	8.55	9.17	8.36	8.62	8.87	9.20	8.99	9.19	8.97	8.79	8.94
Croatia	9.20	9.58	9.55	9.66	9.21	8.67	9.25	8.69	8.76	9.29	9.65	8.99	9.44	9.44	8.94	8.87
Estonia	8.94	9.29	9.32	9.40	8.87	8.46	8.79	8.27	9.10	8.93	9.27	8.85	9.28	8.92	8.75	8.63
Finland	8.91	9.20	9.30	9.25	8.97	8.37	8.79	8.36	8.90	9.00	9.23	8.54	9.17	9.01	8.94	8.60
France	8.72	8.86	9.00	8.98	8.99	8.34	8.96	7.92	9.10	8.69	9.28	8.37	8.74	8.61	8.19	8.77
Germany	8.62	8.72	8.98	9.13	8.70	8.12	8.09	7.97	7.65	8.60	9.12	8.62	9.07	9.09	8.69	8.80
Greece	9.27	9.49	9.49	9.48	9.02	8.85	9.42	8.60	9.09	9.30	9.72	9.43	9.57	9.47	9.03	9.11
Hong Kong SAR	8.21	8.48	8.31	8.72	8.56	7.91	8.44	7.88	8.14	7.66	8.82	7.71	8.90	8.02	7.68	7.88
Hungary	8.86	9.43	9.44	9.54	8.87	7.43	8.26	7.67	8.91	8.84	9.30	8.63	9.35	8.88	9.16	9.13
India	8.88	9.49	9.06	9.18	8.83	9.30	9.38	8.52	8.38	9.03	8.84	8.88	9.07	8.30	8.24	8.64
Indonesia	8.43	8.44	8.23	8.66	8.38	8.87	8.57	8.00	8.63	8.16	8.72	8.26	8.47	8.27	7.97	8.66
Israel	8.58	9.27	9.10	9.16	8.37	7.55	7.64	7.76	8.72	8.61	9.09	8.74	8.97	8.90	8.50	8.24
Italy	8.89	9.34	9.09	9.44	8.87	8.48	9.11	8.34	8.69	8.94	9.41	8.73	9.03	8.93	8.54	8.43
Malaysia	8.57	9.23	9.26	9.22	8.00	8.70	8.93	7.19	8.94	8.73	8.92	8.90	8.70	7.72	7.99	8.16
Malta	8.91	9.38	9.09	9.46	9.02	8.40	8.97	8.37	8.83	9.03	9.14	9.04	9.29	8.48	8.81	8.37
Namibia	8.55	8.55	8.64	8.91	8.36	8.91	9.22	7.47	7.97	8.45	9.08	8.98	8.78	8.41	8.41	8.14
Nepal	8.13	8.59	8.36	8.25	8.23	8.48	8.72	8.00	8.43	8.31	8.25	7.44	8.39	7.61	7.61	7.35
Norway	8.99	9.27	9.21	9.38	8.99	8.42	8.93	8.58	8.90	8.64	9.23	8.79	9.39	9.20	8.96	8.94
Poland	8.88	9.22	9.30	9.46	8.49	7.87	8.70	8.24	8.79	9.09	9.29	8.95	9.27	9.02	8.64	8.94
Romania	9.23	9.48	9.47	9.52	9.00	9.14	9.47	8.36	8.98	9.33	9.64	9.21	9.48	9.35	9.08	8.99
Russia	8.67	9.08	9.03	9.21	8.78	7.93	8.57	7.91	8.76	8.91	9.03	8.65	8.79	8.64	8.63	8.19
S Africa	8.61	8.79	8.78	8.94	8.57	8.96	9.20	7.53	8.39	8.63	8.88	8.70	8.96	8.37	8.42	8.04
S Korea	8.47	9.09	8.99	8.73	8.62	8.47	8.62	8.54	8.45	8.18	8.72	7.42	8.66	8.35	8.03	8.25
Spain	9.05	9.32	9.18	9.55	9.00	8.52	9.16	8.76	8.74	8.97	9.45	9.09	9.29	8.91	8.91	8.94
Sri Lanka	8.35	8.87	8.51	8.08	7.59	8.74	8.95	8.06	7.50	8.48	8.55	8.32	8.38	8.38	8.51	8.30
Switzerland	9.04	9.27	9.30	9.46	9.09	8.59	8.88	8.48	9.23	9.01	9.38	8.75	9.22	9.15	8.87	8.88
Taiwan	8.48	8.89	8.97	8.88	8.55	8.15	8.65	8.01	8.28	8.15	8.83	8.07	8.98	8.54	8.24	8.09
UK (England)	8.77	9.21	9.20	9.42	8.70	8.38	8.84	7.78	8.63	8.90	9.05	8.13	9.12	8.87	8.82	8.53
UK (Wales)	8.73	9.15	9.22	9.38	8.75	8.09	8.67	7.87	8.51	8.96	9.07	8.04	9.09	8.95	8.68	8.51
Vietnam	7.91	7.93	8.40	8.15	7.14	8.11	8.46	7.44	8.16	7.92	8.24	7.76	7.94	7.58	8.21	7.20

10 years old. Mean scores in column 2 are the average across 15 aspects in each country

In the next three tables we present three alternative ways of looking at this data, which can provide insights that take account of some of the possible linguistic and cultural response factors.

Table 8.2 shows country ranking for each aspect of life. For example, Albania is ranked 1st and has the highest score for satisfaction with family, while Vietnam has the lowest score and is ranked 35th. As noted above, it is evident that some countries consistently have high rankings, while others have consistently low rankings. There were also countries with a more mixed picture. For example, Hungary ranked first for satisfaction with the future but 35th (bottom) for satisfaction with student life. While rankings can be an over-simplified approach (because two countries ranked next to one another can be very close together or much further apart), this approach does help to provide some simpler insights that are not immediately apparent from the detail of Table 8.1.

Table 8.3 presents a different view. Here the rankings are within-countries. For example, the highest level of satisfaction in Albania is for learning (1st) and the lowest is for the neighbourhood (15th as there are 15 aspects of life in total). This table illustrates that there is inconsistency in terms of satisfaction with some aspects of life within countries than across the large majority of countries. For example, the aspects related to family, possessions, and home are highly ranked in almost all countries, and those relating to health and safety in most. On the other hand, classmates is an aspect that children seem to be relative dissatisfied with across almost all countries.

Table 8.4 draws these different ways of viewing the patterns into a single picture. It uses an approach that we implemented in the first report on the last wave of the survey, where we calculated relative scores. These serve to highlight aspects of life with which children in each country are relatively satisfied or dissatisfied, taking into account the overall pattern of scores across all countries and aspects. The calculation is as follows:

Figure 8.1: Calculation of relative scores

$$\text{Relative score} = 100 * \left(1 - \frac{\text{Mean}_{ij}}{\text{Mean}_i \times (\text{Mean}_j \div \text{Grand mean})} \right)$$

Where:

Mean_{ij} = Actual mean satisfaction score for aspect *i* in country *j*

Mean_i = Pooled mean satisfaction score for aspect *i* across all countries

Mean_j = Mean satisfaction score for all aspects within country *j*

Grand mean = Mean of all *Mean_{ij}*

These scores average to one, both across countries within each aspect, and within each country across aspects. A score above 1 indicates an aspect children evaluate relatively positively in a particular country, and a score below 1 indicates an aspect children evaluate relatively negatively. The calculation eliminates some of the concerns about linguistic and response biases. Scores offer a useful guide to policymakers seeking to understand which might be the key aspects for improvement in their country. For example, a policymaker in Nepal looking only at national figures, might conclude satisfaction with classmates is a key area of concern, as mean satisfaction is lower for this aspect (Table 8.3). But satisfaction with classmates is relatively low in most countries, thus the relative score of 1.06 means that Nepal is in fact faring relatively well on this aspect. Policymakers might, more usefully, focus attention on appearance, freedom, and the future, where relative scores are lowest. There are countries (for example, Italy) where it is difficult to discern clear patterns through this approach. For most countries, however, Table 8.4 can provide insight into areas of relative strengths and weaknesses, and may be useful in terms of identifying priorities for improving children's well-being.

Table 8.2: Between-country mean satisfaction ranking for 15 aspects of life

	Family	House	Things	Friends	Student	Learning	Class- mates	Neighb' hood	Time use	Health	Appear- ance	Safety	Freedom	Listened to	Future
Albania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Algeria	8	26	27	19	3	2	24	32	26	8	12	13	29	10	12
Bangladesh	28	31	32	31	10	13	30	21	27	34	28	33	31	26	33
Belgium (Flanders)	24	16	16	23	30	30	17	18	16	24	24	23	18	25	18
Brazil	23	22	24	18	8	6	16	31	19	11	23	30	23	22	28
Chile	11	13	15	14	15	10	10	22	17	16	6	12	10	13	6
Croatia	2	2	2	2	13	7	3	14	4	3	7	4	3	7	10
Estonia	12	6	12	11	20	22	14	3	13	13	13	9	13	14	16
Finland	19	8	17	10	24	21	11	9	9	15	22	14	9	6	17
France	27	23	23	8	25	15	23	2	21	12	25	27	20	30	13
Germany	30	25	22	21	27	34	22	34	25	18	21	17	7	15	11
Greece	3	3	6	5	9	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	4	3
Hong Kong SAR	33	34	30	25	32	32	26	30	35	29	33	24	32	34	32
Hungary	6	5	4	13	35	33	31	7	18	9	20	6	16	2	1
India	4	20	20	15	2	5	7	27	6	27	11	18	28	27	15
Indonesia	34	35	31	28	7	28	20	20	32	30	27	31	30	33	14
Israel	13	17	21	29	34	35	29	16	24	19	16	21	15	21	25
Italy	9	19	10	12	17	12	13	17	12	6	17	19	12	19	21
Malaysia	16	10	18	33	12	18	35	6	20	25	10	28	33	32	27
Malta	7	18	8	4	22	14	9	11	7	17	5	8	22	12	22
Namibia	32	29	26	30	6	8	33	33	29	20	8	26	24	24	29
Nepal	31	33	33	32	18	23	21	25	30	33	34	32	34	35	34
Norway	15	12	13	9	21	17	5	8	22	14	14	5	5	5	7
Poland	17	7	7	27	33	24	15	12	5	10	9	10	8	17	8
Romania	5	4	5	7	4	3	12	5	2	4	3	3	4	3	4
Russia	22	21	19	16	31	29	25	13	14	23	19	25	19	18	26
S Africa	29	28	25	24	5	9	32	26	23	26	18	22	26	23	31
S Korea	21	24	29	22	19	27	6	24	31	31	35	29	27	31	24
Spain	10	15	3	6	16	11	2	15	10	5	4	7	14	8	5
Sri Lanka	26	30	35	34	11	16	18	35	28	32	26	34	25	20	23
Switzerland	14	9	9	3	14	19	8	1	8	7	15	11	6	9	9
Taiwan	25	27	28	26	26	26	19	28	33	28	30	20	21	28	30
UK (England)	18	14	11	20	23	20	28	19	15	22	29	15	17	11	19
UK (Wales)	20	11	14	17	29	25	27	23	11	21	31	16	11	16	20
Vietnam	35	32	34	35	28	31	34	29	34	35	32	35	35	29	35

10 years old. This table shows how each country ranks on each aspect of life. A higher rank indicates higher mean satisfaction.

Table 8.3: Within-country mean satisfaction ranking for 15 aspects of life

	Family	House	Things	Friends	Student	Learning	Class- mates	Neighb' hood	Time use	Health	Appear- ance	Safety	Freedom	Listened to	Future
Albania	2	4	8	9	5	1	12	15	7	6	10	3	11	13	14
Algeria	2	6	7	11	4	1	15	14	12	3	8	5	13	9	10
Bangladesh	2	7	5	9	3	1	15	4	6	11	12	8	13	10	14
Belgium (Flanders)	6	2	1	9	15	11	14	8	5	3	12	4	7	13	10
Brazil	3	4	5	8	6	1	13	15	7	2	9	10	12	11	14
Chile	2	3	1	11	14	6	15	13	10	4	7	5	8	12	9
Croatia	3	4	1	9	15	8	14	13	7	2	10	5	6	11	12
Estonia	3	2	1	9	14	11	15	6	7	5	10	4	8	12	13
Finland	4	1	2	8	14	11	15	10	7	3	13	5	6	9	12
France	7	3	5	4	13	6	15	2	10	1	12	9	11	14	8
Germany	7	5	1	8	12	13	14	15	11	2	10	4	3	9	6
Greece	3	4	5	13	14	8	15	11	9	1	7	2	6	12	10
Hong Kong SAR	5	7	3	4	10	6	11	8	15	2	13	1	9	14	12
Hungary	3	2	1	10	15	13	14	8	11	5	12	4	9	6	7
India	1	6	4	10	3	2	12	13	7	9	8	5	14	15	11
Indonesia	8	12	4	9	1	6	14	5	13	2	11	7	10	15	3
Israel	1	3	2	11	15	14	13	8	9	4	7	5	6	10	12
Italy	3	5	1	9	13	4	15	11	7	2	10	6	8	12	14
Malaysia	2	1	3	12	10	5	15	4	8	6	7	9	14	13	11
Malta	2	5	1	8	13	9	14	10	7	4	6	3	12	11	15
Namibia	8	7	5	12	4	1	15	14	9	2	3	6	11	10	13
Nepal	2	6	9	10	3	1	11	4	7	8	14	5	13	12	15
Norway	3	5	2	7	15	10	14	11	13	4	12	1	6	8	9
Poland	5	2	1	13	15	11	14	10	6	3	8	4	7	12	9
Romania	3	6	2	12	10	5	15	14	8	1	9	4	7	11	13
Russia	2	4	1	7	14	12	15	8	5	3	9	6	10	11	13
S Africa	6	7	4	10	3	1	15	12	9	5	8	2	13	11	14
S Korea	1	2	3	6	9	7	8	10	13	4	15	5	11	14	12
Spain	3	5	1	8	15	6	13	14	9	2	7	4	11	12	10
Sri Lanka	2	6	12	14	3	1	13	15	7	4	10	9	8	5	11
Switzerland	4	3	1	8	14	11	15	5	9	2	13	6	7	12	10
Taiwan	3	2	4	7	12	6	15	9	11	5	14	1	8	10	13
UK (England)	2	3	1	10	13	8	15	11	6	5	14	4	7	9	12
UK (Wales)	3	2	1	8	13	10	15	11	6	5	14	4	7	9	12
Vietnam	9	2	6	15	7	1	13	5	10	3	11	8	12	4	14

10 years old. This table shows how each aspect of life ranks within countries. A higher rank indicates higher mean satisfaction.

Table 8.4: Relative satisfaction scores for 15 aspects of life

	Family	House	Things	Friends	Student	Learning	Class- mates	Neighb' hood	Time use	Health	Appear- ance	Safety	Freedom	Listened to	Future
Albania	0.99	0.99	0.97	1.01	1.05	1.01	1.07	0.94	1.01	0.98	1.02	0.99	1.01	0.98	0.98
Algeria	1.02	0.98	0.97	0.99	1.07	1.06	0.96	0.93	0.97	1.02	1.02	1.01	0.95	1.02	1.02
Bangladesh	1.01	0.98	0.98	1.01	1.07	1.06	0.99	1.05	1.02	0.95	0.99	0.97	0.97	1.01	0.95
Belgium (Flanders)	0.98	1.02	1.03	1.00	0.95	0.97	1.00	1.02	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.02	0.98	1.02
Brazil	1.00	1.00	0.99	1.01	1.05	1.05	1.02	0.95	1.01	1.03	1.00	0.95	0.98	1.00	0.97
Chile	1.00	0.99	1.00	1.00	0.98	1.01	1.00	0.98	0.99	0.99	1.02	1.00	1.01	1.00	1.03
Croatia	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.01	0.97	0.99	1.02	0.97	1.01	1.01	0.99	1.00	1.03	0.99	0.99
Estonia	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.00	0.97	0.97	1.00	1.04	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.00	0.99
Finland	0.99	1.01	1.00	1.02	0.97	0.97	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.02	1.03	1.00
France	0.98	1.00	0.99	1.04	0.98	1.01	0.98	1.06	1.00	1.02	0.98	0.97	1.00	0.96	1.04
Germany	0.97	1.01	1.01	1.02	0.97	0.92	0.99	0.90	1.00	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.06	1.03	1.05
Greece	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.04	1.00	1.03	1.00	1.01
Hong Kong SAR	0.99	0.98	1.02	1.05	0.99	1.01	1.03	1.01	0.93	1.03	0.96	1.05	0.99	0.96	0.99
Hungary	1.02	1.03	1.03	1.01	0.86	0.92	0.93	1.02	1.00	1.01	0.99	1.03	1.01	1.06	1.06
India	1.03	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.08	1.04	1.03	0.96	1.02	0.96	1.02	0.99	0.94	0.95	1.00
Indonesia	0.96	0.95	0.98	1.00	1.08	1.00	1.02	1.04	0.97	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.99	0.97	1.06
Israel	1.04	1.03	1.02	0.98	0.91	0.88	0.97	1.04	1.00	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.05	1.01	0.99
Italy	1.01	0.99	1.02	1.01	0.98	1.01	1.01	0.99	1.01	1.02	1.00	0.99	1.01	0.98	0.98
Malaysia	1.04	1.04	1.03	0.94	1.04	1.02	0.90	1.06	1.02	1.00	1.06	0.99	0.91	0.95	0.98
Malta	1.01	0.99	1.02	1.02	0.97	0.99	1.01	1.01	1.01	0.99	1.03	1.01	0.96	1.01	0.97
Namibia	0.96	0.98	1.00	0.99	1.07	1.06	0.94	0.95	0.99	1.02	1.07	1.00	0.99	1.01	0.98
Nepal	1.02	0.99	0.97	1.02	1.07	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.02	0.98	0.93	1.00	0.94	0.96	0.93
Norway	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.01	0.96	0.98	1.03	1.01	0.96	0.99	1.00	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.02
Poland	1.00	1.01	1.02	0.96	0.91	0.96	1.00	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.03	1.01	1.02	0.99	1.04
Romania	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.98	1.02	1.01	0.97	0.99	1.01	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00
Russia	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.02	0.94	0.97	0.98	1.03	1.03	1.00	1.01	0.99	1.00	1.02	0.97
S Africa	0.98	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.07	1.05	0.94	0.99	1.00	0.99	1.03	1.01	0.98	1.00	0.96
S Korea	1.03	1.03	0.99	1.03	1.03	1.00	1.08	1.02	0.97	0.99	0.89	0.99	0.99	0.97	1.00
Spain	0.99	0.98	1.01	1.00	0.97	1.00	1.04	0.98	0.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	0.99	1.01	1.02
Sri Lanka	1.02	0.99	0.93	0.92	1.08	1.05	1.04	0.91	1.02	0.99	1.01	0.98	1.01	1.04	1.03
Switzerland	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.01	0.98	0.97	1.01	1.04	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.02	1.00	1.01
Taiwan	1.01	1.02	1.00	1.02	0.99	1.00	1.02	0.99	0.96	1.00	0.97	1.03	1.02	0.99	0.98
UK (England)	1.01	1.01	1.03	1.00	0.98	0.99	0.95	1.00	1.01	0.99	0.94	1.01	1.02	1.03	1.00
UK (Wales)	1.01	1.02	1.03	1.01	0.95	0.98	0.97	0.99	1.03	1.00	0.94	1.01	1.03	1.02	1.00
Vietnam	0.96	1.03	0.99	0.91	1.06	1.05	1.01	1.05	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.97	1.06	0.94

10 years old

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Overview

The Children's Worlds Survey presents a unique view of childhood, from children around the world. This report is but a first step in analysing data gathered from over 128,000 children in 35 countries and regions across five continents. The third wave conclusion begins with a description of the diversity in children's circumstances and daily lives. It is followed by a consideration of variants in children's well-being, both between and within countries. We then examine proposed further analysis and make recommendations for future research. Finally, we provide the key points and policy implications of our findings.

The diversity of children's circumstances and daily lives

One key contribution of the Children's Worlds Study is the advance in cross-cultural comparisons of children's perceptions, experiences and evaluations of their lives across diverse geographical, social and economic contexts. The current wave enables us to compare data from children in 35 countries, providing a unique opportunity to enhance our own understanding of children's lives, and promote global understanding of childhood.

Similar to the previous waves, we found considerable diversity in children's living experiences, in factors such as living arrangements and material circumstances. For example, children living with both parents ranged from as low as 60% in South Africa, to 95% in Albania. In some countries, up to 8% of children did not live with either parent, while in other countries (e.g. Albania) all children lived with at least one parent. We also found children are increasingly living in two homes, likely a result of parental separation. Children's material circumstances also varied substantially. Internet access remains a particular point of disparity, with only 33% of children in Nepal and 40% in Bangladesh indicating having access, in contrast to high-income European countries where more than 90% of children have access. This raises concern that information inequality may constitute a new form of disadvantage for children in low-income countries, especially relevant in the current context of restricted access to school and learning opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another revealing finding emerged in children's response to whether they felt they had enough food to eat each day. In nine countries (all located in Africa and Asia), more than 10% selected the options of 'never' or 'sometimes'. While we cannot use this data to make inferences regarding child hunger, stunting or inadequate nutrition, the results do suggest that from children's perspective food security is a concern.

While our analysis suggests variations across countries, we caution against using children's level of access to material items to compare material circumstances without due consideration to social, cultural and economic factors. This set of items included in the study, may be useful in exploring

within-country differences in children's experience of life depending on their level of access to material items.

Between-country variations in children's well-being

Historically, the Children's World Study is premised on a hierarchical conceptualisation of subjective well-being, which includes measuring children's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives. The cognitive component includes both context-free and domain-based aspects of children's lives; the affective component includes positive and negative affect. The current wave of the survey included, for the first time, items assessing negative affect. In fact, the third wave of the survey is the first multinational research to include negative affect items to study children's subjective well-being, and we also included an adapted scale measuring eudaimonic well-being. However, confirmatory factor analysis conducted with the various scales used in the study (presented in Chapter 3), largely failed to establish measurement invariance. This suggests that the scores cannot be meaningfully compared across countries, and it is likely that children in different contexts had a different understanding of the items. We were, however, able to establish a level of measurement invariance for the Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-SWBS measuring the cognitive aspect of life satisfaction), which allows cross-country comparisons by correlations and regressions. We learn that we must exercise caution in making cross-country comparisons with these subjective well-being scales, especially in comparing mean scores.

Lack of measurement invariance is not unusual in cross-cultural studies; findings were similar in the first two waves of the survey, perhaps due to cultural patterns introducing systematic response bias. To mitigate this, the Children's Worlds Study integrates two strategies: one is a multiple-indicator approach in comparing children's well-being scores; the second is providing contextual information to support evidence of findings in individual countries and enhance interpretation. In the current report our focus is on the multiple-indicator approach when reporting low-satisfaction percentages, mean scores and relative scores. Relative scores are a recent innovation, and reflect scoring patterns within each country and across each aspect of life. The key feature of relative scores is in presenting a balance of positive and negative aspects in each country. To a large extent, this addresses concerns about possible cultural response bias, and enables extraction of strengths and weaknesses in subjective well-being in each country, which is potentially informative and useful to policy-makers. Using this multiple-indicator approach provides a broad-based view, and insight into variations across countries.

Applying the approach to measures of overall well-being raises an important point: which headline measure should be emphasized? Should it be noted that different methods lead to different conclusions, ultimately linked to what one wishes to achieve? This in itself defines strategies for improving well-being; for example, are we interested in improving mean well-being scores, reducing low well-being, or reducing inequality? These decisions also have implications for informing social policy. That said, our findings do suggest a consistent pattern in measures of subjective well-being: countries presenting with higher mean scores generally had lower levels of low satisfaction, and vice versa. We also note a consistent trend in scores and rankings for countries and geographical regions. Albania, Romania, Malta, Spain, and Croatia consistently ranked in the upper half across overall subjective well-being measures. Asian countries/regions Vietnam, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan, and South Korea ranked consistently in the lower half. Remarkably, Albania ranked 1st across 10- and 12-year-olds in all measures. Although likely an outcome of cultural response style, further contextualisation is necessary for a more meaningful interpretation. While subjective well-being measures may be valuable indicators, their inherent abstraction limits practical applicability and informing policy. A bottom-up approach may be more tangible, and therefore palatable to policy-makers; it seems more realistic to improve children's satisfaction with specific aspects of their life (e.g., school or neighbourhood), rather than attempt to increase their overall well-being. Focused

social intervention for children with lower scores, is certainly more effective than targeting all children, as trying to improve well-being for children with high scores would be a particularly formidable undertaking.

Exploring children's well-being in different aspects across countries, presents interesting results. One notable finding showed that some countries ranked consistently across the various domains, while others presented with substantial variation. Again, this was dependent on the measures used. Albania ranked 1st across 13 of 15 domains of well-being included in the study. Croatia, Greece, and Romania ranked consistently high across all domains, while Hong Kong SAR, Nepal, Taiwan, and Vietnam ranked consistently low. Other countries showed much greater variability; Namibia and South Africa ranked in the top 10 for satisfaction with 'life as a student' and 'things learned at school', but much lower in the other 13 domains. Hungary too demonstrates variability, ranking in the top 10 across seven items, but substantially lower for satisfaction with 'life as a student', 'things learned at school' and 'classmates'.

A different picture emerged from relative scores. Interestingly, the three aspects related to school climate presented with the most pronounced relative scores, both positive and negative. Satisfaction with appearance, freedom, being listened to and future also showed distinct scores. The considerable number of 35 countries lends credibility to relative scores, and is especially useful for policy-makers targeting specific aspects to improve children's lives.

Within-country variations in children's well-being

The unique contribution of the Children's Worlds Study is showcasing between-country variations, and yet we have consistently found more variations within than between countries. There appears to be a trend in ranking within countries regarding specific aspects of children's lives. Satisfaction with family, home, material possessions, health, and safety ranked high in most countries, whereas satisfaction with classmates, neighbourhood, appearance, freedom, and being listened to ranked low. Satisfaction with classmates in particular, ranked low – in the bottom three in most countries. Recent literature on children's subjective well-being, has identified a range of factors contributing to within-country variations, including among others: macro-level factors (e.g., socio-economic status, income equality, poverty and deprivation, social class and culture); micro-level factors (e.g., school, neighbourhood and relationships with family and friends); and individual level factors (e.g., age, gender, and personality characteristics). This report focuses on age and gender, which have proven to be a key source of within-country variation. Over the past two decades increasing evidence supports the notion of subjective well-being decreasing with age. The Children's Worlds Survey was able to test this hypothesis across the 10- and 12-year-old age groups, thanks to identical wording of the questions and response options. In the current wave of the survey we found evidence of subjective well-being decreasing with age in most countries, across measures of well-being (with the exception of negative affect which increases) and specific aspects of life. In some instances, the decrease was marginal, in others quite significant. The CW-SWBS measure of overall subjective well-being showed the 10-year-olds presented with significantly higher scores than the 12-year-olds, in 21 of 35 countries. Negative affect measures found significant increase (decrease in subjective well-being) between 10- and 12-year-olds in 22 countries. The specific aspect of 'satisfaction with people you live with' being an example, we found the 10-year-olds scored significantly higher than the 12-year-olds in 12 countries. In this example, it was the 12-year-olds who scored significantly higher in one country (Indonesia). Tables 3.2, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, and 7.1 easily identify examples of the subjective well-being tendency to decrease with age. Individual country research teams should consider further exploration of this trend within their country contexts.

Results diverge across gender, with girls scoring significantly higher than boys in some countries, and boys in others. This finding is in line with previous waves of the Children's Worlds survey and the broader literature base on children's subjective well-being. In the current wave, we explored the gender differences within the three age groups for the overall well-being scales. An interesting finding shows that the number of countries with significant gender differences increased with age. For example, the CW-SWBS showed three countries with significant gender differences for the 8-year-olds, nine countries for the 10-year-olds, and 16 for the 12-year-olds. The dynamics behind this association and whether the level of significance also increases with age, would be an interesting area of further research. Considering gender differences across specific aspects of life, there were particularly strong differences for 'satisfaction with life as a student'; significant gender differences showed in 22 countries, girls presenting with significantly higher scores. These and other trends in gender differences remain a fruitful area of research, thus individual countries are advised to follow a contextual approach to better understand the gender-related patterns.

Recommendations for further analysis

This report delivered a largely descriptive account, in itself an expedient first step in understanding children's subjective well-being, and how children experience and evaluate various aspects of their lives. Through the various chapters, we have taken account of variations in children's subjective well-being, both between and within countries; relative scores are integral in making sense of them. Country teams are advised to heed these scores, as they highlight specific aspects of life where children are doing relatively well or poorly. Researchers and social service practitioners may target aspects of life with relatively low scores as a strategy to improve children's well-being. Future analysis should advance more sophisticated approaches, and strive to explain variations. Data from the current wave of the survey offers opportunities for such exploration of individuals, countries, and between countries. Multi-level modelling would provide greater insight into how subjective well-being varies within different domains of well-being and aspects of life, and could potentially elucidate the mechanisms driving these variations.

One of the main concerns raised in research on children's subjective well-being is that of measurement. Traditionally, scales developed for adults were adapted for children. The Children's Worlds Study developed unique measurement scales, which reflect engagement with children and their input. In the current wave of the survey children from varying contexts were consulted, as opposed to limited samples of children from high-income contexts. We were also able to draw on psychometric testing conducted during previous waves of the survey, to improve measurement and enhance measurement process credibility. Thus we constructed specific scales to measure the various components of children's subjective well-being. We introduced the Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (context-free), the Children's Worlds Domain Based Subjective Well-Being Scale, and the Children's Worlds Psychological Well-Being Scale. And still, given the lack of measurement invariance across the different contexts, further research on measurement design and construction is required; we recommend using participatory techniques with children across different contexts, cultures, and languages. The importance of this cannot be overstated, as it somewhat mitigates the main measurement issues outlined above, and increases the ecological validity of the study.

Given that lack of measurement invariance limits cross-country comparisons (especially using mean scores), we caution against using mean scores as the sole indicator for comparisons. We recommend a multi-indicator approach that includes means, low satisfaction percentage, relative scores, and a measure of inequality. In the current report we have not included analysis of the latter; we recommend that future analysis include measures of inequality to add depth to the interpretation. The Children's Worlds Study has traditionally also emphasised contextualisation of findings, as additional means to enhance the depth of interpretation. We recommend that country teams drive

this approach; it would go a long way toward making sense of curious results that have emerged from the study. A few examples would be seeking contextual variables to explain the high scores across all measures of subjective well-being in Albania; a contextual approach used to interpret low scores for positive affect in Germany; and contextual analysis affording clarification on the gendered nature of the findings in some countries.

As previously mentioned, our data capture all components of a hierarchical conceptualisation of subjective well-being, including positive and negative affect. This provides an opportunity to test various structural models of children's subjective well-being with different samples and cohorts.

In this report we limited our focus to the key domains of well-being. We recommend further analysis of important themes found to be related to children's subjective well-being, including safety, social relationships, time-use, body image, bullying and peer victimisation, and children's rights.

Directions for future research

Through three iterations, the Children's Worlds Study is the largest multinational research on children's subjective well-being. The third wave collected comparative data from 35, largely representative country samples. Given the project management burden, issues around funding, and navigating complex methodological challenges, this is an impressive feat. That said, future waves of the survey should strive to increase sample representativeness, to enhance comparability and ecological validity of the findings. This would entail further standardising sample protocols of participating countries, and should be prioritised above increasing the number of participating countries.

The Children's Worlds Study has provided data on younger children, unavailable in the broader literature-base. Aspiring to continue our philosophy of including younger children, gives rise to the important question of survey participation age limit, given the cognitive burden of endorsing response options on a questionnaire. We may have to design more innovative ways of engaging with and collecting data from large samples of younger children. Using emoticons with the 8-year-old cohort has already provided some assurance of possibility, and opened up an area for research future.

Some countries collected part or all questionnaires on-line, other administered paper questionnaires. More research is required, as well as children's advice, in order to guarantee the equivalence of paper and on-line response in different countries, and also to guarantee that format does not introduce cultural bias to the answers.

Across the three waves of the survey, we consistently found overall well-being scales to be non-invariant across countries, and subsequently cautioned against use of mean scores to compare and rank countries. We further found variations in children's subjective well-being better explained at within-country, rather than between-country level. Given the cultural and linguistic complexities of a multinational study of this magnitude, this outcome is understandable. To address this issue we have used a multi-indicator and contextual approach. In future waves of the survey we may consider moving away from the tradition of ranking countries, especially as it relates to the more abstract measures of overall subjective well-being. However, ranking countries on more concretely worded items related to various aspects of children's lives, may still be more convenient for policy-makers.

While the survey considers a vast list of items and themes that directly impact children's lives, there is a distinct possibility we may be overlooking themes that are important to children. Further qualitative research with children is therefore essential, to ensure we capture all important aspects of children's lives. Information and communication technology progress, and current context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, are rapidly altering children's life experiences.

Since the survey was conducted with children in mainstream schools, it is likely that certain sub-groups have been excluded from the sampling process, such as children with special needs and those who do not attend school for various reasons. A significant area for future research would be to gain access to those children and include them in subsequent waves of the study.

Lack of longitudinal data still remains a limitation, and reduces the capacity of researchers to make confident claims about causal relations between variables. For future waves of the survey, a longitudinal methodological approach should be strongly considered.

Key messages and implications for policy

The essence of the Children's Worlds Study is to generate data for ultimate use in effecting positive change in children's lives, and to improve their overall quality of life. Below we consider the key messages of the study, and its implications for social policy.

The first broad message is that child and adult subjective well-being are relatively independent of each other, the factors that influence adult subjective well-being and children's subjective well-being, are distinct. The implication is that any social policy initiatives aimed at improving children's subjective well-being, should include data that reflects direct engagement with children, placing them centrally in the research process, and ensuring their voices are brought to the fore.

The second broad message is the important contribution of cross-country studies on children's subjective well-being. They enable policy makers to ascertain how children in their individual countries fare on certain aspects of life, in comparison to other countries. This may prove valuable to policy makers in targeting certain areas of children's lives for improvement. In a similar way, it would allow identifying universal trends that warrant further research or policy intervention. For example, 'satisfaction with classmates' ranked very poorly in relation to other aspects of children's lives across the majority of countries; this information would be beneficial for researchers, international agencies and policy makers to advance further research in the area, develop and implement interventions, and enact policy responses. It is only through cross-country studies which facilitate comparative analysis, that this information becomes available.

The third broad message is premised on evidence that most variation in children's subjective well-being, is explained at the within-country level. Using a multiple indicator approach, affords policy makers confidence in identifying priority areas that require intervention. For example, improving the well-being of children presenting with high scores is a difficult task; policy makers may prefer to identify and target subgroups or clusters of children presenting with low well-being. Relative scores are a particularly useful measure to provide policy makers with information on aspects of life where children are doing relatively well or poorly. This would allow for targeted social interventions to be actioned towards certain aspects of life, with specific subgroups of children.

This third wave of the Children's Worlds study, as with previous waves, has contributed to and exemplifies the important role of multinational cross-country comparative research on children's subjective well-being, by engaging with children directly about their experiences of various life aspects. By elucidating these key components of children's lives across country contexts, including positive and negative influence, we are able to focus on and address priority areas for prospective research between and within countries.

The Children's World Study is premised on the collective belief in the great value of engaging with children directly on matters affecting their lives, and children's perspectives and evaluations of various aspects of their lives as meaningful sources of knowledge. This expresses our value position, of ascribing to children as a valid population cohort, and to childhood as an authentic structural

feature of society. It is from this position that our work is located theoretically and informed methodologically. We take pride in the Children's Worlds tradition of engaging directly with children, and in our commitment to ensuring that evidence-based knowledge is generated into policies and actions, that contribute to improving children's well-being and quality of life.

Appendix: Technical details of the study

Here we provide a brief non-technical overview of the design of wave 3 of the Children's Worlds study. Further information will be made available in a technical paper on the project website³.

Questionnaire development

Preparation for the third wave of the study began in November 2015 with a review of learning from the second wave. This included gathering feedback from all participating national research teams on strengths and weaknesses of the survey design. This feedback process was combined with statistical analysis of the data to identify questions that had not worked well (for example, high levels of missing data or very skewed distributions). Research teams also proposed ideas for new content.

A second phase of preparation was to agree key areas of focus for the third wave. The second wave of the survey had provided a descriptive overview of variations in children's subjective well-being. It was agreed that the third wave would attempt to go further in identifying factors that explained these variations both within and between countries. This led to a stronger focus on children's material circumstances and to the inclusion of questions in each country to identify sub-groups of children (for example on the basis of ethnicity, language or religion) who may be at risk of lower-than-average well-being. It was also agreed that there would be an increased focus on children's experiences of safety and violence, and additional questions on these topics were proposed for the questionnaire.

Building on the above work, the first draft of a new questionnaire was developed (May 2016). This was circulated to all research teams who at that point had already indicated their intention to join the third wave. Feedback was received on the formulation and feasibility of questions and some additional suggestions for new content.

This led to a second draft of the questionnaire that was circulated to all participating teams for piloting and discussion with children (February 2017). Guidance on the use of focus groups and cognitive testing was also provided for the piloting process. This draft version of the questionnaire was piloted involving 517 children in 14 countries.

Based on the outcomes of the piloting process, a revised and shortened version of the questionnaire was developed and circulated to all participating research teams for a final round of feedback. This process then led to the final versions of the questionnaires for three age groups of children covered by the survey. The content of these questionnaires is presented and discussed in Chapter 3.

Ethics

A requirement for participation in the survey is that the national research team receives ethical approval from an appropriate authorising body within their country. This might include institutional

³ www.isciweb.org

review boards in universities and government departments. Guidance on key ethical principles was provided to research teams to promote consistency of approach. For example, the importance of maximising children's rights to participate in the research was emphasised. All countries included in this report received appropriate ethical clearance.

One of the key ethical issues that should be noted were requirements to seek parental consent. In some countries it is necessary (for legal reason) to seek active parental consent whereby a parent signed a consent form prior to their child's participation in the survey. Other countries used passive consent – information was provided to parents who had the opportunity to notify the school that they did not wish their child to participate. In some countries no parental consent was needed as schools were able to provide consent.

The issue of parental consent is a key challenge for representative surveys of children. It presents a juxtaposition of parent's rights to make decisions about their children (sometimes enshrined in national law) and children's rights to make their own choices and freely express their views (as in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). This is an issue that requires further discussion in the international research community – particularly for surveys such as Children's Worlds that focus on children's views and carry minimal risks of harm. In general, the feedback from schools was that children enjoyed participating in the survey and saw it as an important opportunity to express their views. No adverse effects of participation were reported to the national research teams.

Sampling strategies

For the second wave of the survey a specialist central review board had been established to review proposals for sampling strategies and approve final versions. This had worked well and so was continued for the third wave. A set of guidelines were drawn up, incorporating learning from the second wave. Key requirements for full inclusion in the study were to use some form of random sampling (usually random stratified cluster sampling) with a sampling frame covering at least 95% of the child population in the age groups surveyed in mainstream schools. Up to 5% exclusions were allowed in each country due to issues such as the difficulties and costs of surveying very small schools in geographically remote areas. A target sample size of at least 1,000 children in at least 20 schools in each age group was set.

Initially each national research team proposed a sampling strategy. This was reviewed by the sampling review board who provided feedback, including suggestions for improvement. After one or more revisions, each final strategy was approved by the review board.

Administration

The responsibility for conducting the survey lay with each national research team. In most countries, surveys were administered on paper. In these cases members of the research team visited each school to support the survey administration and were available to answer any questions from staff or children. In some countries (Belgium (Flanders), Finland, Spain, Germany, Greece, Malta, Norway, Poland, Russia, Taiwan and UK (England and Wales)) the survey was administered by electronic questionnaire instead of or in addition to paper. In some of these instances members of the research team still visited the schools when the survey was administered while in others the research team sent guidance to schools and teachers were responsible for organising the administration. The decision as to whether to use paper or digital questionnaires was primarily informed by practicalities within each country. It is still an open question as to whether different modes of questionnaire may lead to different response patterns among children.

Some research teams felt that the youngest age group of children – around the age of 8 years – may be unfamiliar with completing questionnaires of this kind. A sample training sheet was produced that could be adapted to local context and used immediately before the survey to enable children to familiarise themselves with the task.

Data processing

Data inputting of paper questionnaires was conducted by each national research team who were responsible for carrying out checks to ensure the quality of data input. At this stage all questionnaires were input as there was a subsequent data cleaning process managed centrally. A standard template in SPSS was used for data inputting to ensure consistency of coding across countries. Evidently this stage was not required for digital questionnaires although some recoding was required to match the standard template.

The data files were then sent to a central team of researchers who undertook a standard set of checks on the data. This include identifying any inconsistencies in coding and any variables with particularly high levels of missing data. These issues were discussed with each national research team and any remedial actions and corrections were applied.

In addition, a number of criteria were used to identify any cases that would not be included in the international data set. These were:

1. The child was more than two years outside the target age range for the particular age group being surveyed
2. More than 50% of the child's responses were missing data
3. There was evidence of systematic responding (exactly the same answers for a set of 14 time use questions). This criterion for identifying systematic responding had also been used in the previous wave of the survey. Based on meeting any of these three criteria cases were omitted from the international data set. On average this resulted in around 3% of cases being excluded.

Following the completion of the data cleaning process, weightings were calculated for most of the national data sets. These weightings were designed to rebalance the survey based on:

1. Planned unequal probability of selection at the sampling design stage
2. Non-participation of children or schools in the way originally envisaged in the sampling design
3. Balancing the proportion of cases across sampling strata to match the profile of the overall child population.

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