



L-Università ta' Malta
Centre for Resilience &
Socio-Emotional Health

International Survey of Children's Subjective Wellbeing Malta 2020

Carmel Cefai | Natalie Galea

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We worry about what a child will become tomorrow,
yet we forget that they are someone today

Stacia Tauscher

Chapter I

Introduction

Background

Children's perspectives on their learning, behaviour, health, wellbeing and other aspects of their lives, are different from those of adults, such as teachers and parents, and are a valuable source of information on how contexts such as schools, home and the community may improve the children's wellbeing and quality of life. Children have a unique insider experience of what it means to be a child in a particular context which may be different from that of adults and thus are an important source of knowledge (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; McAuley & Rose, 2010). What they have to say about their experiences at school, at home, and with friends, about their health, wellbeing, social inclusion, relationships and satisfaction with life, provides a more adequate understanding of the situation and may throw light on important issues which are sometimes overlooked by adults. Furthermore, children have a right to participate actively in research, interventions, and policies targeting their welfare. This reflects models of childhood which construe children as agents who actively construct their own lives, seeing childhood not just as a preparation for adulthood (becoming), but also as an important state of being in the present, with children actively influencing and shaping their own lives (McAuley & Rose, 2010; McAuley, McKeown & Merriman, 2012).

The International Study of Children's Subjective Wellbeing, Children's World, is an international research project on children's subjective wellbeing involving more than 40 countries across the world. The objective of this project is to collect representative data on children's lives and daily activities, their time use and their perceptions of their wellbeing, in as many countries as possible, with the aim of raising awareness on, and improving, children's wellbeing and their life situations (Rees & Main, 2015). It strives to do so through the children's own voices, giving children a platform to voice their views on various aspects of their life and wellbeing. Whilst some other international studies such as the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study (HBSC) by WHO, and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) by OECD, included some subjective questions in recent waves, they do not cover the full range of aspects of children's lives, their questions on subjective wellbeing are rather limited, and they do not include a broad selection of countries across continents and different levels of national wealth (Rees, Savahl, Lee, & Casas, 2020).

The present, third wave of the International Study of Children's Subjective Wellbeing¹ includes 35 countries² across the world, with data collection taking place in 2018-2019. Maltese children participated again in the study. In this report we are pleased to present the findings from the Malta study with over 2000 children aged 8 to 12-year-old. The report provides the findings of the study according to the ten areas explored in the study, namely children's views on their homes and family, their friends, school, locality, leisure time, economic wellbeing, rights as children, satisfaction with life, and living in Malta. The findings are then discussed and compared with the findings from the other countries in the project, and with the findings of the Malta second wave study in 2016. The report concludes with a number of recommendations

¹ The first wave of the study was published in 2012 in 14 countries, while the second wave followed in 2013-2016 with 16 countries participating, including Malta (Cefai & Galea, 2016).

² Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Malta, Namibia, Nepal, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, UK, Vietnam and Wales

on how the subjective wellbeing of Maltese children at home, at school, in their community, and during their leisure time, may be improved according to children’s own voices.

Methodology

Sampling: Strategy and outcome

The sample was designed to achieve a nationally representative sample of school children around the ages of 8, 10 and 12 with a total of 3000 children. One thousand children were selected from Year 3 (aged 6 to 8 years old), Year 5 (aged 8 to 10 years old) and Year 7 (aged 10 to 12 years old) respectively. The primary sampling unit was the three mainstream school sectors in Malta (i.e. State schools, Church schools and Independent schools). Separate samples were drawn for Years 3 and 5 (Primary school education) and Year 7/Form 1 (Middle school education). Percentages of students attending the different types of school sectors were obtained to calculate the number of students required for the corresponding sample from each sector. This ensured that the sample reflects the proportion of children in each school sector. The sampling frame was further stratified by various variables namely geographic region, gender and school size. State schools were selected by stratified sampling, with one school randomly selected from each of the ten colleges. Selection of the other remaining state schools was based on probabilities proportional to their size, with schools selected from colleges/regions characterised by large student populations. Church and Independent schools were selected on the basis of size/student populations and gender, but with schools across different regions.

Two representative classes were selected by the Head of School for each age group, according to set instructions provided in the information sheet. Since both students aged 8 and 10 years attend Primary schools, the same schools were selected for data collection for the two respective age groups. In the case of Middle schools, large schools comprised an average of six classes for 12-year-olds. In such schools, four classes were selected. The survey began in late 2017 and was completed by January 2018. Following a number of reminders, a total sample of 2021 was achieved.

Weights have been applied to the sample used in the analysis so that the proportion of students in the data set in each stratum is equivalent to the proportion of students in that stratum in the population. Additional weighting was also applied to balance the weighting across the three age groups. This used the existing weights but adjusted them so that each age group has an equal weight in the analysis. The resulting numbers are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Frequency of achieved and weighted sample

	State		Church		Independent		Total	
	Ach.	Wgt.	Ach.	Wgt.	Ach.	Wgt.	Ach.	Wgt.
8-year-old	300	380	214	199	53	94	567	673
10-year-old	319	401	273	214	38	59	630	674
12-year-old	444	363	380	311	0	0	824	674
Total	1063	1144	867	724	91	153	2021	2021

The final sample consisted of 2021 school students, with about 660-670 in each of the three cohorts; there is a good gender balance in the primary school cohorts but there is a gender imbalance in the secondary in favour of boys (Tables 1.2). The great majority were born in Malta and speak Maltese. Amongst 10 and 12-year-olds, about 10% were not born in Malta, 26% speak English and 15% have a disability/learning difficulty (Tables 1.3, 1.4).

Table 1.2: Frequency of achieved and weighted sample by age by gender

	8-year-old		10-year-old		12-year-old		Total	
	Ach.	Wgt.	Ach.	Wgt.	Ach.	Wgt.	Ach.	Wgt.
Boy	309	365	353	344	474	388	1136	1097
Girl	254	303	273	324	333	272	860	899
Total	563	668	626	668	807	660	1996	1996
Nmissing 25								

Table 1.3: Frequency born in Malta and child disability (10y & 12y)

	Born in Malta ¹		Would you say that you are disabled? ²	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	1053	88.6%	180	15.4%
No	112	9.4%	830	70.7%
Not sure	23	1.9%	164	13.9%
Total	1188	100%	1174	100%
Nmissing 834 ¹ , 847 ²				

Table 1.4: Languages Spoken (10y & 12y)

	Language spoken					
	At home ¹		In lessons at school ²		With friends ³	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Maltese	964	81.5%	842	71.2%	866	73.3%
English	140	11.8%	294	24.9%	301	25.5%
Italian	18	1.5%	5	0.5%	3	0.2%
Arabic	26	2.2%	5	0.4%	2	0.1%
Other Language	35	3.0%	35	3.0%	11	0.9%
Total	1182	100%	1181	100%	1181	100%
Nmissing 839 ¹ , 840 ² , 840 ³						

Instrument used

Three versions of the International Survey of Children's Wellbeing questionnaire (ISCWeB; www.isciweb.org) were used, one for each age group, exploring the same issues, but with some variations, particularly between the questionnaires for the 8 and 10-year-olds and that for 12-year-olds, which included more items. The questionnaires explored topics such as family and people children live with, money and possessions, friends, neighbourhood, school and bullying, use of time, children's rights, and views about, and satisfaction with, themselves, their life and their future. The questionnaires comprised questions about frequency of activities, satisfaction scales of life in general and specific domains or factors, agreement scales with status and events, and socio-demographic characteristics. The self-reported wellbeing questions examined cognitive subjective wellbeing (overall life satisfaction), affective subjective wellbeing (positive and negative affect) and psychological wellbeing. Three types of scales were used to measure each aspect of children's lives, namely, agreement (5-point unipolar agreement scale), satisfaction (11-point scale), and frequency (of activities in last week, month, year). In the 8-years-olds version, a scale of 5 emoticons was used for the satisfaction items. The questionnaires were translated in Maltese making use of a backward and forward procedure, piloted with a focus group with each age group, and amended accordingly.

Statistical analysis

The presentation of the findings covers weighted data analysis using different statistical tests, namely chi-square test, t-test, ANOVA and linear regression. Descriptive statistics of each variable were also computed (frequencies, means and standard deviation). ANOVA and t-test were applied to compare mean scores by socio-demographic variables, namely gender and age. To obtain a detailed pattern of the characteristics of children, further analysis was carried out between various variables and school sector, home district, as well as whether the children were born in Malta or outside Malta. The Kruskal-Wallis H test and Mann-Whitney U test were also used to analyse some of the data by age and gender respectively. For all tests, a p-value of less than 0.05 (95% confidence) level of significance was employed.

Chapter 2

My Family and My Home

My Family

Figure 2.1 illustrates that 98% of 10 and 12-year-old children live together with their families. Ninety per cent sleep/live in the same home, while 10% do so in different homes on a regular basis (Figure 2.2). More 10-year-old children report sleeping in different home than 12-year-olds. Those who sleep in the same home are more likely to express positive wellbeing in contrast to those who live in different homes, though the great majority of participants in both groups report positive wellbeing (Table 2.1, 2.2).

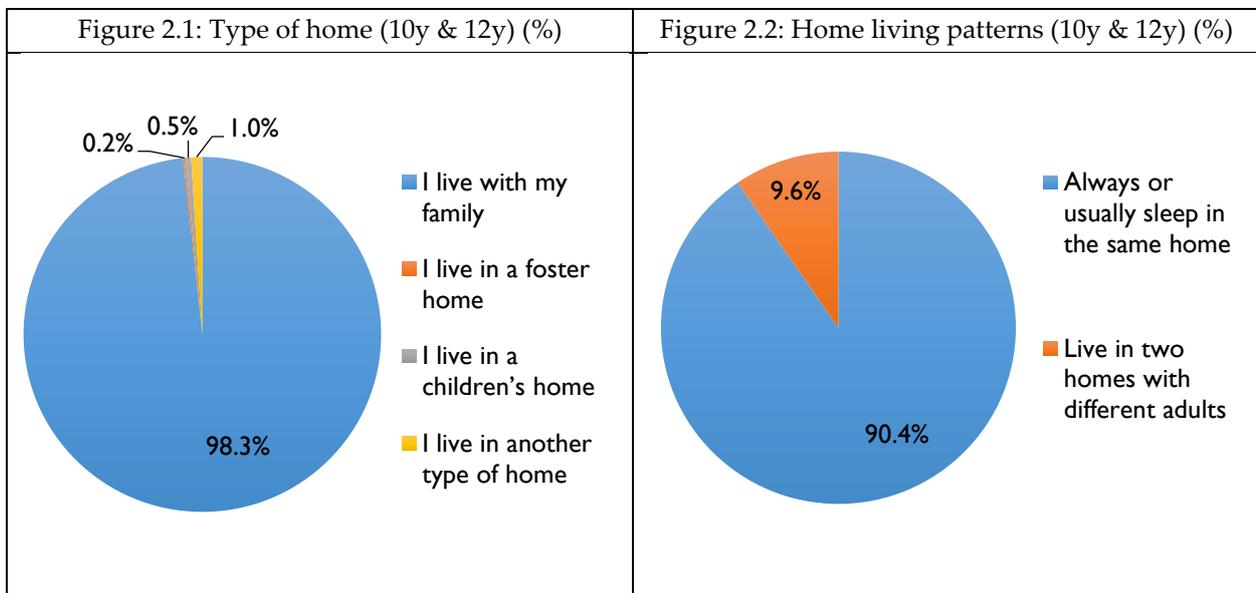


Table 2.1: Same home or different home by age

		10y	12y
Same home	N	589	609
	%	87.9%	92.8%
Different homes	N	81	47
	%	12.1%	7.2%
Total	N	670	656
	%	100%	100%
Note: $\chi^2(10)=9.22, p<0.01$			

Table 2.2: Mean scores of SWBS by whether they live in the same home (10y & 12Y)

	Mean	Std. Dev.
I always sleep in the same home	90.83***	16.271
I regularly sleep in two homes with different adults	84.32***	23.767
Note: F(1,1280)=15.23, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001		

The vast majority of children who live only in one home live with their mother (99%) and father (91%), with 78% of such families including siblings and 16% grandparents. Only 2.5% of one-home children live with their mother’s partner and 1% with their father’s partner (Table 2.3). Of the 10% of children who live in two homes, in the first home 85% live with their mother and 59% with their mother’s partner, while in the second home 74% live their father and 33% with their father’s partner. Grandparents also feature quite strongly in the second home with 40% and 30% of families having grandmothers and grandfathers respectively (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Children living in one home (only home) or separate homes (first & second home) (10y & 12y)

	Only Home	First Home ¹	Second Home ²
	% of cases	% of cases	% of cases
Mother	98.8%	84.5%	26.1%
Father	90.6%	37.6%	74.3%
Mother’s partner	2.5%	58.6%	7.5%
Father’s partner	0.9%	-	33.2%
Grandmother	9.9%	-	40.2%
Grandfather	5.9%	29.6%	30.4%
Siblings	77.5%	61.1%	39.6%
Other children	2.0%	9.9%	14.6%
Other adults	4.1%	12.6%	13.1%
Total	292.2%	293.9%	279.0%
Note: ^{1,2} Cases where children live in separate homes			

Sixty-five per cent of families of 10 and 12-year-old children consist of 3 to 4 persons (including parent/s) followed by 26% of 5-6 persons (Figure 2.3). There do not appear to be clear gender differences in the number of persons in the family, but there are more boys in the smaller families and more girls in the bigger families (7 and more) (Table 2.4). The majority of the respondents (68%) have one or two siblings, whilst 17% did not have any siblings (Figure 2.4).

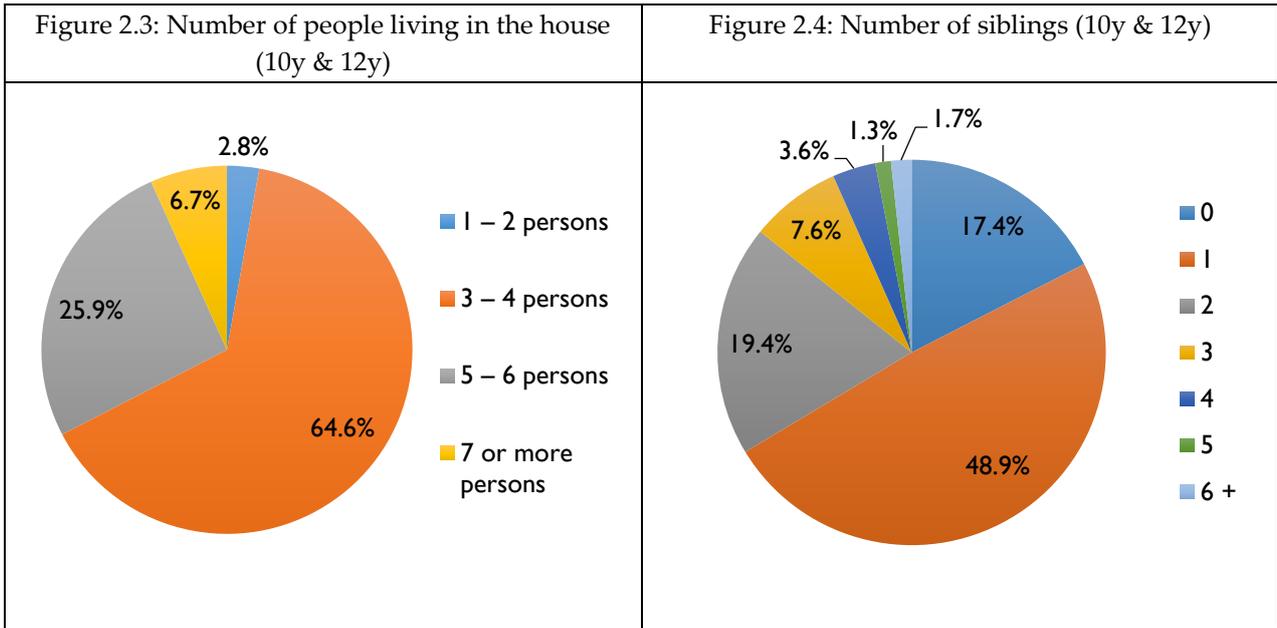


Table 2.4: Means of people living at home by gender

People living in your home	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	4.19***	1.180
Girl	4.53***	1.618

Note: $t(1308)=-3.85, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Whilst in the great majority both parents do not live or work away from the family, 12% of fathers and 5% of mothers do (Figures 2.5, 2.6). Girls and 10-year-old children are more likely to have their fathers living or working away than boys and 12-year-old children (Table 2.5).

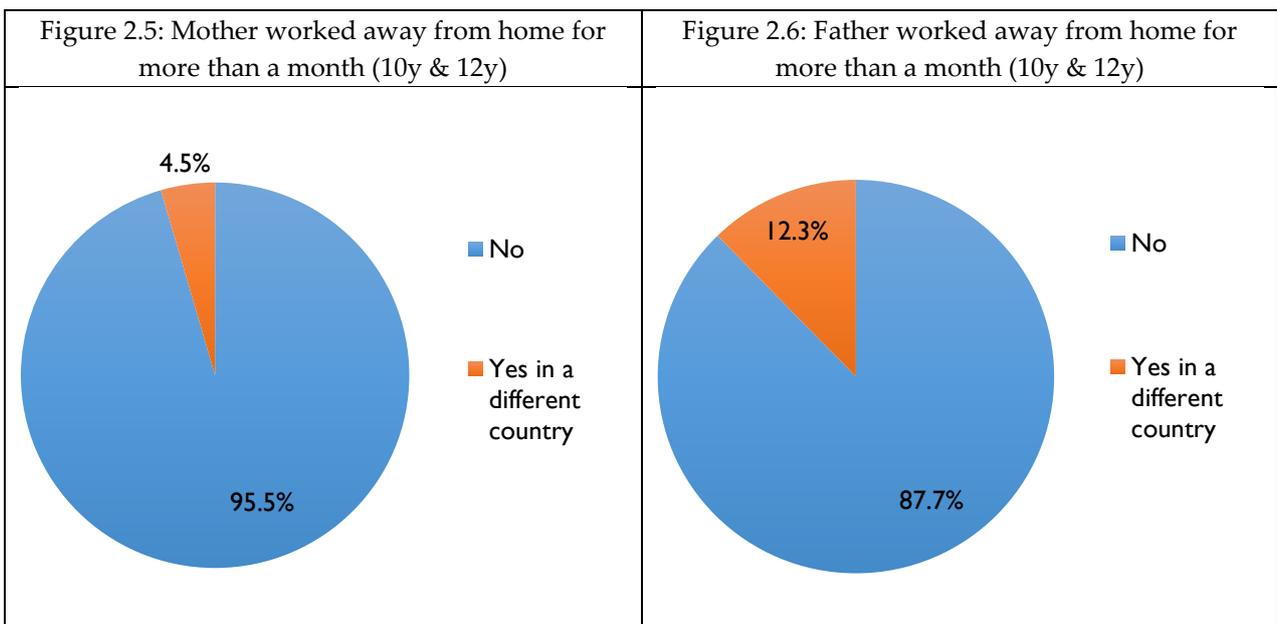


Table 2.5: Father working away from home by age and gender

Father working away from home for more than a month		
Age ¹	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	.15**	.359
12y	.09**	.293
Gender ²	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	.11*	.307
Girl	.15*	.352

Note: ¹t(1278)=3.132, ²t(1277)=-2.15, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Twenty-eight per cent of children see their family they don’t live with daily, and 55% at least once or more per week, 4 % never see the other family (Figure 2.7). Twelve-year-old children and boys meet more often with family member they don’t live with (Table 2.6).

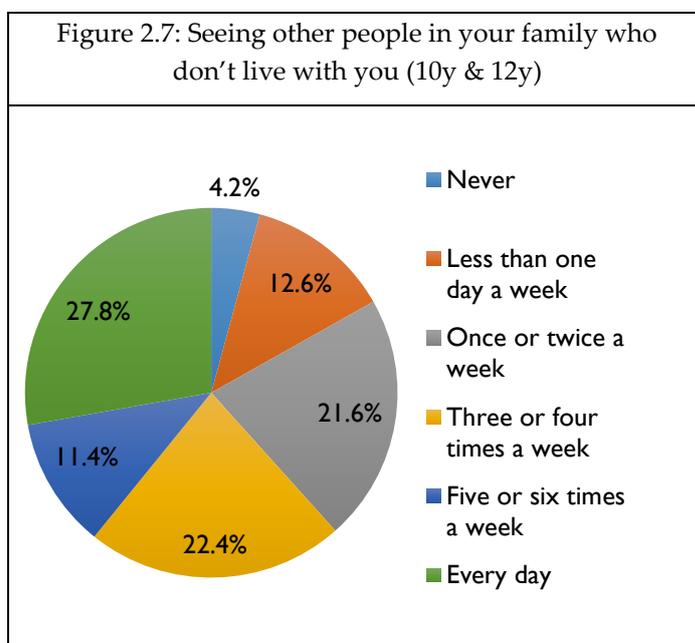


Table 2.6: Seeing other family members who children don’t live with by age and gender (10y & 12y)

See other people in your family who don't live with you		
Age ¹	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	2.71***	1.639
12y	3.44***	1.303
Gender ²	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	3.20**	1.470
Girl	2.93**	1.574

Note: ¹t(1301)=-8.87, ²t(1296)=3.15, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figures 2.8 and 2.9 show that the majority of Maltese children reported high levels of satisfaction with the people they live with. Eighty-one per cent of 8-year-olds and 73% of 10 and 12-year-olds are totally satisfied. Ten-year-olds are more satisfied than 12-year-olds (Table 2.7).

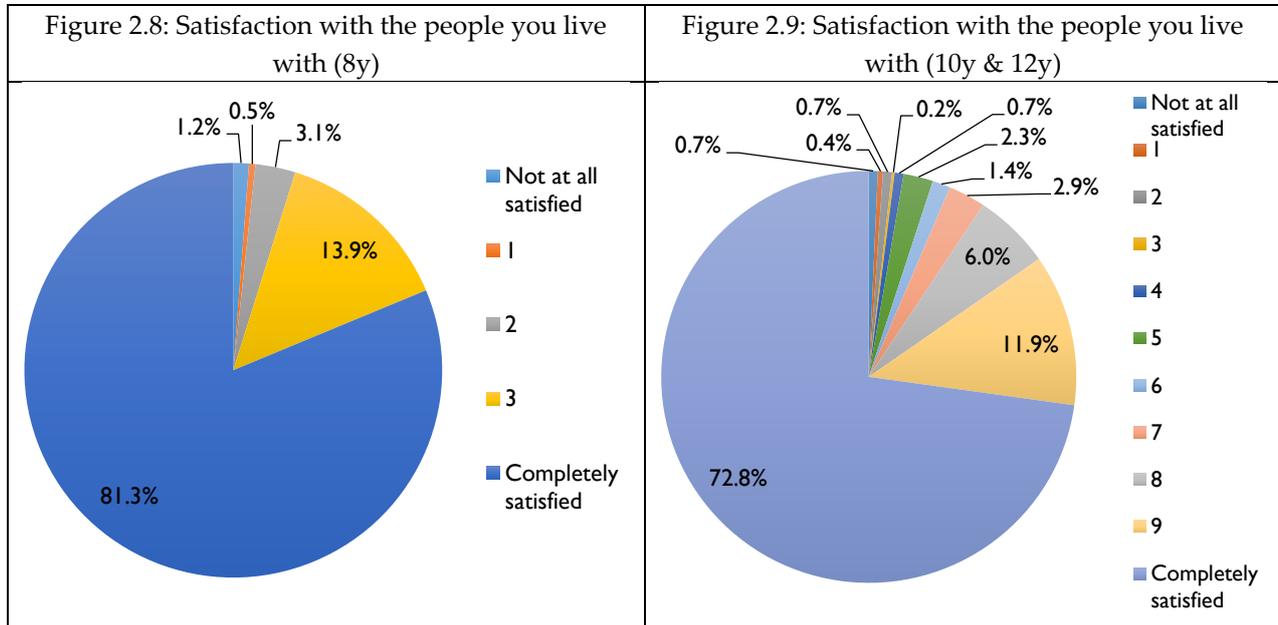


Table 2.7: Satisfaction with the people that you live with by age

Satisfaction with the people that you live with	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	9.38*	1.521
12y	9.20*	1.754

Note: $t(1310)=2.06, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Overall, the great majority of participants have positive feelings towards other family members, with 81% completely agreeing that there are people who care about them, 75% that if they have a problem their family will help and that they feel safe at home, and 74% that they have a good time with their family. The scores were slightly lower for ‘parents listen to what they have to say’ and for ‘making decisions about children’, with 61% agreeing completely (Figure 2.10). Those who feel safe at home are more likely to report more positive affectivity and less negative affectivity (Table 2.8). The great majority of children are also satisfied with the other people in their family (those they do not live with), with 69% of 8-year-olds and 62% of 10/12-year-olds being completely satisfied (Figures 2.11, 2.12).

Figure 2.10: Family-related statements amongst all age groups

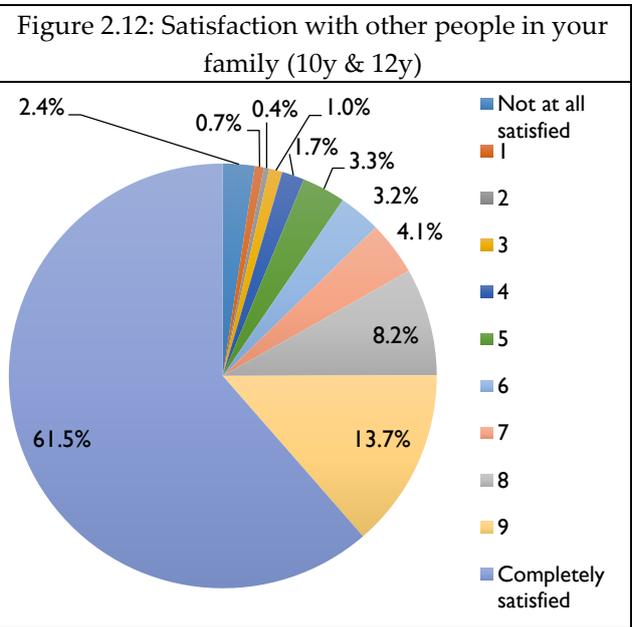
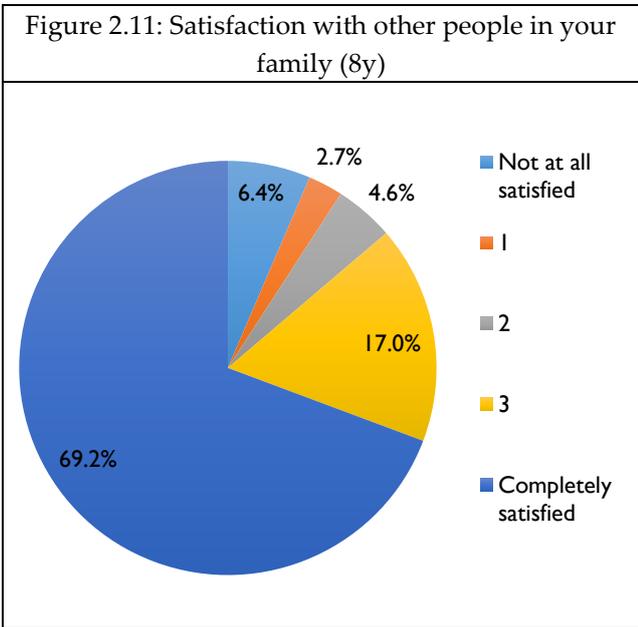
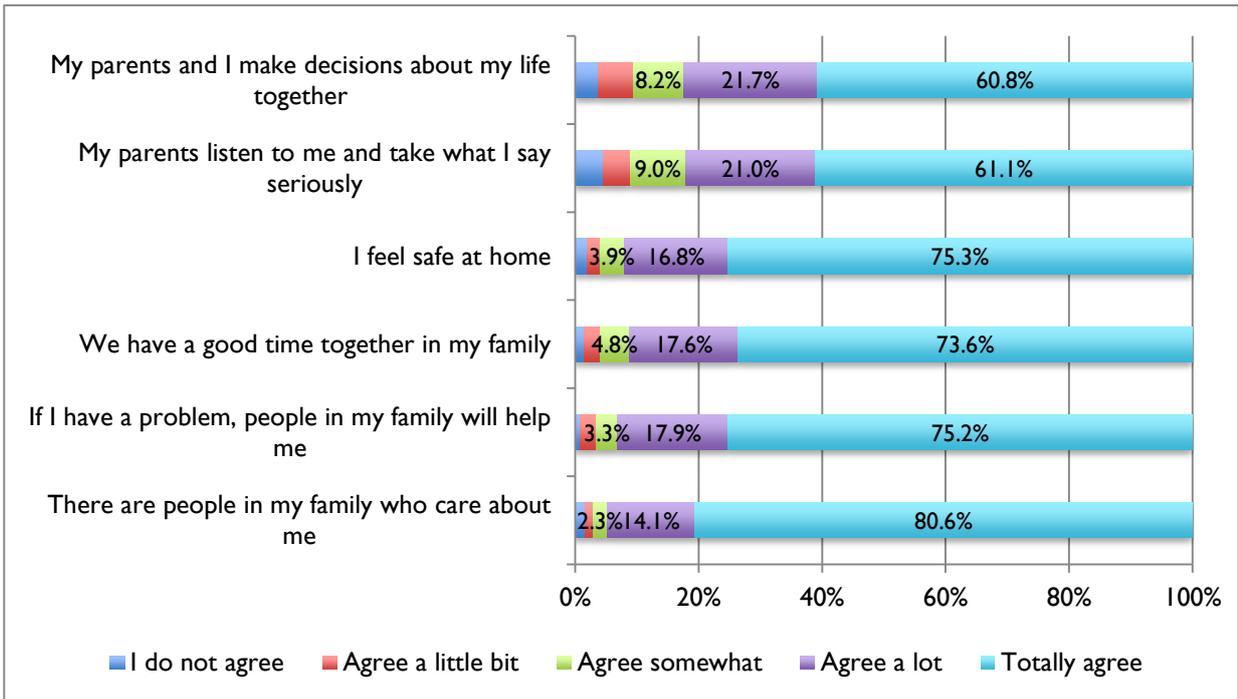


Table 2.8: Feel safe at home by Positive Affect Scale (PAS) & Negative Affect Scale (NAS)

Feel safe at home		
PAS ¹	Mean	Std. Dev.
I do not agree	53.76***	30.758
Agree a little bit	74.48***	20.466
Agree somewhat	68.50***	22.779
Agree a lot	82.95***	18.490
Totally agree	85.83***	15.186
Total	84.01***	17.296
NAS ²	Mean	Std. Dev.
I do not agree	48.49***	29.292
Agree a little bit	48.97***	28.005
Agree somewhat	50.57***	23.885
Agree a lot	42.75***	29.135
Totally agree	31.73***	26.142
Total	34.83***	27.242

Note: ¹F(4,1143)=28.34, ²F(4,1137)=13.44, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Twenty-four per cent of children reported being hit more than 3 times, whilst 17% were called names (Figures 2.13, 2.14). Younger children are more likely to be hit than 12-year-olds, whilst 8 and 10-year-olds are more likely to be called names than 12-year-olds (Table 2.9).

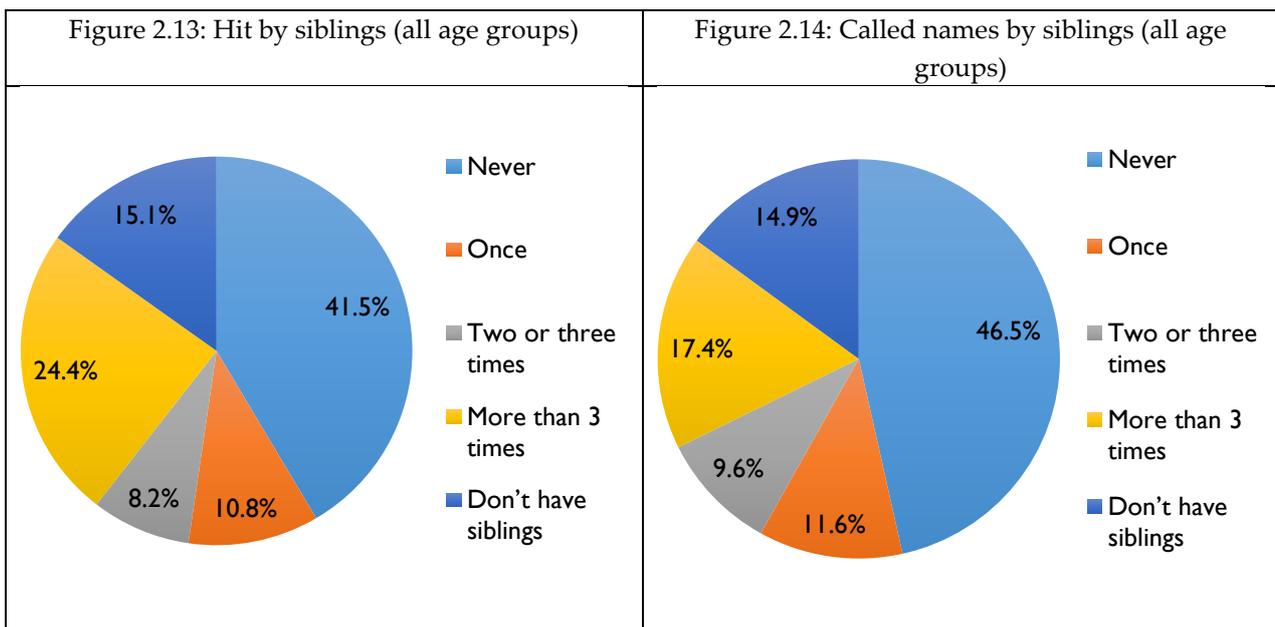


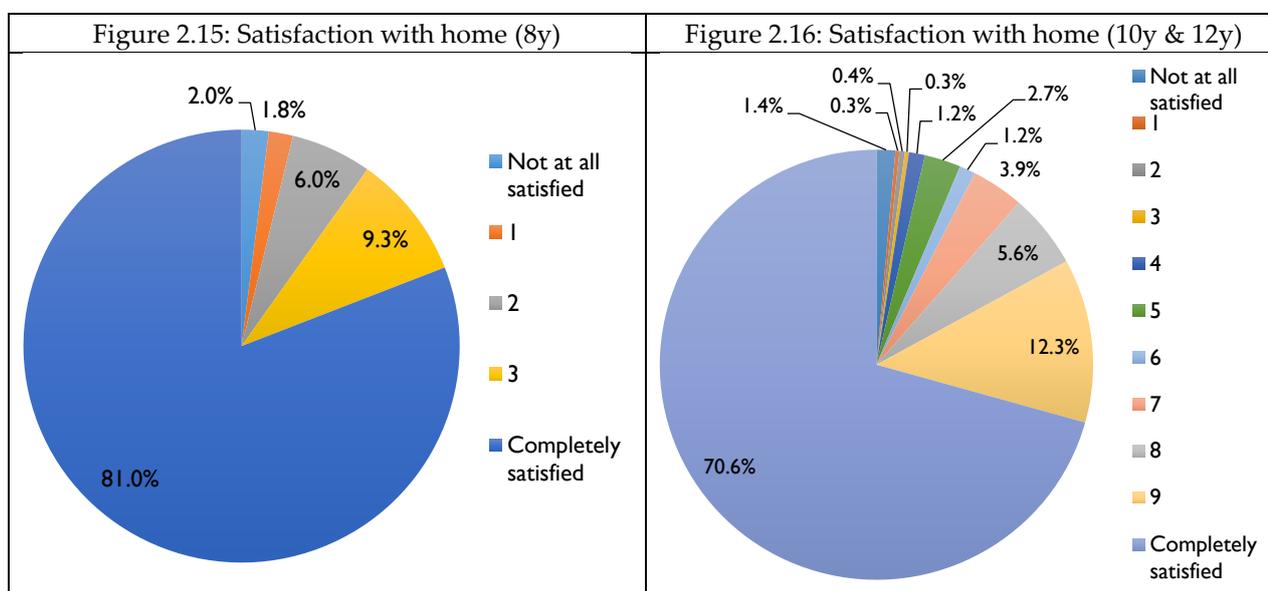
Table 2.9: Mean scores of ‘called names’ and ‘hit by siblings’ by age

		8y	10y	12y
Hit by your brothers or sisters during the past month ¹	Mean	2.00***	1.80***	.89***
	Std. Dev.	1.624	1.589	1.196
Called unkind names by your brothers or sisters during the past month ²	Mean	1.66***	1.65***	.86***
	Std. Dev.	1.682	1.589	1.165

Note: ¹F(2,1696)=80.66, ²F(2,1687)=48.47, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

My Home

Figures 2.15 and 2.16 show that the great majority of the three groups of children are highly satisfied with the home where they live, with 81% of 8-year-olds and 71% of 10/12-year-olds being completely satisfied. More than half (56%) have three to four bedrooms, with 12-year-olds more likely to live in such homes than 10-year-olds, whilst more 10-year-olds are likely to live in houses with one or two bedrooms (Figure 2.17; Table 2.10). Almost all children have at least one bathroom in their home, with around one half having 2 bathrooms and two thirds 2 or more bathrooms (Figure 2.18). One half of 10/12-year-old participants have their own bedroom whilst the other half share it; more 12-year-olds have their own room than 10-year-olds (Figure 2.19; Table 2.11). Eighty-six per cent have their own bed, whilst 89% of 10 and 12-year-olds have a place where to study at home, with the mean scores being higher for female than male students (Figures 2.20, 2.21; Table 2.12).



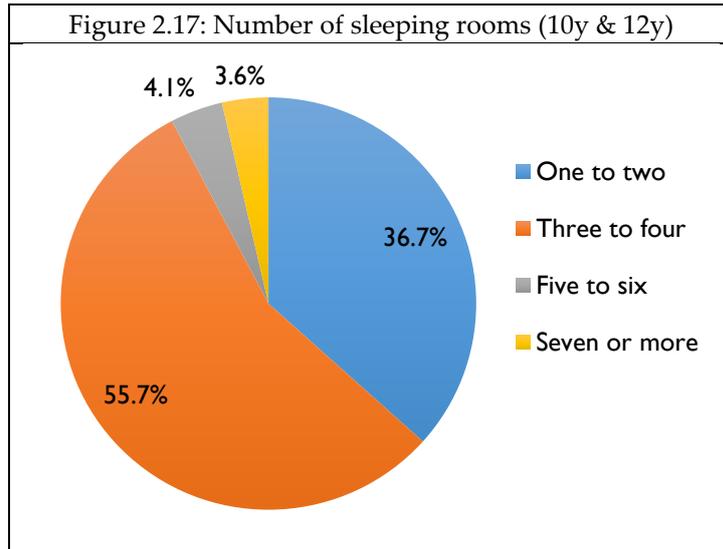


Table 2.10: Number of rooms slept in by age

		10y	12y
One to two	N	259	214
	%	40.2%	33.2%
Three to four	N	326	391
	%	50.5%	60.7%
Five to six	N	33	20
	%	5.1%	3.1%
Seven or more	N	27	19
	%	4.2%	3%
Total	N	645	644
	%	100%	100%

Note: $\chi^2(3)=14.75, p<0.01$

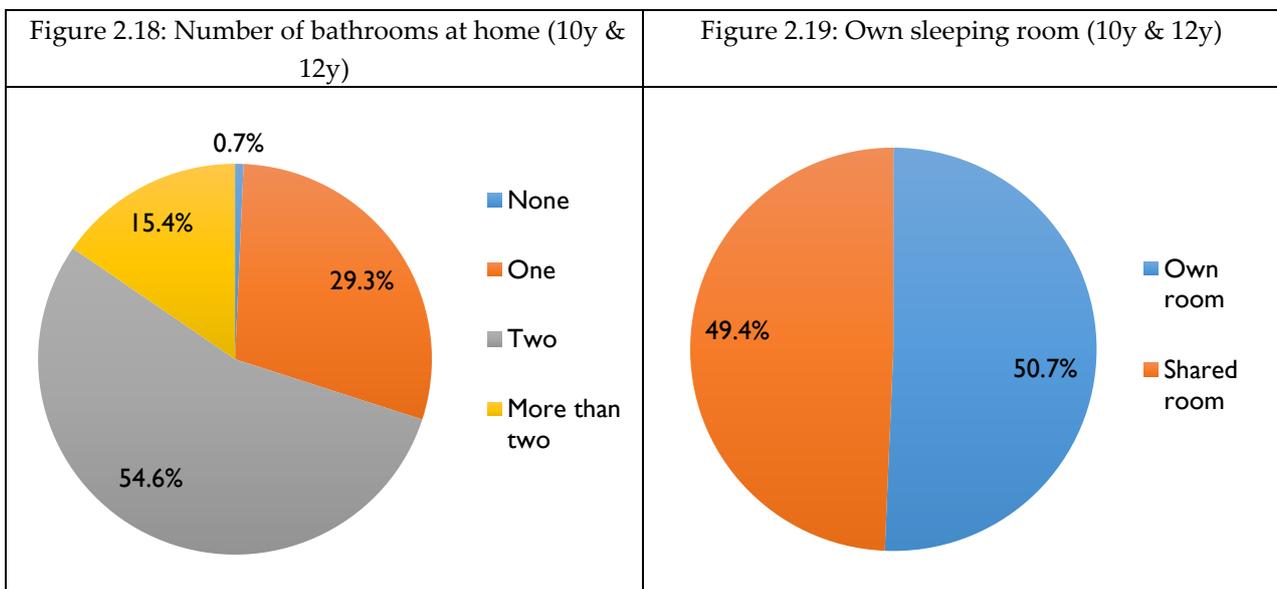


Table 2.11: Own sleeping room by age

		10y	12y
Own room	N	309	361
	%	46.5%	54.9%
Shared room	N	356	296
	%	53.5%	45.1%
Total	N	665	657
	%	100%	100%

Note: $\chi^2(1)=9.51, p<0.01$

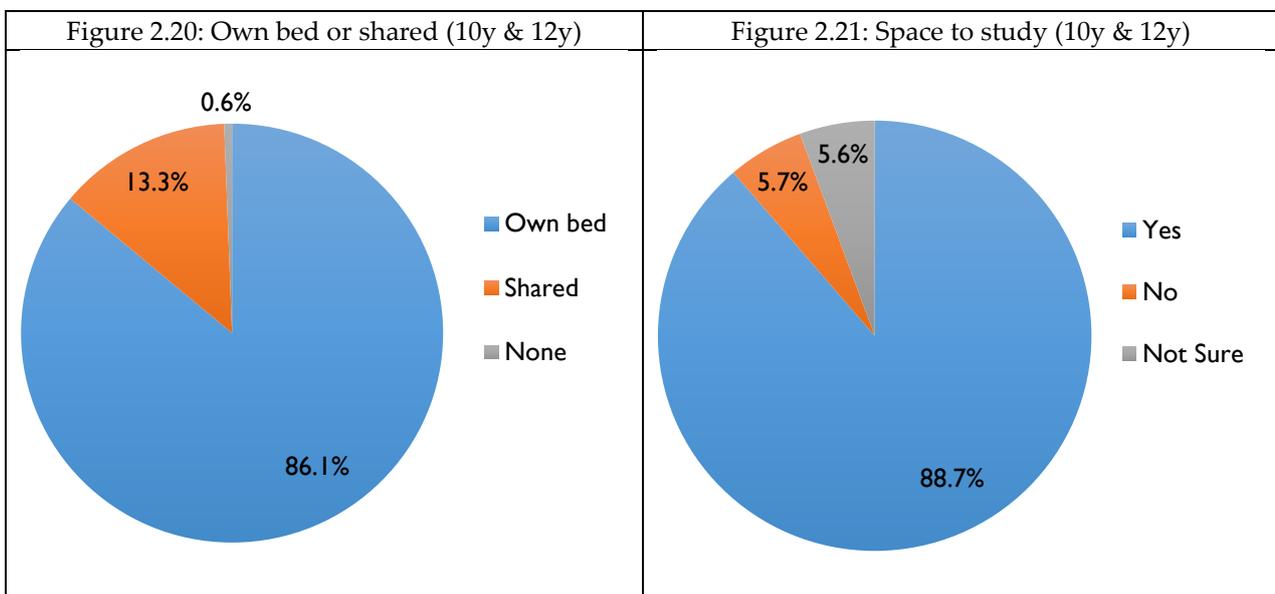


Table 2.12: Study space at home by gender

Space to study at home	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	1.14***	.449
Girl	1.20***	.563

Note: $t(1316)=-2.09, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Chapter 3

My Friends

The vast majority of participants are satisfied or very satisfied with their friends with 78% and 57% of 8 and 10/12-year-olds respectively being completely satisfied (Figures 3.1, 3.2). Eight-year-old girls have significantly higher levels of satisfaction than boys, with a similar tendency amongst 10 and 12-year-olds. Ten year olds report higher levels of satisfaction than 12-year-olds (Table 3.1, 3.2). Overall, most participants reported positive and supportive relations with their friends, with 68% completely agreeing that they have a friend to support them if they have a problem, 65% that they get along well together with their friends, 60% that they have enough friends and 56% that friends are usually nice to them. However, 14% indicated that they do not have enough friends (Figure 3.3). More 8-year-olds believe they have nice, supportive friends, but there are no clear gender differences (Table 3.3). Nineteen per cent see their friends everyday while 50% do so one or more times a week, but 14% never see their friends (Figure 3.4). Eight year olds see their friends more frequently than older peers (Table 3.4).

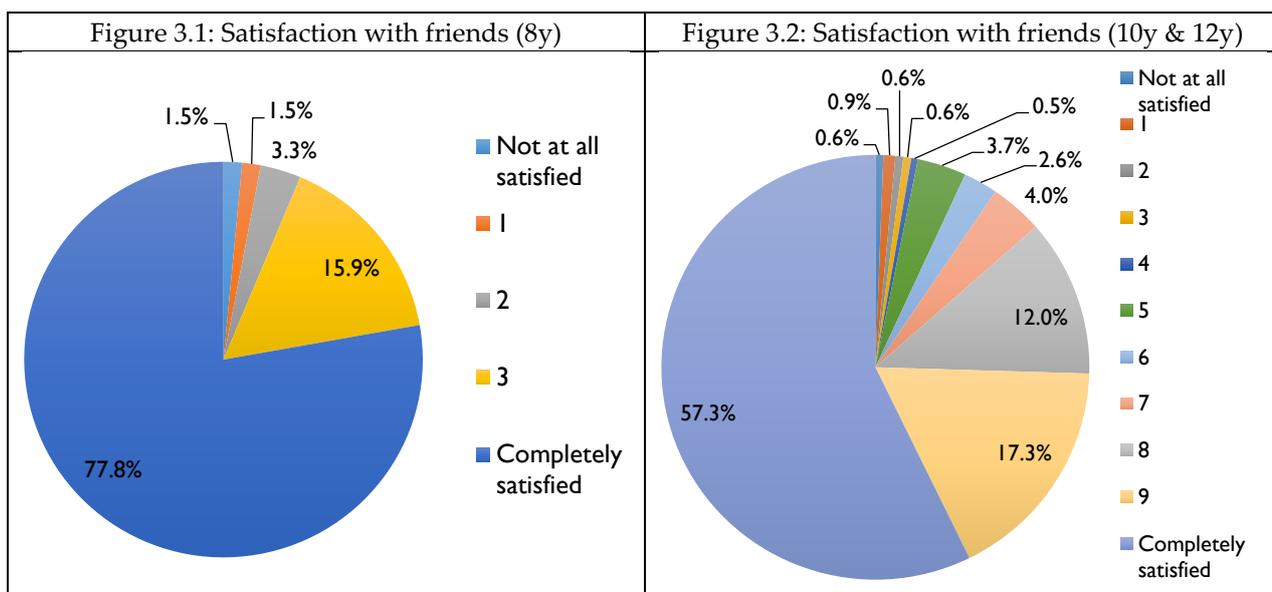


Table 3.1: Satisfaction with friends by gender (8y)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Happy with your friends	Boy	3.58***	0.876
	Girl	3.78***	0.552

Note: $t(1312)=-1.56, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Table 3.2: Satisfaction with friends by age

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Satisfaction with your friends	10y	9.03*	1.863
	12y	8.82*	1.778

Note: $t(1318)=2.04, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Figure 3.3: Relations with friends (all age groups)

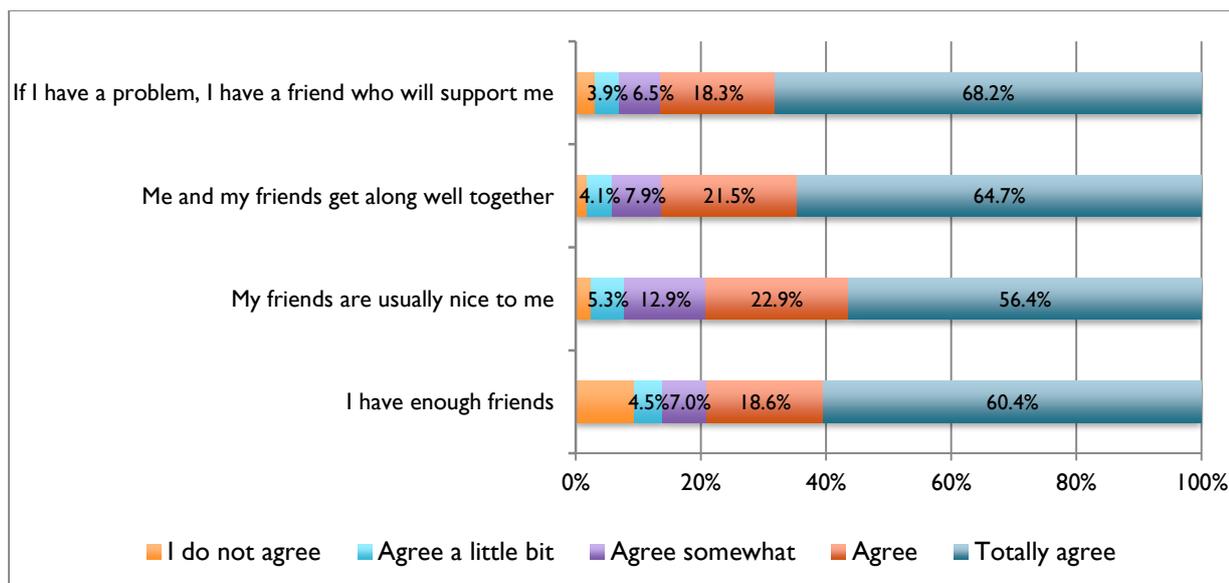


Table 3.3: Relations with friends by age

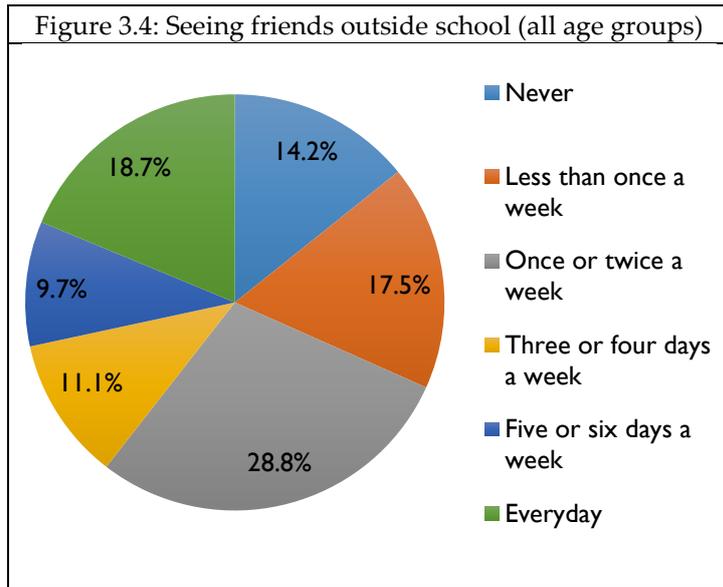
		Mean	Std. Dev.
I have enough friends ¹	8y	3.16	1.418
	10y	3.10	1.334
	12y	3.23	1.114
My friends are usually nice to me ²	8y	3.34*	1.085
	10y	3.21*	1.042
	12y	3.22*	.971
Me and my friends get along well together ³	8y	3.58***	.845
	10y	3.33***	1.008
	12y	3.39***	.909
If I have a problem, I have a friend who will support me ⁴	8y	3.57***	.928
	10y	3.35***	1.033
	12y	3.43***	.991

Note: ¹F(2,1867)=1.63, ²F(2,1916)=2.88, ³F(2,1921)=12.21, ⁴F(2,1878)=8.20, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 3.4: Seeing friends outside school by age

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Seeing friends outside school	8y	2.56**	1.780
	10y	2.28**	1.577
	12y	2.37**	1.611

Note: F(2,1971)=4.95, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001



Chapter 4

My Life at School

The great majority of 8-year-old participants are satisfied or very satisfied at school, with 67% being completely satisfied with their life as a student, 70% with the things learn at school and 70% with the other children in their class (Figure 4.1). Eight-year-old girls reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction than boys in these areas (Table 4.1). Ten and twelve-year-olds similarly expressed a high level of satisfaction with their life at school, their learning, and their peers, though the level of complete satisfaction ranged between 44% (other children) to 57% (things learned) (Figure 4.2). Ten-year-old students report significantly higher levels of satisfaction than 12-year-olds on the three aspects of school life (Table 4.2). Ten and twelve-year-old students who speak Maltese are more satisfied with the things learned at school and with other children in their class than those who speak English (Table 4.2).

Figure 4.1 Satisfaction with life at school (8y)

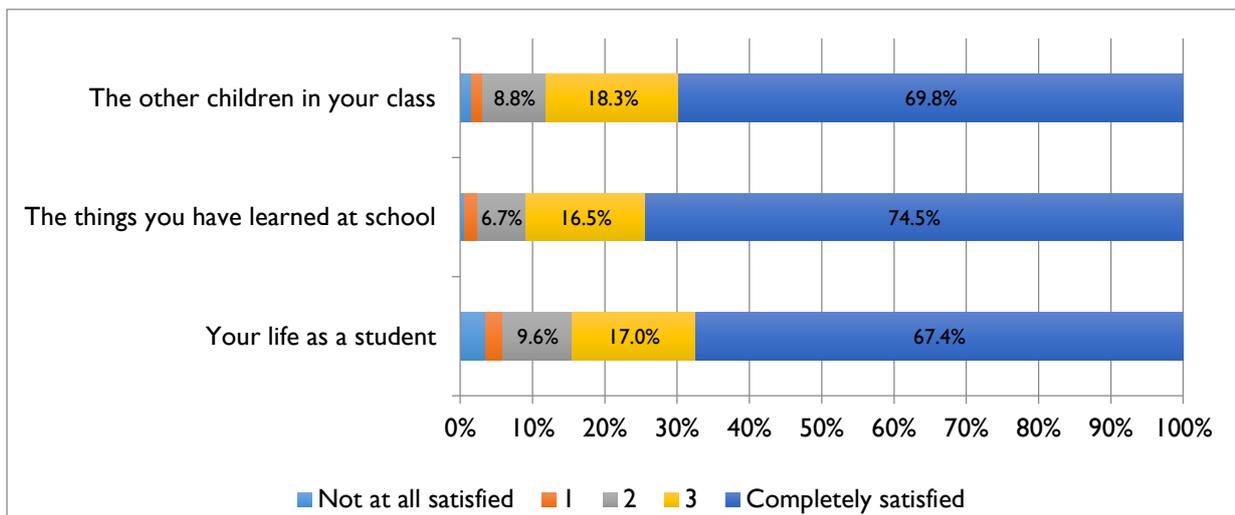


Figure 4.2: Satisfaction with life at school (10y & 12y)

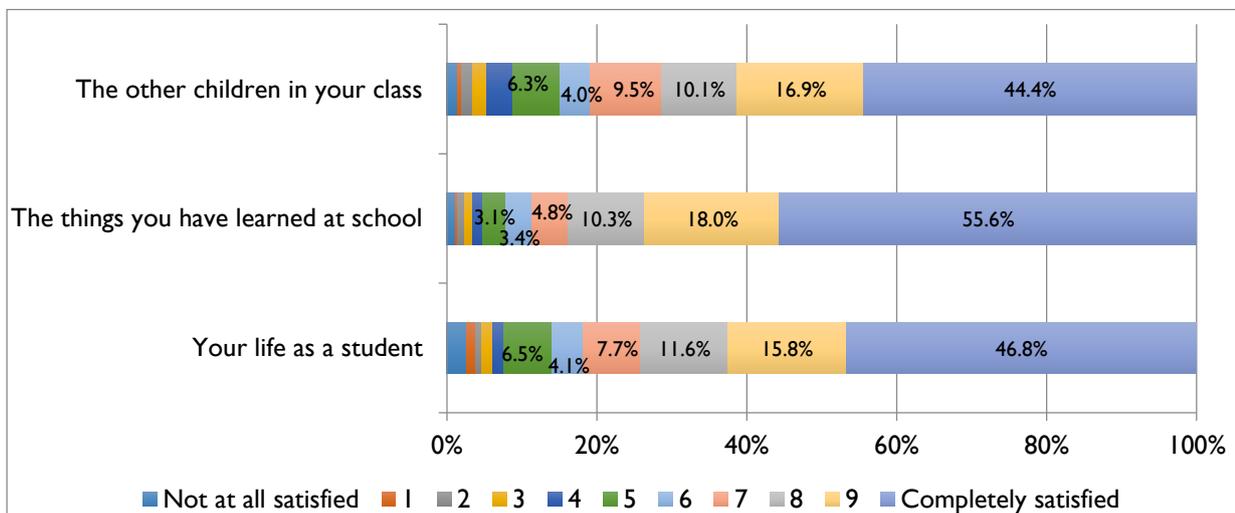


Table 4.1: Gender differences in satisfaction at school (8y)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Satisfaction with your life as a student ¹	Boy	3.27***	1.153
	Girl	3.60***	0.753
Satisfaction with the things you have learned ²	Boy	3.49***	0.851
	Girl	3.79***	0.535
Satisfaction with other children in your class ³	Boy	3.45**	0.904
	Girl	3.62**	0.758
Note: ¹ t(647)=-4.31, ² t(645)=-5.28, ³ t(636)=-2.68, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001			

Table 4.2: School satisfaction by age (10y & 12y) and language used at school (Maltese/English)

Age ^a	Satisfaction with your life as a student ¹		Satisfaction with the things you have learned ²		Satisfaction with other children in your class ³	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	8.40*	2.509	8.97**	1.991	8.37*	2.309
12y	8.14*	2.353	8.63**	1.970	8.06*	2.355
Language used at school ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Maltese	8.39	2.393	9.01***	1.712	8.34*	2.245
English	8.05	2.458	8.60***	2.170	8.05*	2.428
Note ^a : ¹ t(1321)=1.97, ² t(1322)=3.15, ³ t(1315)=2.41, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001						
Note ^b : ¹ F(4,1163)=1.30, ² F(4,1166)=14.03, ³ F(4,1158)=2.51, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001						

The great majority of 8, 10 and 12-year-old participants totally agree or agree that teachers care about them (91%), will help them if they have a problem (90%) and listen to them and take them seriously (84%) (Figure 4.3). The younger participants are more likely to agree about their positive relationships with the teachers (Table 4.3). There are some indications that girls have more positive views of classroom relationships, particularly being helped by teachers and peers (Table 4.4). About three fourths of 10/12-year-olds agree or strongly agree that they have opportunities to make decisions at school, with 12-year-olds scoring higher than 10-year-olds (Table 4.3).

More than 80% agree or strongly agree that they feel safe at school and 76% that other children will help them if they have a problem; in both instances 8-year-olds are more likely to strongly agree than 10 and 12-year-olds. However, when asked if they feel totally safe the percentages go down to 63% amongst 8-year-olds and 60% amongst 10 and 12-year-olds respectively (Figure 4.3; Table 4.3). When asked whether there are a lot of arguments in their class, there were mixed reactions, with 49% not agreeing or agreeing a little bit, whilst 36% totally agreeing/agreeing; 10 and 12-year-olds and girls tend to agree more than 8-year-olds and boys respectively (Figure 4.3; Table 4.3, 4.4). Eighty per cent of the students spend about half an hour or less travelling to school, but 20% spend up to one hour or more (Figure 4.4). When asked about how safe they feel when travelling to and from school, only 65% feel totally safe, while 11% do not feel safe (Figure 4.5). Eight-year-olds and girls feel safer than older and male students, while students from Gozo feel safer than students from the other regions, particularly those from the South Eastern Region (Table 4.5).

Figure 4.3: Relationship with teachers (all age groups)

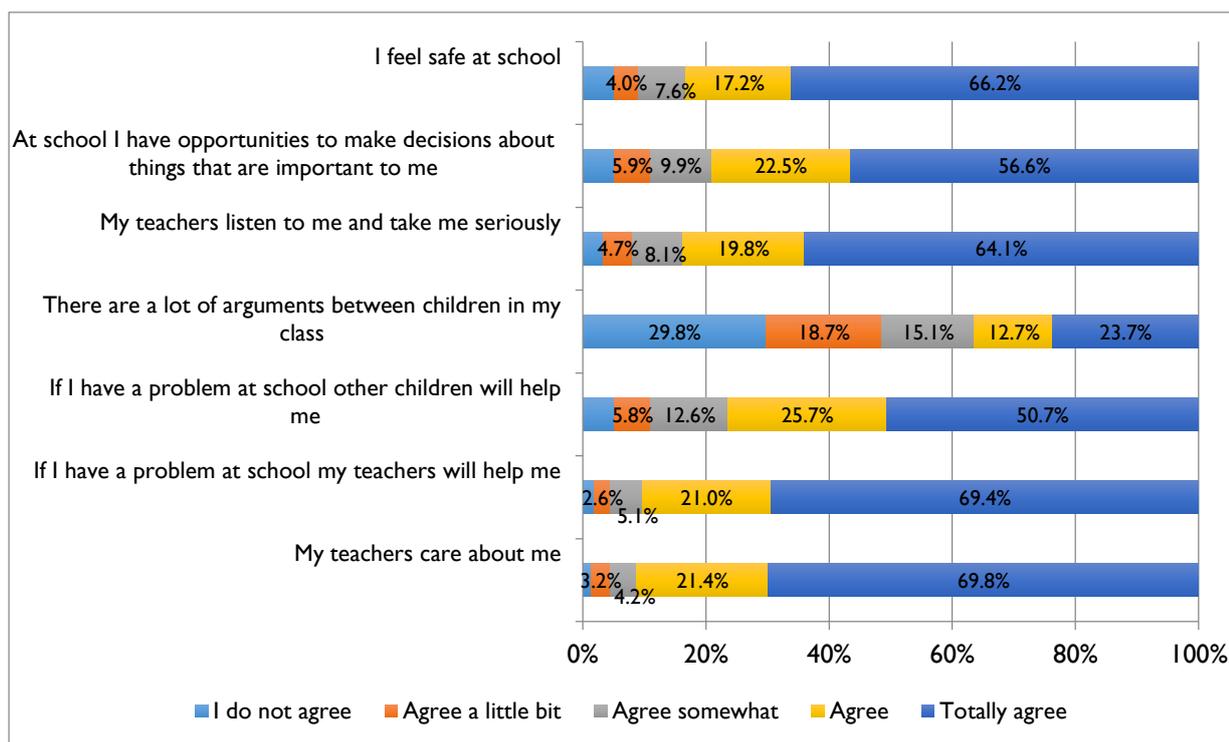


Table 4.3: Relationship with teachers and students by age

		8y	10y	12y
My teachers care about me ¹	Mean	3.73***	3.59***	3.34***
	Std. Dev.	.749	.749	.930
If I have a problem at school my teachers will help me ²	Mean	3.70***	3.55***	3.35***
	Std. Dev.	.747	.836	.942
If I have a problem at school other children will help me ³	Mean	3.26***	2.96***	3.11***
	Std. Dev.	1.181	1.187	1.063
There are a lot of arguments between children in my class ⁴	Mean	1.64**	1.94**	1.86**
	Std. Dev.	1.664	1.492	1.504
My teachers listen to me and take me seriously ⁵	Mean	3.57***	3.38***	3.15***
	Std. Dev.	1.000	1.007	1.067
At school I have opportunities to make decisions about things that are important to me ^{6*}	Mean	-	3.03***	3.35***
	Std. Dev.	-	1.265	1.006
I feel safe at school ⁷	Mean	3.50***	3.30***	3.27***
	Std. Dev.	1.075	1.142	1.093

Note: ¹F(2,1921)=37.99, ²F(2,1945)=27.46, ³F(2,1876)=10.34, ⁴F(2,1796)=5.99, ⁵F(2,1856)=25.84, ⁶F(1,1197)=24.53, ⁷F(2,1891)=7.86, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

*Question not included in 8y questionnaire

Table 4.4: Relationship with teachers by gender (all age groups)

		Boy	Girl
My teachers care about me ¹	Mean	3.51*	3.60*
	Std. Dev.	.881	.760
If I have a problem at school my teachers will help me ²	Mean	3.49*	3.58*
	Std. Dev.	.876	.836
If I have a problem at school other children will help me ³	Mean	3.05**	3.19**
	Std. Dev.	1.224	1.041
There are a lot of arguments between children in my class ⁴	Mean	1.76*	1.90*
	Std. Dev.	1.561	1.547
My teachers listen to me and take me seriously ⁵	Mean	3.33	3.41
	Std. Dev.	1.088	.981
At school I have opportunities to make decisions about things that are important to me ^{6*}	Mean	3.24	3.14
	Std. Dev.	1.132	1.178
I feel safe at school ⁷	Mean	3.32	3.38
	Std. Dev.	1.153	1.056

Note: ¹t(1910)=-2.32, ²t(1934)=-2.28, ³t(1865)=-2.61, ⁴t(1785)=-2.01, ⁵t(1846)=-1.56, ⁶t(1191)=1.51, ⁷t(1880)=-1.17, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

*Question not included in 8y questionnaire

Figure 4.4: Time spent travelling to school today (10y & 12y)

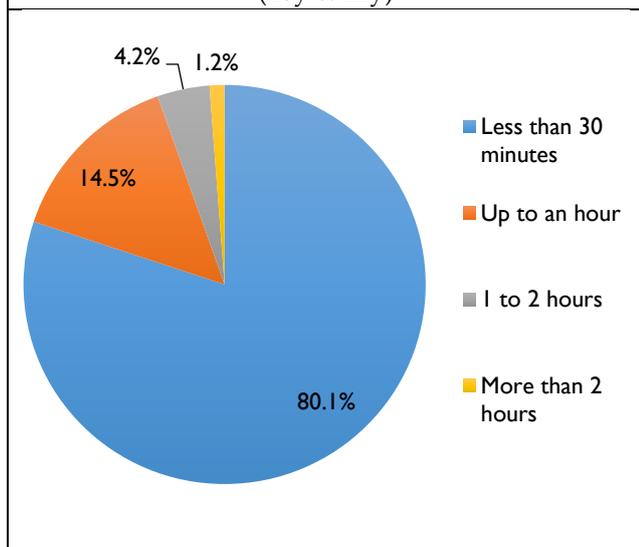


Figure 4.5: Perceived safety to and from school (all age groups)

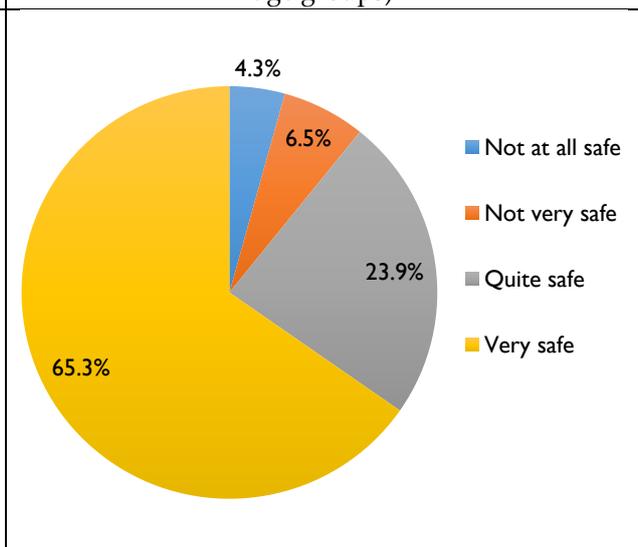


Table 4.5: Mean scores for perceived safety to and from school by age, gender & home district

Perceived safety to and from school		
Age ¹	Mean	Std. Dev.
8y	2.64***	.803
10y	2.45***	.845
12y	2.42***	.734
Gender ²	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	2.46*	.820
Girl	2.54*	.774
Home District ³	Mean	Std. Dev.
Southern Harbour	2.53***	.830
Northern Harbour	2.50***	.810
South Eastern	2.35***	.835
Western	2.55***	.730
Northern	2.60***	.743
Gozo & Comino	2.73***	.522
Note: ¹ F(2,1823)=13.26, ² t(1812)=-2.18, ³ F(5,1784)=4.31, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001		

Bullying

When asked about fights between students at school, more than half of the students said there were fights everyday (18%) or on most days of the week (36%) (Figure 4.6). Girls are more likely to report more frequent fighting than boys (Table 4.6). When asked about bullying at school during the past month, the majority reported that they were never hit (67%), called unkind names (62%) or left out by other children (65%). However, 19% said that during the past month they were frequently hit by other children and/or left out (2 or 3 times or more) and 22% said that they were frequently called unkind names (Figure 4.7). About 10% appeared to have frequent experiences of physical or verbal bullying (more than 3 times in the last month). Eight and 10-year-olds are more likely to report frequent physical bullying than 12-year-olds. On the other hand, more 10-year-olds are likely to be called names than 8-year-olds (Table 4.7). More boys than girls are the victims of frequent physical bullying (Table 4.7). Physical bullying appears to be more frequent in independent schools in contrast to state and church schools, with a similar tendency in verbal bullying. Relational bullying is more likely to be more frequent in independent schools and church schools (Table 4.7). Analysis of bullying by nationality shows that children not born in Malta are more likely to be the victims of frequent physical and verbal bullying (Table 4.7). Table 4.8 shows that the lesser the frequency of relational and verbal bullying, the higher the subjective wellbeing.

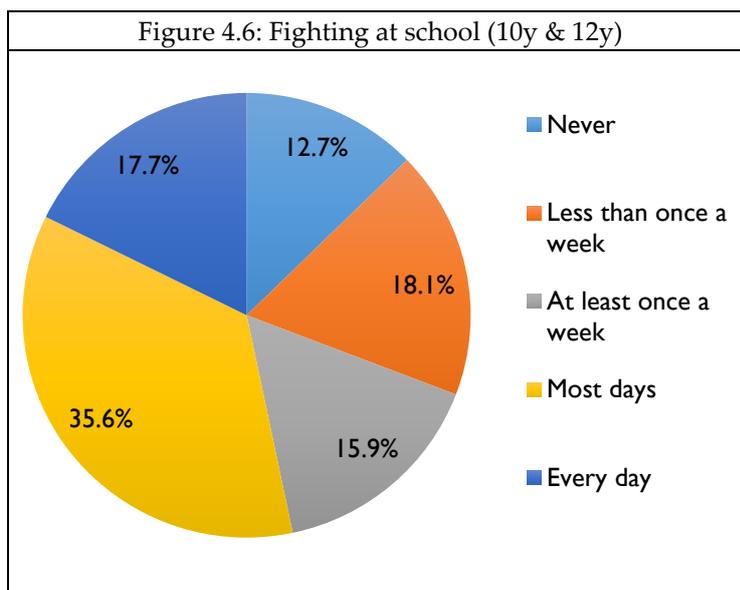


Table 4.6: Fighting at school by gender (10y & 12y)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
How often are there fights between children at your school	Boy	2.19*	1.289
	Girl	2.38*	1.302
Note: $t(1119) = -2.44, p > 0.05, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$			

Figure 4.7: Bullying and exclusion at school during the past month (all age groups)

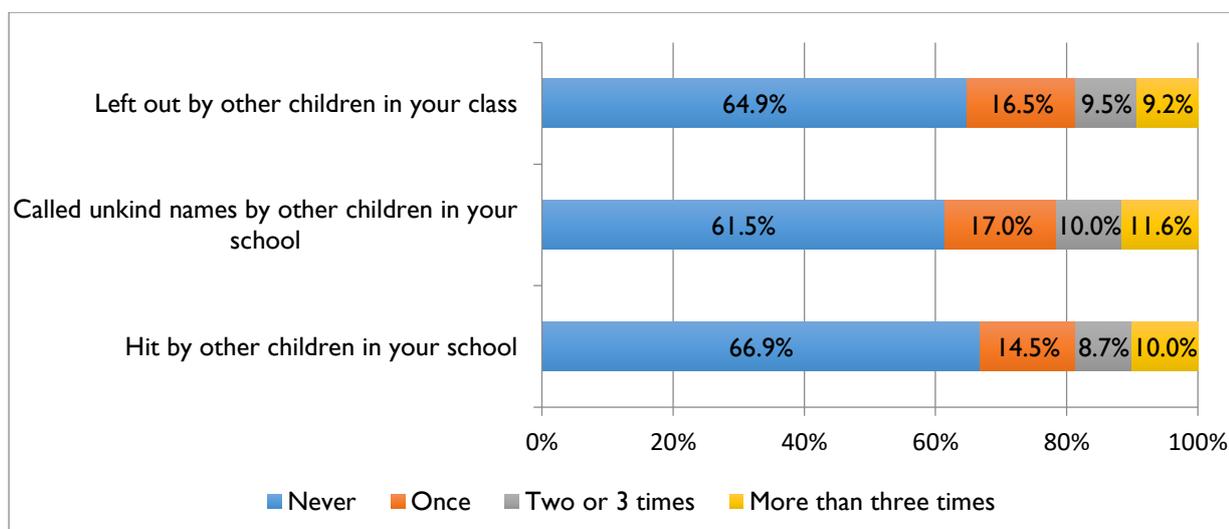


Table 4.7: Bullying and exclusion at school during the past month by gender, age, school sector and whether born in Malta

Age ^a	Hit by other children in your school ¹		Called unkind names by other children in your school ²		Left out by other children in your class ³	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
8y	.71***	1.082	.63*	1.019	.62	1.017
10y	.71***	1.051	.80*	1.062	.65	.973
12y	.44***	.848	.72*	1.057	.62	.974
Gender ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	.66*	1.035	.70	1.040	.67	.998
Girl	.56*	.961	.74	1.061	.58	.973
School Sector ^c	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
State	.52***	.958	.70	1.032	.56**	.942
Church	.67***	1.014	.70	1.062	.72**	1.037
Independent	1.15***	1.138	.89	1.095	.73**	1.034
Born in Malta ^d	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Born in Malta	.57*	.975	.73**	1.050	.62	.971
Not born in Malta	.72*	.967	.83**	1.114	.67	.985

Note^a: ¹F(2,1873)=15.24, ²F(2,1856)=4.17, ³F(2,1811)=0.14, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001
 Note^b: ¹t(1862)=2.16, ²t(1845)=-1.00, ³t(1800)=1.82, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001
 Note^c: ¹F(2,1873)=25.57, ²F(2,1856)=2.07, ³F(2,1811)=5.79, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001
 Note^d: ¹t(1109)=-1.53, ²t(1098)=-0.91, ³t(1082)=-0.58, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 4.8: Relationship between Children's Worlds Subjective Wellbeing Scale (CW-SWBS) and bullying and exclusion at school

	B	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Intercept	77.557	1.984	73.664	81.450	
Hit by other children in your school	Never hit by peers	-4.705	1.979	-8.588	-.822
	Hit once by peers	-5.481	2.169	-9.736	-1.227
	Frequently hit by peers	-4.662	2.315	-9.203	-.120
Called unkind names by other children in your school	Never called names by peers	10.634***	1.774	7.154	14.114
	Called names once by peers	7.586***	1.850	3.957	11.215
	Frequently called names by peers	4.771***	2.058	.734	8.807
Left out by other children in your class	Never excluded by peers	11.530***	1.799	8.000	15.059
	Excluded once by peers	8.238***	1.975	4.363	12.112
	Frequently excluded by peers	3.705***	2.127	-.467	7.877

Note: R²_{adj}=0.11, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Chapter 5

My Neighbourhood

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show that the great majority of participants are satisfied with the area where they live, with 75% of 8-year-olds and 59% of 10/12-year-olds being completely satisfied. More 8-year-old girls are satisfied than 8-year-old boys, but no significant gender difference was found amongst the older groups (Table 5.1). Seventy-six per cent agree/totally agree that they feel safe when they walk around in the area where they live in contrast to 7% who do not and another 6% who are hesitant about it. Sixty-six per cent think there are enough places to play and have a good time, but 15% said there not enough places for them and another 9% agreed only a little (Figure 5.3). Seventy-nine per cent believe that adults in their local area are kind to children; 72% think that adults in their area listen to children and take them seriously (in contrast to 17% who are not convinced); 68% believe that if they have a problem, there are people in their local area who will help them (in contrast to 22% who do not feel confident about this); and 65% believe that in their local area, they have opportunities to participate in decisions about things that are important to children (in contrast to 23% who do not think so or agree only a little) (Figure 5.3). Eight year olds have more positive feelings about their locality than their older peers, with more 8 than 10 and 12-year-olds having higher mean scores for feeling safe when they walk around the area where they live, there are enough places where to play and have a good time, there are people in their local area who will help them and adults in their locality listen to them and take them seriously (Table 5.2). On the other hand, 12-year-olds have a higher level agreement than 10-year-olds that they have opportunities to participate in decisions in their locality. There are no significant regional differences in children’s views of the areas where they live, such as safety, support from people from the local area and opportunities to participate in decision making; but children from Gozo agree more that adults are kind to them and listen and take them seriously (in contrast to other regions such as Northern), whilst children from Western and South Eastern regions agree that there are places to socialise more than children from the other regions (Table 5.3). The majority of 10 and 12-year-olds do not agree that there are frequent fights in their area, but 22% report that there is one fight or more every week by adults in their locality (Figure 5.4).

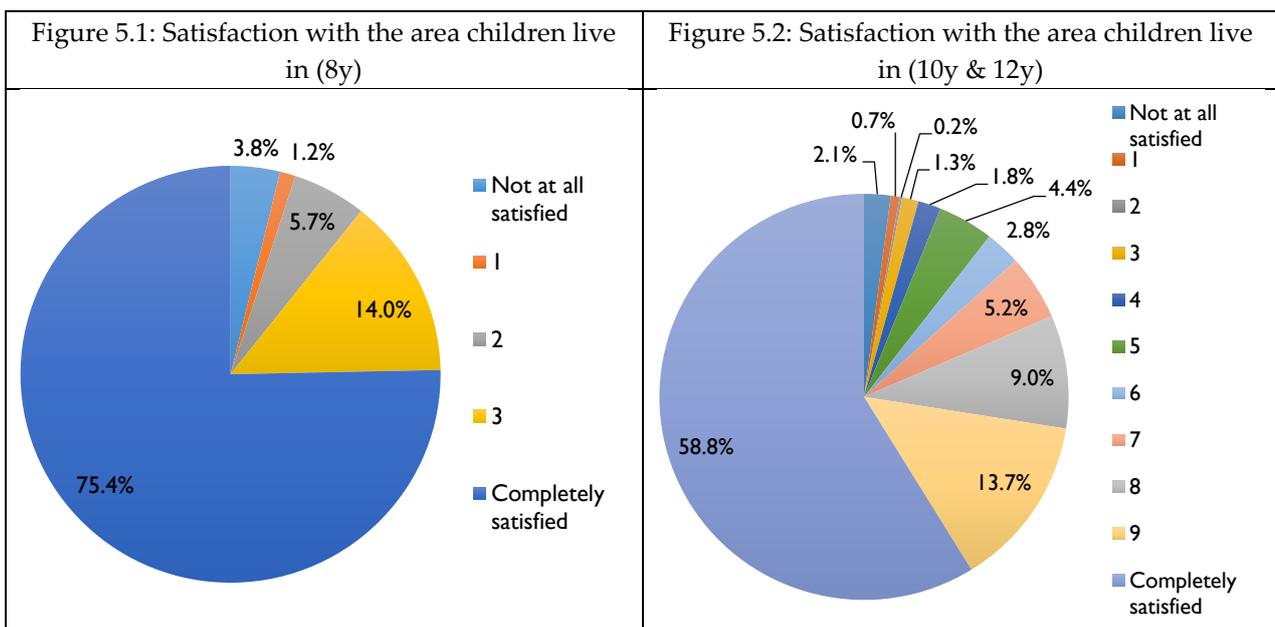


Table 5.1: Satisfaction with the area children live in by gender (8y)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Satisfaction with the area where you live	Boy	3.48*	1.02
	Girl	3.65*	0.834

Note: $t(633)=-2.38, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Figure 5.3: Satisfaction with various aspects of the local area (all age groups)

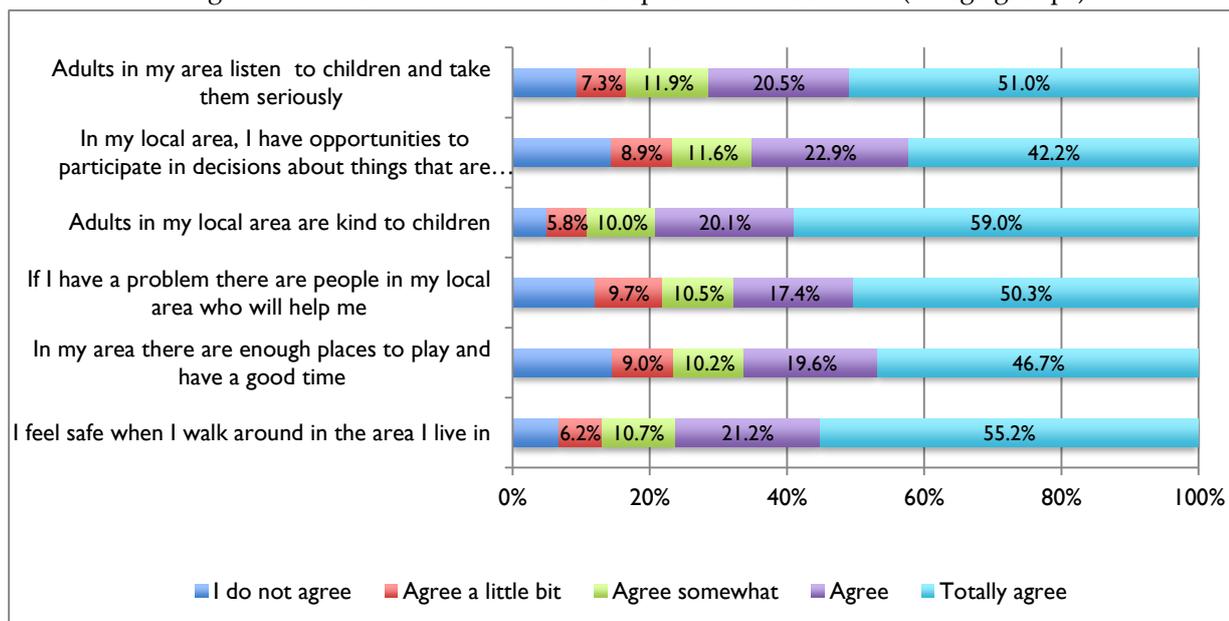


Table 5.2: Mean scores of various aspects of the local area by age (all age groups)

		8y	10y	12y
I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in ¹	Mean	3.25**	3.04**	3.06**
	Std. Dev.	1.286	1.234	1.144
In my area there are enough places to play and have a good time ²	Mean	3.00***	2.63***	2.62***
	Std. Dev.	1.468	1.468	1.456
If I have a problem there are people in my local area who will help me ³	Mean	3.09***	2.77***	2.66***
	Std. Dev.	1.458	1.401	1.419
Adults in my local area are kind to children ⁴	Mean	3.23	3.27	3.16
	Std. Dev.	1.302	1.064	1.085
In my local area, I have opportunities to participate in decisions about things that are important to children ^{5*}	Mean	-	2.57**	2.83**
	Std. Dev.	-	1.527	1.354
Adults in my area listen to children and take them seriously ⁶	Mean	3.14***	2.94***	2.81***
	Std. Dev.	1.381	1.256	1.325

Note: ¹ $F(2,1869)=5.48, ^2F(2,1720)=13.85, ^3F(2,1758)=14.25, ^4F(2,1754)=1.25, ^5F(1,1075)=8.63, ^6F(2,1592)=8.40, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

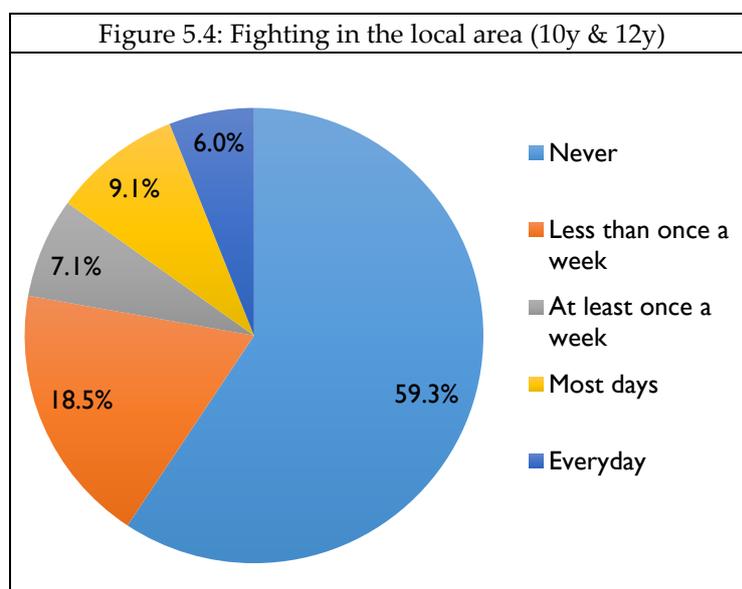
*Question not included in 8y questionnaire

Table 5.3: Mean scores of various aspects of the local area by home district (all age groups)

		Southern Harbour	Northern Harbour	South Eastern	Western	Northern	Gozo & Comino
I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in ¹	Mean	3.08	3.04	3.12	3.26	3.20	3.22
	Std. Dev.	1.266	1.306	1.147	1.128	1.193	1.065
In my area there are enough places to play and have a good time ²	Mean	2.68*	2.63*	2.93*	2.95*	2.78*	2.63*
	Std. Dev.	1.499	1.536	1.334	1.371	1.483	1.588
If I have a problem there are people in my local area who will help me ³	Mean	2.70	2.89	2.81	3.02	2.85	2.95
	Std. Dev.	1.504	1.411	1.378	1.394	1.516	1.276
Adults in my local area are kind to children ⁴	Mean	3.20*	3.27*	3.17*	3.37*	3.05*	3.49*
	Std. Dev.	1.195	1.105	1.139	1.065	1.305	.735
In my local area, I have opportunities to participate in decisions about things that are important to children ^{5*}	Mean	2.53	2.78	2.69	2.80	2.63	2.80
	Std. Dev.	1.506	1.422	1.398	1.417	1.555	1.448
Adults in my area listen to children and take them seriously ⁶	Mean	3.04*	2.96*	2.87*	3.09*	2.75*	3.31*
	Std. Dev.	1.318	1.321	1.306	1.253	1.516	1.011

Note: ¹F(5,1828)=1.59, ²F(5,1836)=2.96, ³F(5,1718)=1.62, ⁴F(5,1718)=2.89, ⁵F(5,1043)=0.99, ⁶F(5,1556)=2.63, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

*Question not included in 8y questionnaire



Chapter 6

Money and the Things I Have

Figure 6.1 shows that whilst 44% of participants are never worried about how much money their family has, however, 27% worry often or always. Children from Gozo appear to be less worried than those from the Northern, Northern Harbour and Southern Harbour regions (Table 6.1). Children not born in Malta are more worried than Maltese children (Table 6.1); younger students also worry more often than the 12-year-old students (Table 6.1).

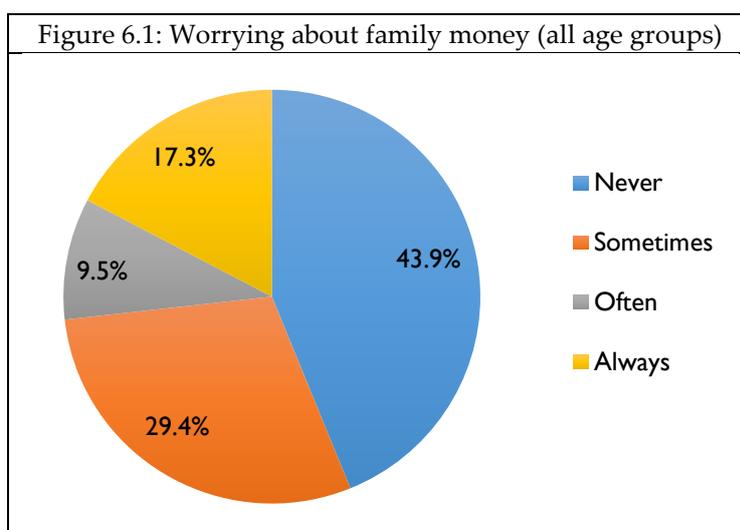


Table 6.1: Worrying about family money by age, home district and nationality

Frequently worry about how much money your family has		
Age ¹	Mean	Std. Dev.
8y	1.15***	1.303
10y	.95***	1.043
12y	.92***	.962
Home District ²	Mean	Std. Dev.
Southern Harbour	1.06***	1.131
Northern Harbour	1.00***	1.159
South Eastern	.99***	1.017
Western	.92***	1.034
Northern	1.16***	1.172
Gozo & Comino	.45***	.720
Born in Malta ³	Mean	Std. Dev.
Born in Malta	.90**	.977
Not born in Malta	1.06**	1.116

Note: ¹F(2,1656)=6.74, ²F(5,1617)=4.69, ³F(2,1029)=6.49, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

The vast majority of participants from the three age groups are satisfied with the things they have, with 86% of 8-year-olds and 73% of 10/12-year-olds being completely satisfied; the level of dissatisfaction among all age cohorts being very low at around 1% to 2% (Figures 6.2, 6.3). Ninety-two per cent reported that they have enough food to eat on a daily basis, with only 1% claiming that they never have enough food, particularly 8-year-olds (Figure 6.4, Table 6.2). Figure 6.5 shows that 96% to 98% of participants have clothes in good condition, enough money for school activities, access to Internet at home, two pairs of shoes in good condition and school equipment. Ninety per cent have sports equipment, 85% pocket money and 64% a mobile phone. Older students, especially the 12-year-old cohort, enjoy better economic wellbeing than 8 year olds, such as enough clothes in good condition, access to internet, pocket money, mobile phones, and equipment for school. (Table 6.3).

A small percentage of participants appear to be living on the poverty line, however, with 15% not having enough pocket money, 10.5% no equipment for sports/hobbies, 4% not having clothes in good condition, enough money for school trips and activities or access to the Internet at home; and 3% not having two pairs of shoes and the equipment they need for school (Table 6.3). Older students, especially the 12-year-old cohort, enjoy better economic wellbeing than 8-year-olds, such as enough clothes in good condition and shoes, access to internet, pocket money, mobile phones, money for school trips, and equipment for school. In the majority of the items, there were no gender differences, except for clothes in good condition (boys more likely than girls), enough money for school trips (girls more likely than boys) and two pairs of shoes (girls more likely than boys).

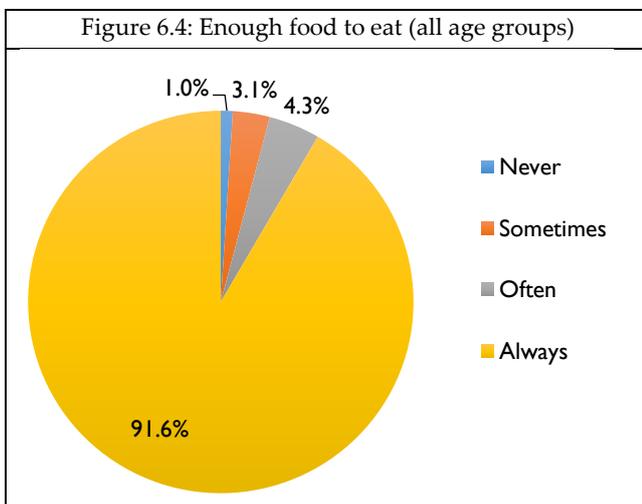
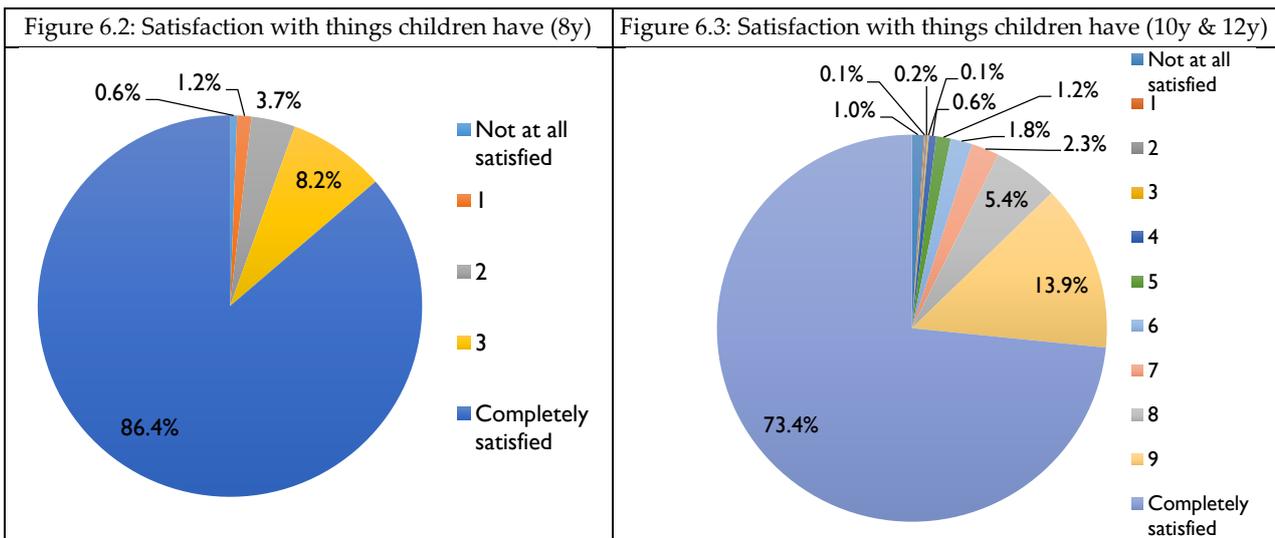


Table 6.2: Enough food to eat by age

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Enough food to eat each day	8y	2.82***	.599
	10y	2.84***	.514
	12y	2.92***	.320

Note: F(5,1893)=7.20, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figure 6.5: List of basic necessities (all age groups)

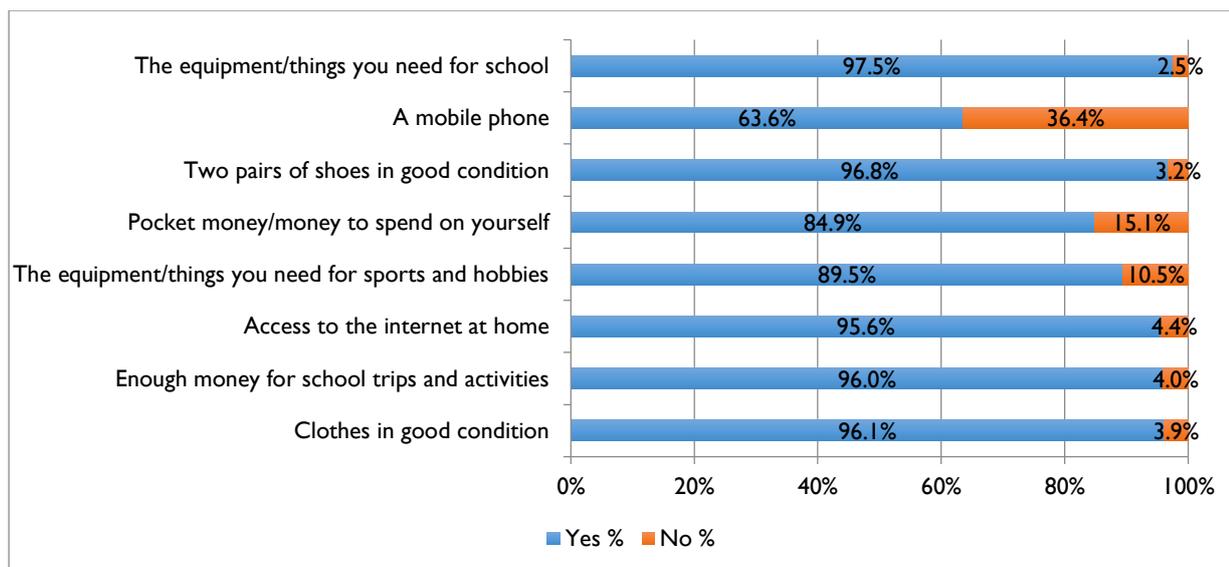


Table 6.3: Things children have by age

		8y		10y		12y		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clothes in good condition ¹	No	54	8.5%	15	2.3%	6	1.0%	75	3.9%
	Yes	578	91.5%	649	97.7%	617	99.0%	1844	96.1%
Enough money for school trips and activities ²	No	49	7.8%	19	2.9%	9	1.5%	77	4.0%
	Yes	582	92.2%	639	97.1%	611	98.5%	1832	96%
Access to the internet at home ³	No	60	9.4%	14	2.1%	11	1.8%	85	4.4%
	Yes	575	90.6%	649	97.9%	610	98.2%	1834	95.6%
The equipment/things you need for sports and hobbies ⁴	No	105	16.7%	57	8.6%	38	6.1%	200	10.5%
	Yes	524	83.3%	604	91.4%	580	93.9%	1708	89.5%
Pocket money/money to spend on yourself ⁵	No	139	22.0%	97	14.7%	52	8.4%	288	15.1%
	Yes	492	78.0%	561	85.3%	567	91.6%	1620	84.9%
Two pairs of shoes in good condition ⁶	No	46	7.2%	12	1.8%	4	0.6%	62	3.2%
	Yes	590	92.8%	652	98.2%	616	99.4%	1858	96.8%
A mobile phone ⁷	No	357	56.8%	259	38.9%	80	12.9%	696	36.4%
	Yes	271	43.2%	406	61.1%	540	87.1%	1217	63.6%
The equipment/things you need for school ⁸	No	27	4.3%	16	2.4%	4	0.6%	47	2.5%
	Yes	606	95.7%	647	97.6%	617	99.4%	1870	97.5%

Note: ¹ $\chi^2(2)=55.37, p<0.001$, ² $\chi^2(2)=35.61, p<0.001$, ³ $\chi^2(2)=56.57, p<0.001$, ⁴ $\chi^2(2)=40.66, p<0.001$, ⁵ $\chi^2(2)=45.38, p<0.001$, ⁶ $\chi^2(2)=50.17, p<0.001$, ⁷ $\chi^2(2)=263.19, p<0.001$, ⁸ $\chi^2(2)=17.19, p<0.001$,

Practically all families have at least one washing machine (99%), whilst 94% have at least one car or other means of private transport, with 49% having two cars. Eighty-eight per cent have two or more computers at home, whereas only 2% do not possess any computer at home. During the last twelve months, 31% of children went on a holiday with their families and 48% have travelled twice or more on holiday in contrast to 21% who did not (Figures 6.6 – 6.9). Ten-year-olds are more likely to have travelled than 12-year-old students (Table 6.4).

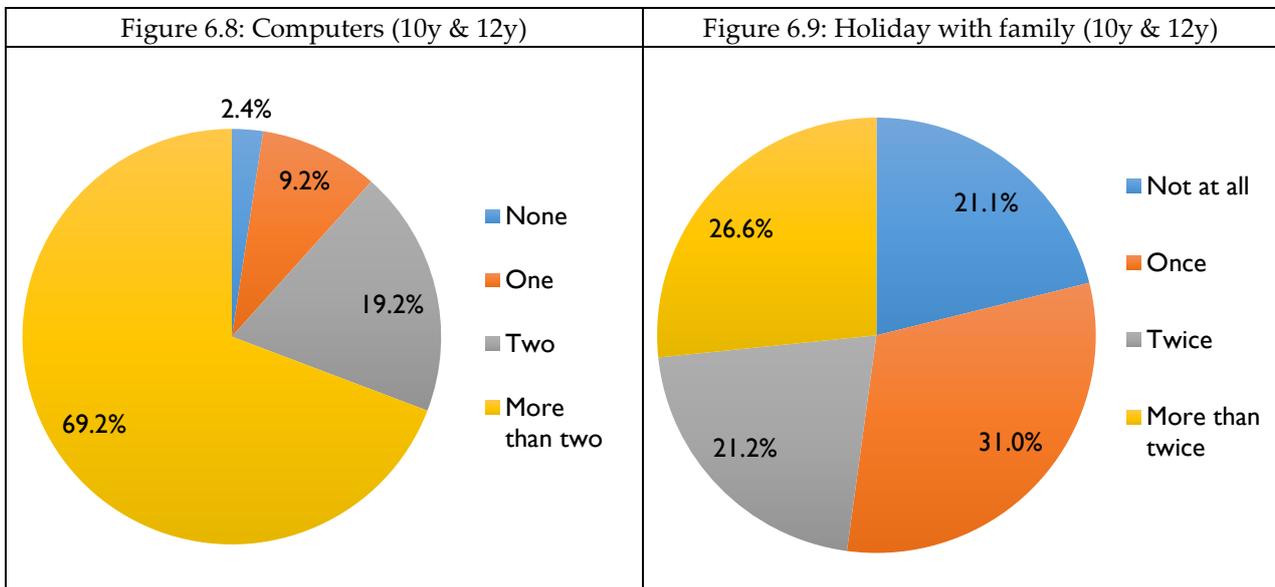
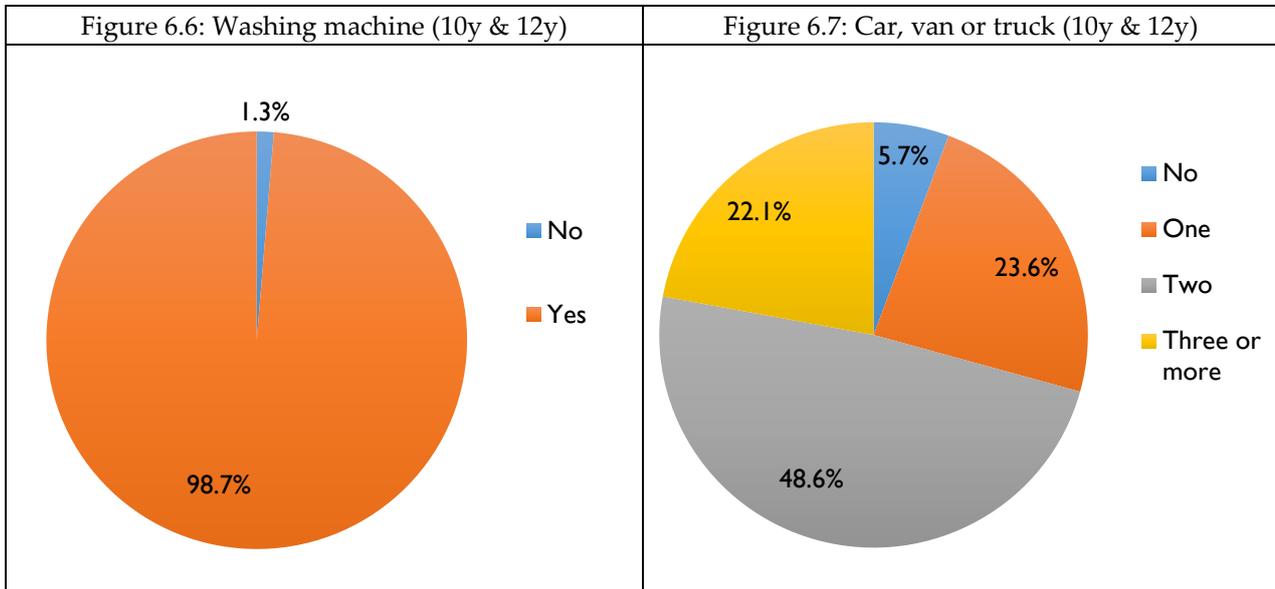


Table 6.4: Mean scores on travel on holiday by age

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Travel away on holiday with your family in the last 12 months	10y	1.63**	1.109
	12y	1.44**	1.078
Note: t(1292)=3.13, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001			

Chapter 7

How I Spend My Time

The great majority of participants from the three age groups are satisfied with their use of time, with 73% of 8-year-olds and 56% of 10/12-year-olds being completely satisfied (Figures 7.1, 7.2). Twelve-year-olds are less satisfied with their use of time than 10-year-olds (Table 7.1). Fifty-eight per cent of 10/12-year-olds are completely satisfied with the free time they have, with 10-year-olds being more satisfied than 12-year-olds (Figure 7.3, Table 7.2).

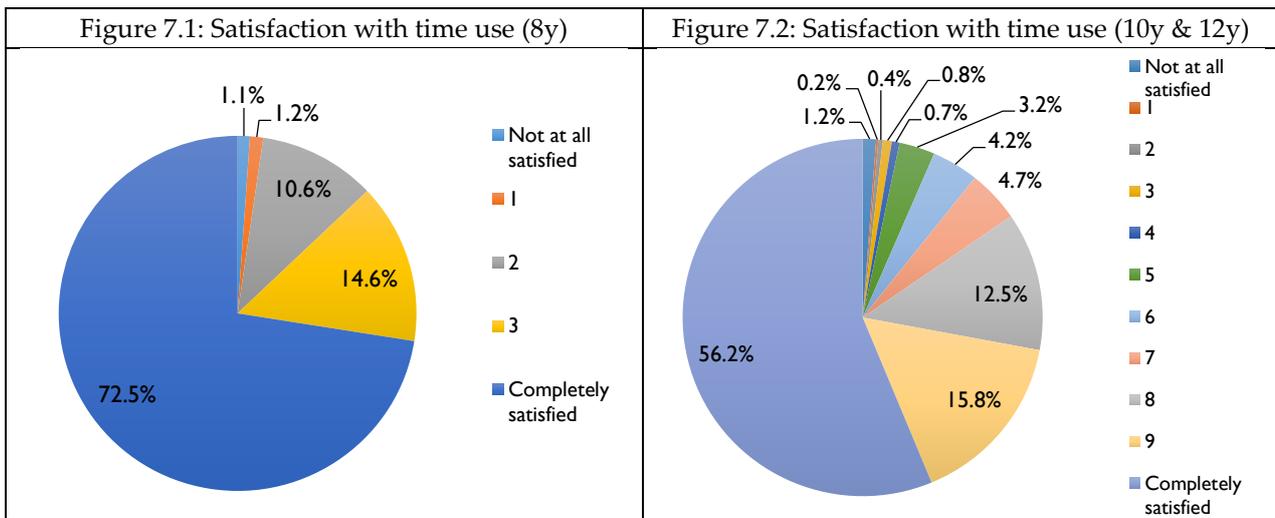


Table 7.1: Satisfaction with time use bet. 10y & 12y

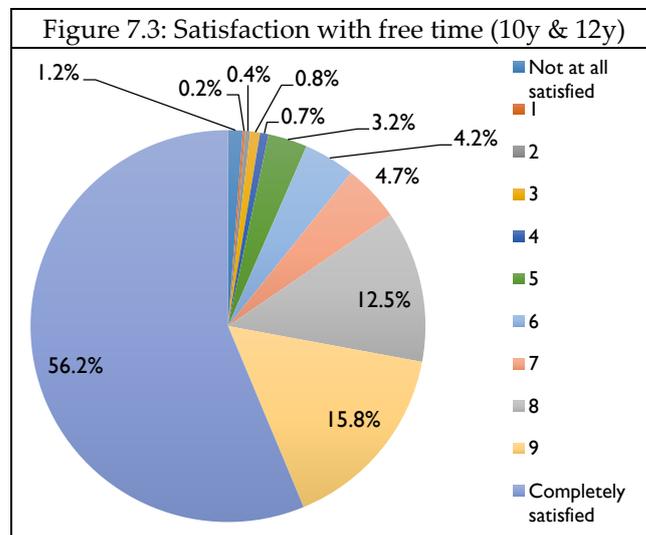
		Mean	Std. Dev.
Satisfaction with how you use your time	10y	9.02***	1.833
	12y	8.66***	1.919

Note: $t(1282)=3.46, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with free time bet. 10y & 12y

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Satisfaction with how much free time you have	10y	8.80***	2.249
	12y	8.29***	2.415

Note: $t(1276)=3.90, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001$



Sixty-six per cent of 10 and 12-year-old participants sleep between 8 and 10pm whilst 14% go to sleep after 10pm (Figure 7.4); those who go to sleep late are less calm and more stressed than those who go to bed early (Table 7.3). Most 10/12-year-old students wake up between 5 and 7am, but 10% wake up at 5am or before, and 31% between 5am and 6am (Figure 7.5).

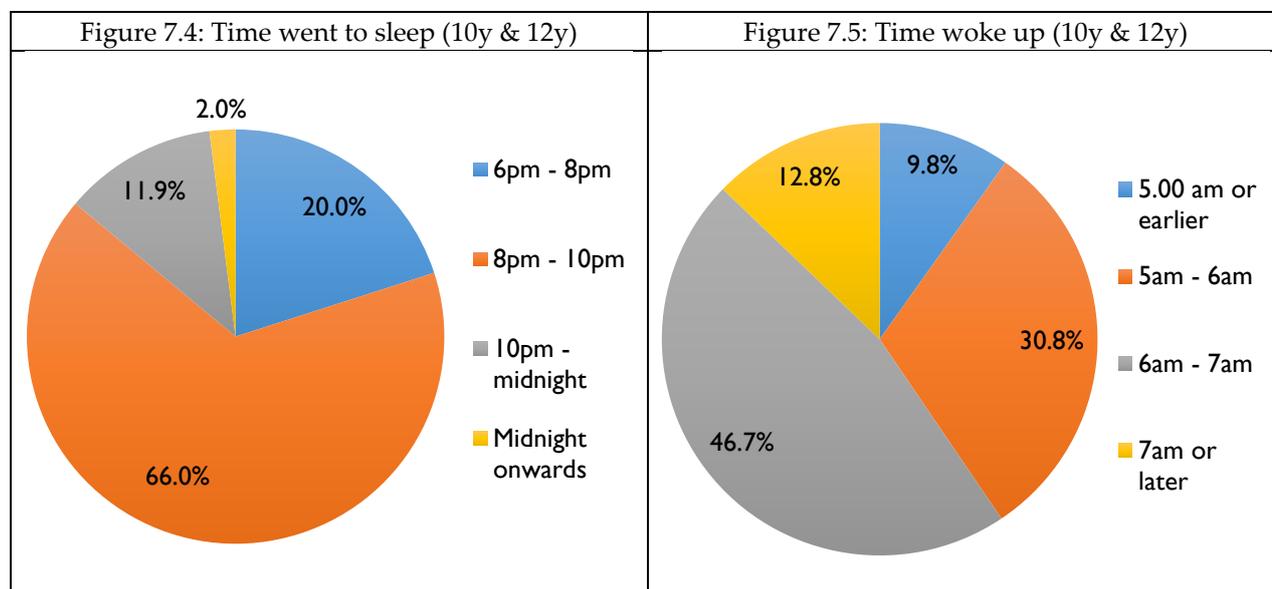


Table 7.3: Difference between ‘feeling calm’ and ‘feeling stressed in ‘time went to sleep’ (10y & 12y)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Feeling calm during the past two weeks	6pm - 8pm	7.91*	2.934
	8pm - 10pm	7.48*	2.966
	10pm - Midnight	6.66*	3.509
	Midnight onwards	7.69*	3.036
Feeling stressed during the past two weeks	6pm - 8pm	4.47**	3.907
	8pm - 10pm	3.82**	3.605
	10pm - Midnight	4.08**	3.811
	Midnight onwards	7.08**	3.594

Note: ¹F(3,655)=2.86, ²F(3,657)=4.32, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figure 7.6 shows how the participants spend most of their time (everyday or 3 to 6 days a week) with family (83%), doing homework (91%), watching TV (74%), using social media (71%) and playing electronic games (74%) and outside play (62%), and doing sports and physical exercise (61%). Helping with household chores (58%), taking care of family members (61%) and going to religious places or services (40%) are also frequent activities. Thirty-one per cent work frequently with family (21% daily) whilst 21% work frequently with non-family members for money or food (14% every day) (Figure 7.6). Whilst the majority (62%) play or spend time outside frequently (3 or more days per week), only 38% do so everyday, whilst 23% do so less than once a week or never (11%); similarly, only 37% do exercise everyday while 10% never

do exercise or sports. Thirty-six per cent spend a lot of their time resting or doing nothing. 21% attend private tuition after school hours on a frequent basis, 15% on a daily basis; more 8-year-olds than 12-year-olds take private tuition on a daily basis.

Eight-year-olds are more likely to take care of siblings on a regular daily basis, in contrast to older peers (Table 7.4). More 8-year-olds than 10/12-year-olds work everyday either with family or others for money or objects (Table 7.4). In general, more 8-year-olds go to religious places or services daily, watch TV everyday, spend time playing or doing sports daily, spend time doing things with family, and play outside than older peers, especially the 10-year-olds (Table 7.4). On the other hand, more 12-year-olds, and to a lesser extent 10-year-olds, spend time on social media and electronic games, as well as relaxing or doing nothing than 8-year-olds (Table 7.4). More girls than boys take care of siblings or other family members and attend religious places or services daily or frequently, as well as doing nothing and resting, while more boys than girls spend more time on social media and electronic games (Table 7.5). Table 7.6 shows that children with less material possessions spend less time playing outside or doing physical exercise, possibly due to lack of opportunity.

Figure 7.6: List of daily activities (all age groups)

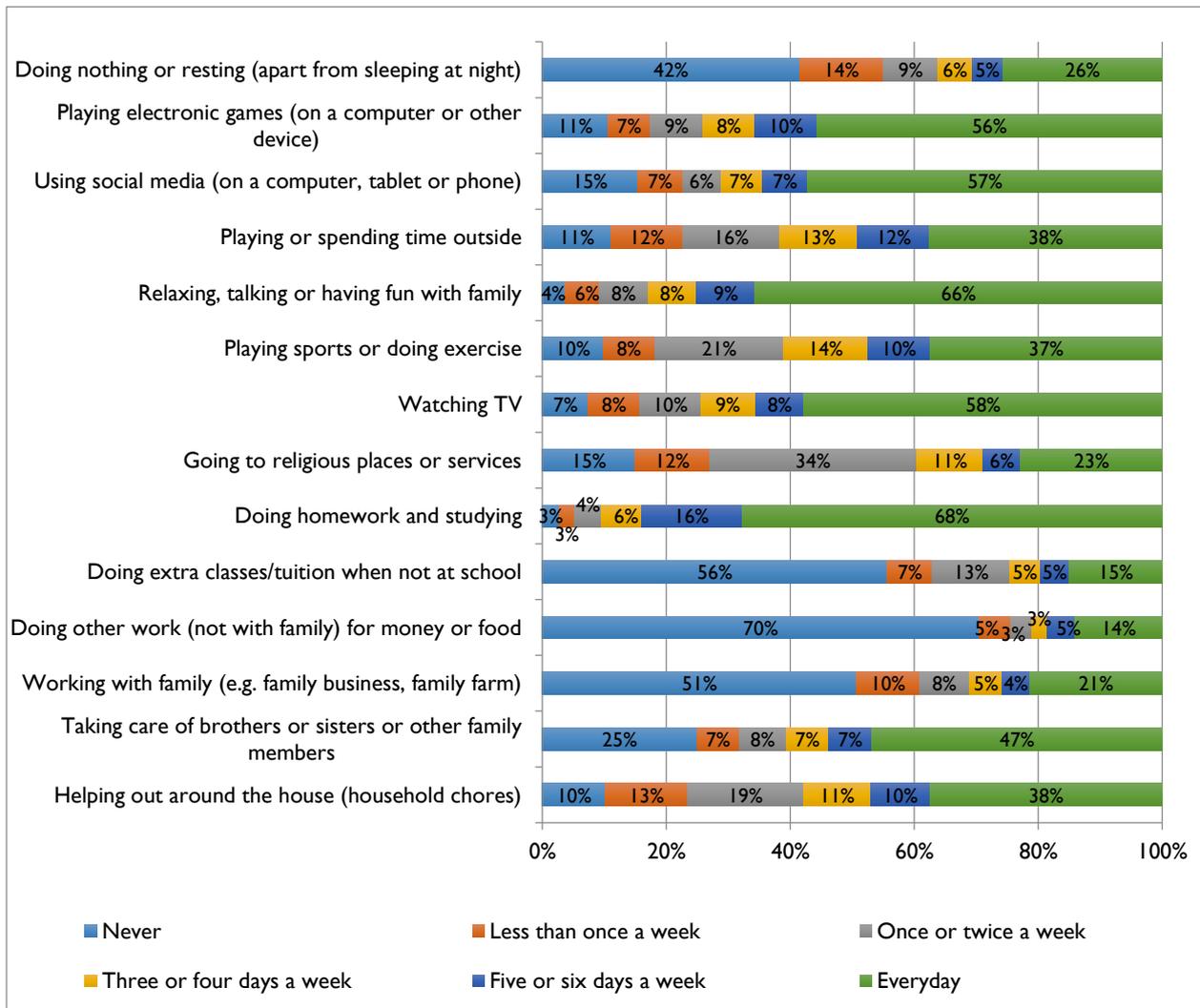


Table 7.4: Mean scores of daily activities by age

		N	Mean Rank	df	χ^2
Helping out around the house (household chores) ¹	8y	680	1057.36	2	3.853
	10y	683	1002.87		
	12y	713	1054.64		
Taking care of brothers or sisters or other family members ²	8y	678	1109.18***	2	21.920
	10y	678	967.76***		
	12y	710	1024.00***		
Working with family (e.g. family business, family farm) ³	8y	679	1088.19**	2	13.596
	10y	671	978.41**		
	12y	709	1023.10**		
Doing other work (not with family) for money or food ⁴	8y	672	1076.62***	2	13.220
	10y	665	989.27***		
	12y	708	1003.80***		
Doing extra classes/tuition when not at school ⁵	8y	665	1051.71*	2	7.177
	10y	669	1040.06*		
	12y	711	980.09*		
Doing homework and studying ⁶	8y	670	1051.66	2	2.376
	10y	676	1010.98		
	12y	711	1024.79		
Going to religious places or services ⁷	8y	676	1116.47***	2	25.726
	10y	677	958.05***		
	12y	709	1020.63***		
Watching TV ⁸	8y	696	1103.50***	2	21.614
	10y	675	1041.86***		
	12y	704	969.54***		
Playing sports or doing exercise ⁹	8y	686	1049.02*	2	7.666
	10y	671	976.34*		
	12y	695	1052.70*		
Relaxing, talking or having fun with family ¹⁰	8y	694	1096.12***	2	16.838
	10y	671	1010.06***		
	12y	700	992.41***		
Playing or spending time outside ¹¹	8y	691	1077.50**	2	10.194
	10y	662	977.85**		
	12y	702	1026.58**		
Using social media (on a computer, tablet or phone) ¹²	8y	681	916.11***	2	76.8382
	10y	670	996.56***		
	12y	700	1161.08***		
Playing electronic games (on a computer or other device) ¹³	8y	674	932.25***	2	31.197
	10y	675	1065.15***		
	12y	703	1079.75***		
Doing nothing or resting (apart from sleeping at night) ¹⁴	8y	686	958.99***	2	31.100
	10y	674	1001.91***		
	12y	696	1122.77***		

Note: $p > 0.05$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7.5: Mean scores of daily activities by gender

		N	Mean Rank	Sun of Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z
Helping out around the house (household chores) ¹	Boy	1147	1011.54	1160235.50		
	Girl	917	1058.72	970844.50	501857.50	-1.848
Taking care of brothers or sisters or other family members ²	Boy	1140	998.16**	1137905.50		
	Girl	915	1065.17**	974634.50	487535.50	-2.710
Working with family (e.g. family business, family farm) ³	Boy	1133	1015.80	1150906.00		
	Girl	916	1036.37	949319.00	508495.00	-.845
Doing other work (not with family) for money or food ⁴	Boy	1131	1011.03	1143480.50		
	Girl	901	1023.36	922047.50	503334.50	-.587
Doing extra classes/tuition when not at school ⁵	Boy	1126	1019.00	1147397.00		
	Girl	907	1014.51	920164.00	508386.00	-.189
Doing homework and studying ⁶	Boy	1128	1022.93	1153861.50		
	Girl	916	1021.97	936128.50	516142.50	-.044
Going to religious places or services ⁷	Boy	1138	997.91*	1135618.00		
	Girl	913	1061.02*	968708.00	487527.00	-2.468
Watching TV ⁸	Boy	1145	1044.13	1195523.50		
	Girl	917	1015.74	931429.50	510526.50	-1.193
Playing sports or doing exercise ⁹	Boy	1138	1018.59	1159157.00		
	Girl	902	1022.91	922663.00	511066.00	-.170
Relaxing, talking or having fun with family ¹⁰	Boy	1135	1026.96	1165601.00		
	Girl	917	1025.93	940777.00	519874.00	-.046
Playing or spending time outside ¹¹	Boy	1145	1016.34	1163711.50		
	Girl	898	1029.21	924234.50	507626.50	-.506
Using social media (on a computer, tablet or phone) ¹²	Boy	1137	1056.13***	1200823.50		
	Girl	902	974.45***	878956.50	471703.50	-3.474
Playing electronic games (on a computer or other device) ¹³	Boy	1141	1052.16**	1200511.00		
	Girl	898	979.14**	879269.00	475618.00	-3.068
Doing nothing or resting (apart from sleeping at night) ¹⁴	Boy	1137	993.29**	1129370.00		
	Girl	909	1061.29**	964711.00	482417.000	-2.710

Note: p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.6: Frequency of time outside and/or play sports or exercise by things children have

Things children have		
Playing sports or doing exercise¹	Mean	Std. Dev.
Never	6.81***	1.117
Once or twice a week	7.11***	.865
Three or four days a week	7.24***	.843
Five or six days a week	7.23***	1.142
Everyday	7.34***	.995
Playing or spending time outside²	Mean	Std. Dev.
Never	6.79***	1.115
Once or twice a week	7.09***	1.108
Three or four days a week	7.35***	.823
Five or six days a week	7.19***	1.090
Everyday	7.41***	.935
Note ¹ : F(5,1755)=7.08, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001		
Note ² : F(5,1750)=10.08, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001		

Chapter 8

How I Feel About Myself

Cognitive wellbeing

In general, the different measures of children’s subjective wellbeing show that Maltese children are quite satisfied with their lives. Figures 8.1 and 8.2 show that 77% of 8-year-old children and 73% of 10/12-year-olds are completely satisfied with their life as a whole. Figures 8.3 and 8.4 show that the majority of 8 and 10/12-year-olds are totally satisfied with aspects such as enjoying their life (78% and 71% respectively), having a good life (76% and 73% respectively), and are happy with their lives (80% and 74% respectively). In all age groups the highest level of satisfaction is being happy with their lives (80% and 74% respectively) whilst the least satisfaction is that things that happen in their lives are excellent (65% and 54% respectively). More 8-year-old girls are satisfied with their lives than the same age boys (Table 8.1), but there were no significant gender differences amongst the older participants. Ten-year-olds, on the other hand, are more satisfied with their life than 12-year-olds on every aspect of their life (Table 8.2).

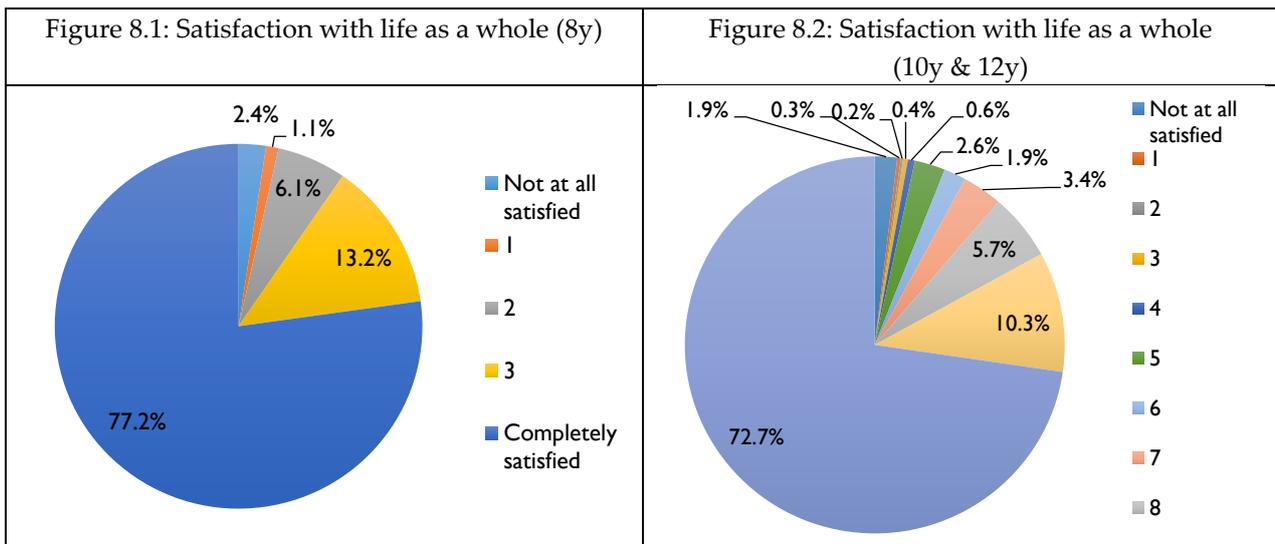


Figure 8.3: Children’s Worlds Subjective Wellbeing Scale (CW-SWBS) (8y)

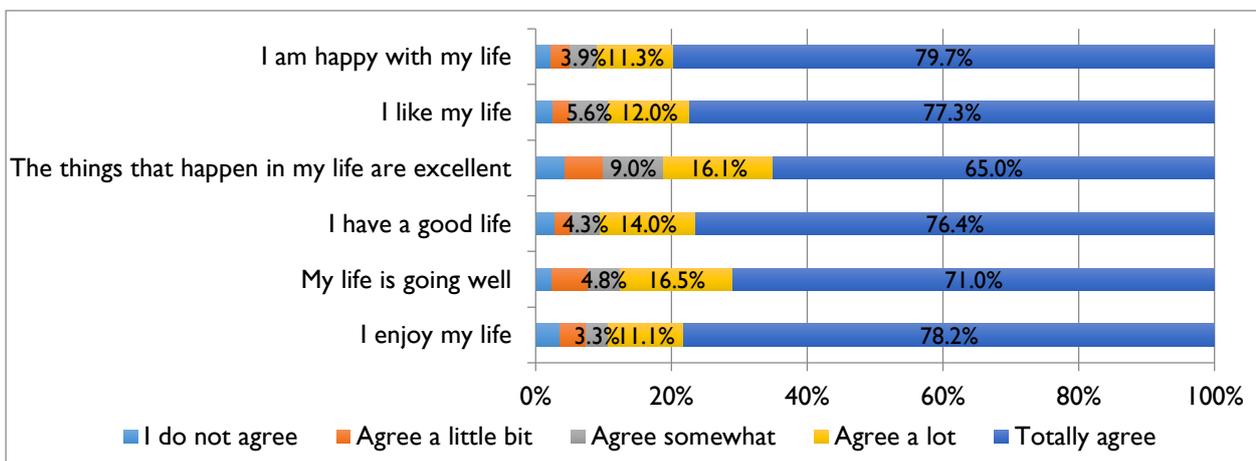


Figure 8.4: Children’s Worlds Subjective Wellbeing Scale (CW-SWBS) (10y & 12y)

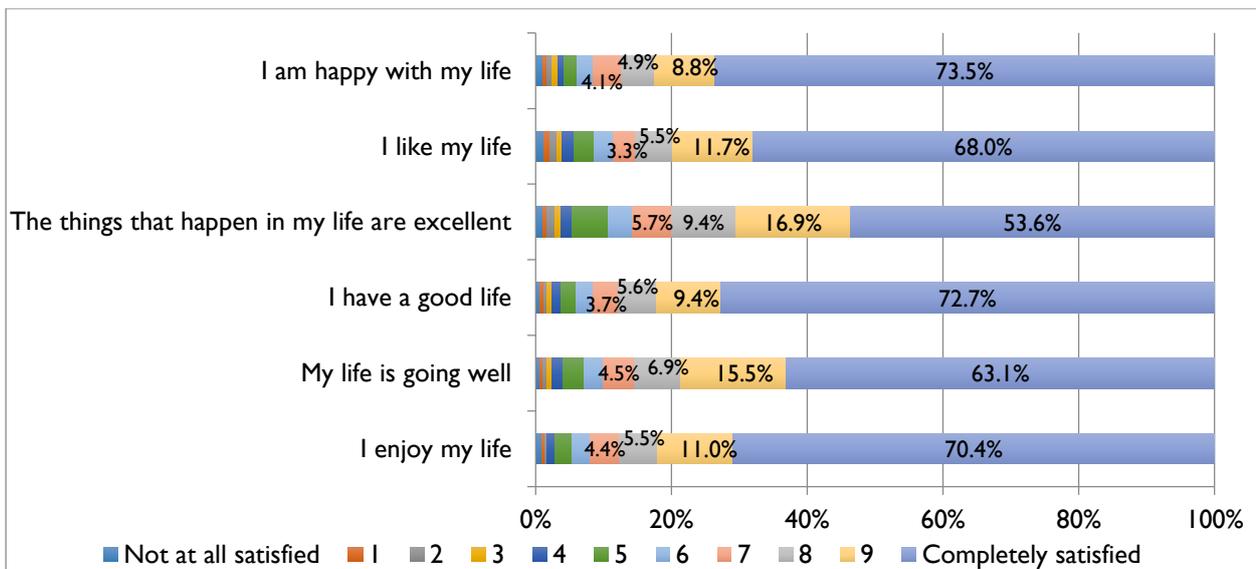


Table 8.1: Children’s Worlds Subjective Wellbeing Scale (CW-SWBS) by gender (8y)

		Boy	Girl
I enjoy my life ¹	Mean	3.43***	3.72***
	Std. Dev.	1.104	.798
My life is going well ²	Mean	3.41*	3.59*
	Std. Dev.	1.012	.913
I have a good life ³	Mean	3.49***	3.72***
	Std. Dev.	.971	.779
The things that happen in my life are excellent ⁴	Mean	3.28	3.36
	Std. Dev.	1.118	1.127
I like my life ⁵	Mean	3.55	3.63
	Std. Dev.	.891	.920
I am happy with my life ⁶	Mean	3.59	3.68
	Std. Dev.	.891	.842

Note: ¹t(658)=-3.80, ²t(654)=-2.39, ³t(652)=-3.34, ⁴t(648)=-0.96, ⁵t(644)=-1.19, ⁶t(645)=-1.32, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 8.2: Difference between 10y and 12y in Children’s Worlds Subjective Wellbeing Scale (CW-SWBS)

		10y	12y
I enjoy my life ¹	Mean	9.28**	9.01**
	Std. Dev.	1.710	1.898
My life is going well ²	Mean	9.20***	8.79***
	Std. Dev.	1.615	2.047
I have a good life ³	Mean	9.35***	9.01***
	Std. Dev.	1.608	1.955
The things that happen in my life are excellent ⁴	Mean	8.92***	8.35***
	Std. Dev.	1.870	2.324
I like my life ⁵	Mean	9.14**	8.79**
	Std. Dev.	1.970	2.201
I am happy with my life ⁶	Mean	9.38***	8.93***
	Std. Dev.	1.633	2.162

Note: ¹t(1314)=2.68, ²t(1313)=4.05, ³t(1302)=3.44, ⁴t(1316)=4.88, ⁵t(1316)=3.05, ⁶t(1315)=4.26, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

The vast majority of 8-year-old students are satisfied with the various aspects of their lives, with 74% to 77% being completely satisfied about how safe they feel, the way they look, their health and their life as a whole (Figure 8.5). More 8-year-old girls feel safer than boys and it is also indicative that they are also more satisfied with the way they look (Table 8.3). Seventy-one per cent of 10 and 12-year-old participants are also completely satisfied with their safety, their health (68% completely satisfied), the way they look (64% completely satisfied) and their life as a whole (73% completely satisfied), but their satisfaction is relatively lower when asked about the freedom they have (56% completely satisfied) and what will happen to them in the future (53% completely satisfied); the latter is the area they are least satisfied with (Figure 8.6). More 10-year-olds are satisfied with the way they look than 12-year-olds (Table 8.4). In all age groups the area with the highest level of satisfaction is life as a whole.

Figure 8.5: Areas of life satisfaction (8y)

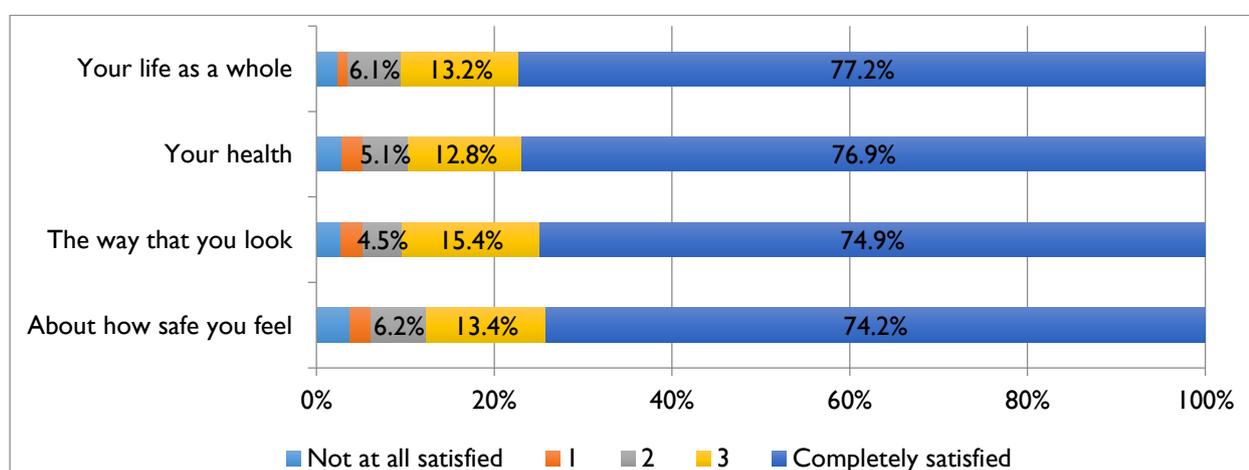


Table 8.3: Areas of life satisfaction by gender (8y)

		Boy	Girl
About how safe you feel ¹	Mean	3.44*	3.60*
	Std. Dev.	1.033	.929
The way that you look ²	Mean	3.52	3.63
	Std. Dev.	.943	.846
Your health ³	Mean	3.54	3.63
	Std. Dev.	.960	.848
Your life as a whole ⁴	Mean	3.57	3.66
	Std. Dev.	.902	.772

Note: ¹t(652)=-2.14, ²t(639)=-1.44, ³t(627)=-1.16, ⁴t(633)=-1.29, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figure 8.6: Areas of life satisfaction (10y & 12y)

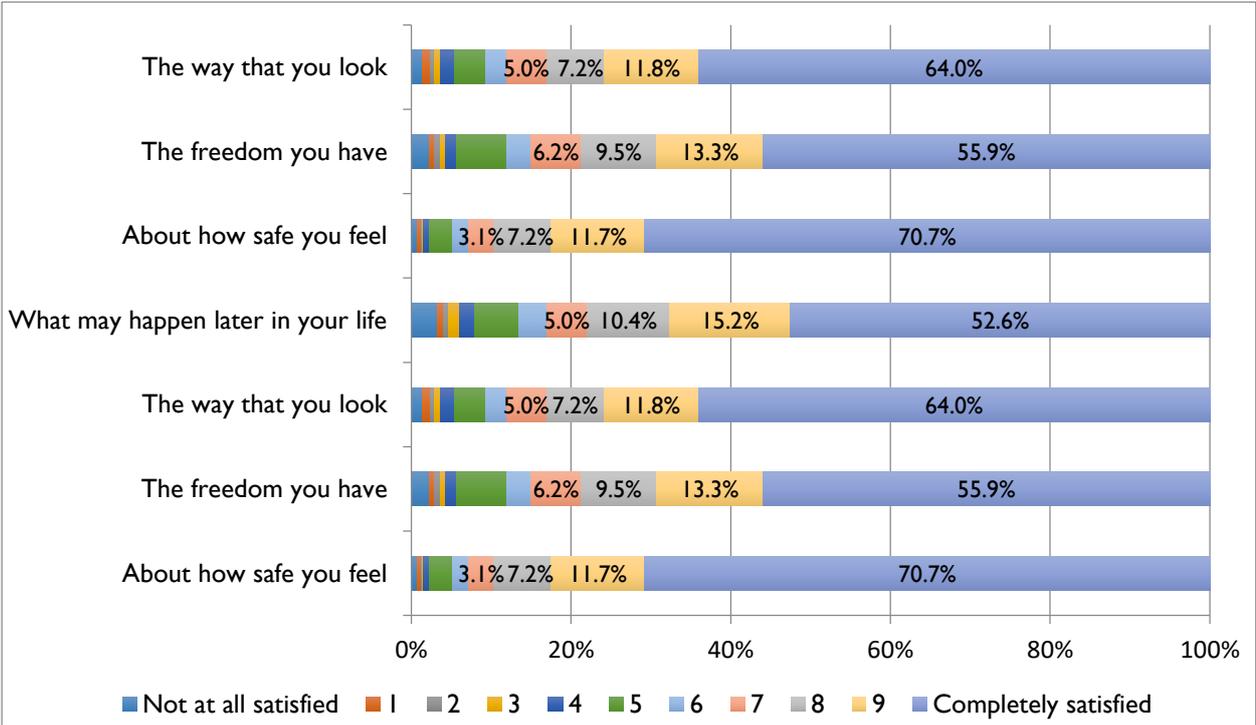


Table 8.4: Difference between 10y and 12y in areas of life satisfaction

		10y	12y
About how safe you feel ¹	Mean	9.28	9.15
	Std. Dev.	1.649	1.722
The freedom you have ²	Mean	8.47	8.70
	Std. Dev.	2.388	2.157
The way that you look ³	Mean	9.04***	8.64***
	Std. Dev.	1.885	2.341
What may happen later in your life ⁴	Mean	8.37	8.47
	Std. Dev.	2.577	2.354
How you are listened to by adults in general ⁵	Mean	8.81	8.89
	Std. Dev.	2.185	2.079
Your Health ⁶	Mean	9.14	9.10
	Std. Dev.	1.875	1.712
Your life as a whole ⁷	Mean	9.27	9.07
	Std. Dev.	1.872	1.929

Note: ¹t(1210)=1.36, ²t(1202)=-1.72, ³t(1203)=3.27, ⁴t(1187)=-0.71, ⁵t(1203)=-0.66, ⁶t(1201)=-0.42, ⁷t(1192)=-1.81, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Affective wellbeing

When asked about how they felt during the past two weeks, 84% of 8-year-olds reported always or often feeling happy, with only 4% never being happy. On the other hand, whilst 42% are never sad, 14% said they are often or always sad (Figures 8.7, 8.8). More 8-year-old girls report being happy than the same age boys (Table 8.5). Similarly, the majority of 10 and 12-year-olds scored high on positive affect, with two thirds being extremely happy and full of energy; however, only 39% feel extremely calm. They also report a low level of negative affect, with around one third saying they are not at all bored (36%), sad (35%) or stressed (27%), and 6% being extremely sad, going up 12% for extremely bored and 15% extremely stressed (Figure 8.9). The means show that Maltese 10 and 12-year-olds are happy children and full of energy in their large majority, but a substantial number are not calm (7.21 out of 10) and feel stressed (4.25/10) and bored (3.49/10) (Table 8.6). The younger students appear to enjoy a better state of affective wellbeing, with significantly higher scores on positive affectivity and a tendency for lower scores on negative affectivity; more 10-year-old participants report being calm, full of energy and not bored than 12-year-olds (Tables 8.7, 8.8). More students in independent schools report negative affectivity than those in state schools; 10/12-year-old students in independent schools are significantly more bored than students in state schools, with a tendency for more students in state schools to feel happier than peers in independent and church schools (Tables 8.7, 8.8).

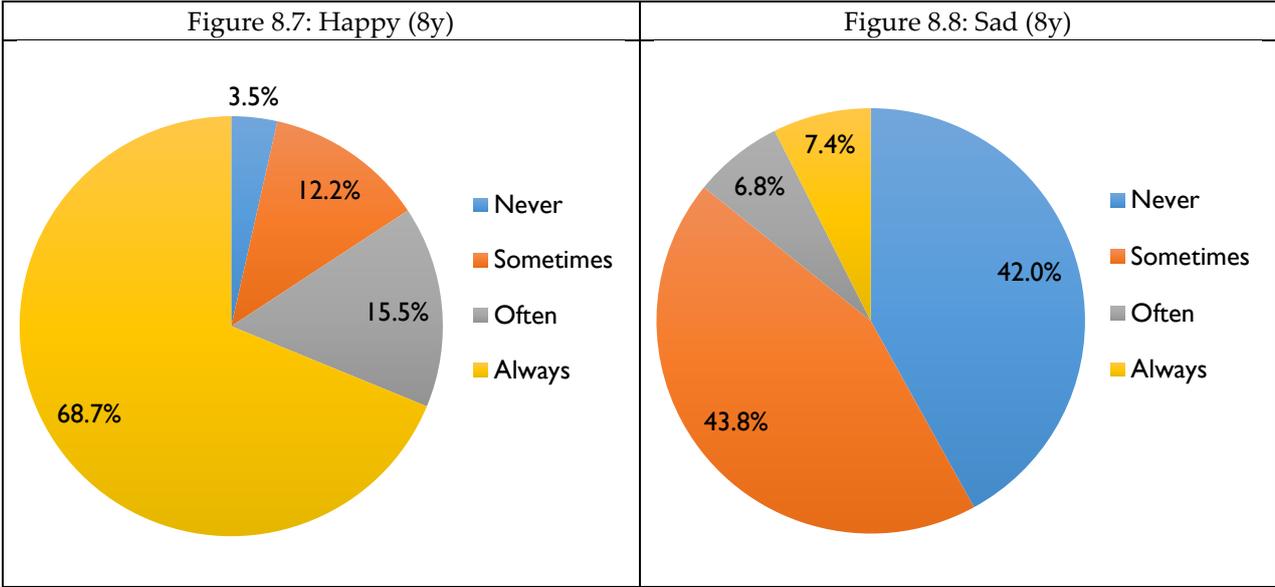


Table 8.5: Feeling happy and sad by gender (8y)

		Boy	Girl
Happy ¹	Mean	2.43*	2.57*
	Std. Dev.	.869	.806
Sad ²	Mean	.80	.80
	Std. Dev.	.851	.881

Note: ¹t(645)=-2.11, ²t(605)=-0.03, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figure 8.9: Feelings (10y & 12y)

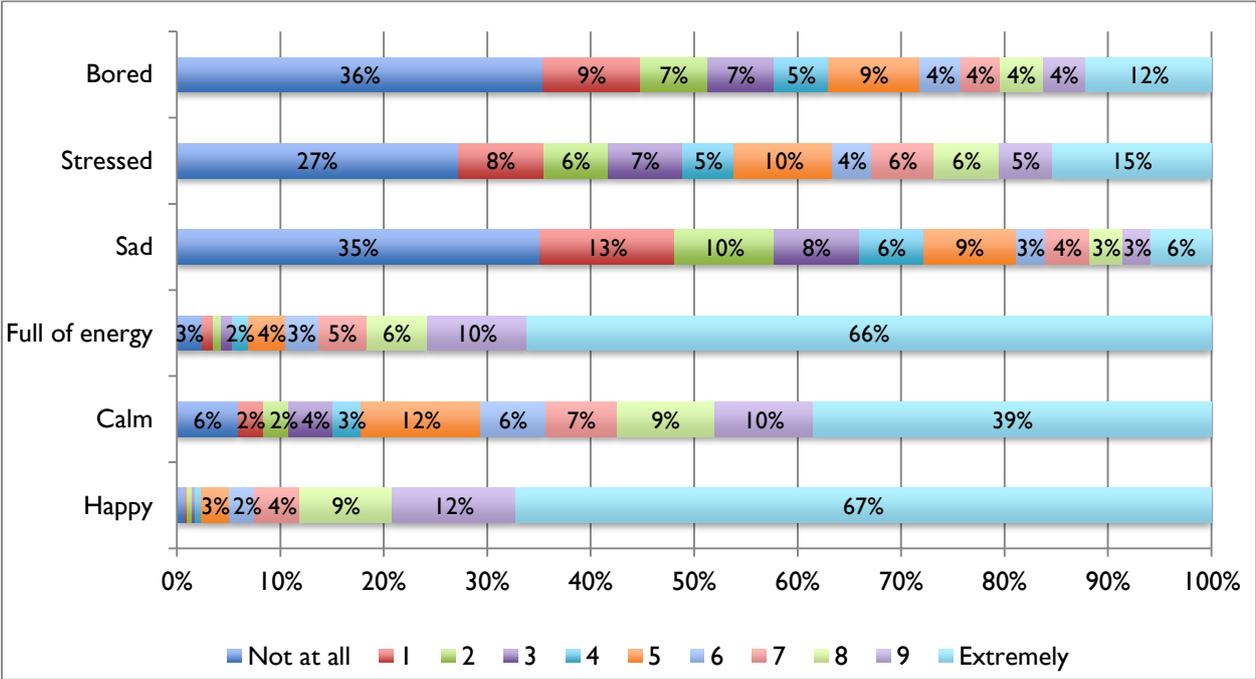


Table 8.6: Mean scores for positive and negative feelings (10y & 12y)

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Happy ¹	9.14***	1.643
Calm ²	7.21***	3.120
Full of energy ³	8.78***	3.122
Sad ⁴	2.82***	3.736
Stressed ⁵	4.25***	2.347
Bored ⁶	3.49***	3.640

Note: ¹t(645)=-2.11, ²t(605)=-0.03, p>0.05, ³t(645)=-2.11, ⁴t(605)=-0.03, ⁵t(645)=-2.11, ⁶t(605)=-0.03, p>0.05, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 8.7: Children's Worlds Positive and Negative Affects Scale (PAS & NAS) by age and gender (10y & 12y)

Age ^a	PAS ¹		NAS ²	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	85.75***	16.504	33.65*	27.575
12y	81.34***	18.541	36.95*	27.154
School Sector ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
State	84.36	18.054	33.35*	27.593
Church	83.03	16.861	36.84*	27.508
Independent	81.60	19.017	42.51*	22.023

Note^a: ¹t(1176)=4.32, ²t(1169)=-2.06, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001
 Note^b: ¹F(2,1175)=1.17, ²F(2,1168)=4.14, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 8.8: Mean scores for feelings items by age and school sector

	Happy ¹		Calm ²		Full of energy ³	
Age ^a	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	9.23	1.648	7.53***	3.031	8.99***	2.264
12y	9.04	1.740	6.85***	3.188	8.53***	2.417
School Sector ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
State	9.19	1.638	7.34	3.151	8.82	2.389
Church	9.12	1.717	7.08	3.117	8.72	2.290
Independent	8.72	2.037	6.93	2.788	8.80	2.388
	Sad ⁴		Stressed ⁵		Bored ⁶	
Age ^a	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	2.73	3.175	4.14	3.765	3.23**	3.637
12y	2.91	3.055	4.37	3.702	3.78**	3.624
School Sector ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
State	2.68	3.157	4.11	3.775	3.22**	3.647
Church	2.94	3.131	4.37	3.713	3.69**	3.637
Independent	3.27	2.502	4.76	3.452	4.87**	3.179
Note ^a : ¹ t(1204)=1.91, ² t(1186)=3.76, ³ t(1194)=3.34, ⁴ t(1193)=-0.99, ⁵ t(1186)=-1.10, ⁶ t(1190)=-2.63, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001						
Note ^b : ¹ F(2,1175)=1.17, ² F(2,1168)=4.14, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001						

Psychological wellbeing

Twelve-year-old participants also scored very highly on the satisfaction scale of psychological attributes to wellbeing, with 58% to 72% being completely satisfied with the way they are, feeling positive about the future, feeling they are learning a lot, that people are generally friendly towards them, that they are good in managing their responsibilities, and that they have enough choices about how to spend their time. Only about 1% are not satisfied at all on any of the six dimensions of psychological wellbeing (Figure 8.10). The means (out of 10) range from 9.10 ('I like the way I am') to 8.72 ('I have enough choices about how to spend my time') (Table 8.9).

Figure 8.10: Children’s Worlds Psychological Subjective Wellbeing Scale (CW- PSWBS items) (12y)

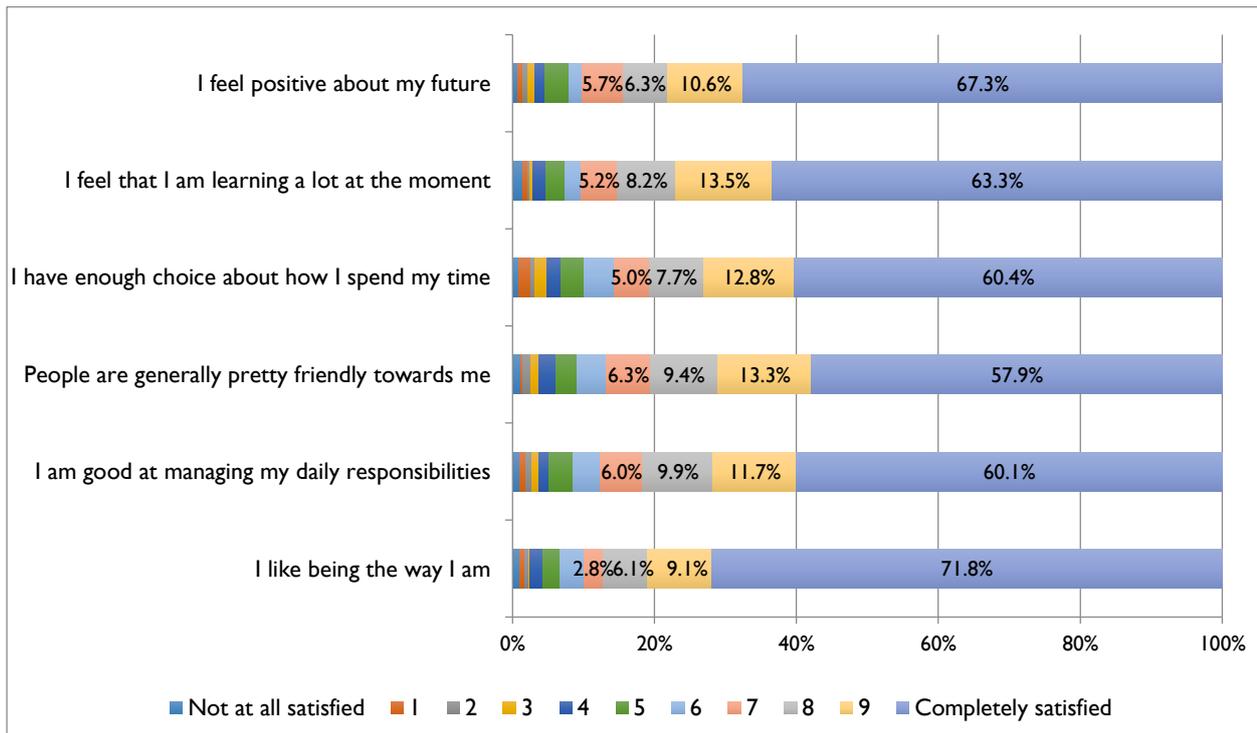


Table 8.9: Satisfaction with life and self (12y)

	Mean	Std. Dev.
I like being the way I am ¹	9.11***	1.925
I am good at managing my daily responsibilities ²	8.79***	2.052
People are generally friendly towards me ³	8.73***	2.093
I have enough choice about how I spend my time ⁴	8.72***	2.207
I feel that I am learning a lot at the moment ⁵	8.94***	1.997
I feel positive about my future ⁶	8.99***	1.970

Note: ¹t(547)=110.68, ²t(542)=99.82, ³t(541)=97.08, ⁴t(542)=92.08, ⁵t(545)=104.61, ⁶t(544)=106.54, p>0.05p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Chapter 9

My Rights as a Child and Living in Malta

Forty-seven per cent of participants are aware of their rights as children, in contrast to 15% who are unaware and 38% who are not sure (Figure 9.1). When asked about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 40% are not sure about it, followed by 35% who do not know about it, and only one fourth who know about it (Figure 9.2). Participants appear to become more aware of their rights and the children’s rights convention as they grow older from 33% and 20% of 8-year-olds up to 63% and 29% of 12-year-olds respectively (Table 9.1). More boys than girls and more students in church and state schools than independent schools, know about children’s rights and the UN Convention of Children’s Rights (Table 9.2).

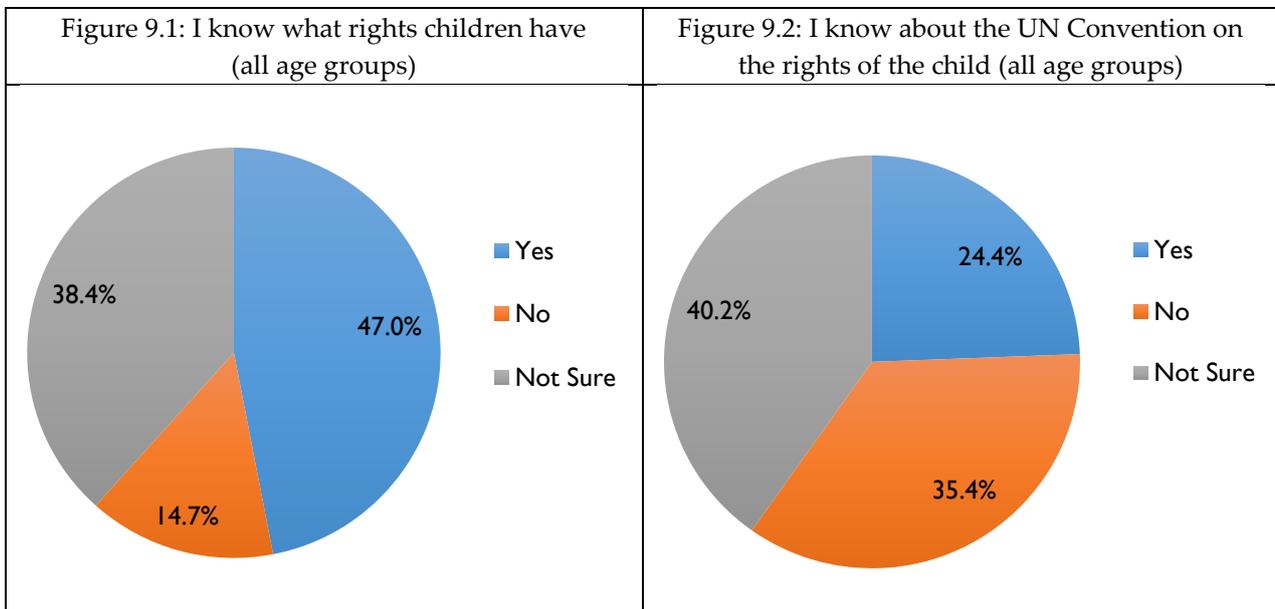


Table 9.1: Awareness of children’s rights and UNCRC by age

		I know what rights children have ¹			I know about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ²		
		8y	10y	12y	8y	10y	12y
Yes	N	210	301	348	129	157	158
	%	32.9%	46.9%	63.4%	20.4%	24.3%	29.4%
No	N	172	76	20	309	219	115
	%	27.0%	11.8%	3.6%	48.8%	33.9%	21.4%
Not sure	N	256	265	181	195	270	265
	%	40.1%	41.3%	33.0%	30.8%	41.8%	49.3%
Total	N	638	642	549	633	646	538
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: ¹ $\chi^2(4)=179.27$, ² $\chi^2(4)=97.43$, $p<0.001$

Table 9.2: Awareness of children's rights and UNCRC by age, gender, school sector and whether born in Malta (all age groups)

	I know what rights children have ¹		I know about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ²	
Age^a	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
8y	1.06***	.772	.72***	.782
10y	1.35***	.683	.91***	.758
12y	1.60***	.559	1.08***	.709
Gender^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	1.41***	.678	.94**	.772
Girl	1.21***	.748	.84**	.755
School Sector^c	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
State	1.31*	.735	.95***	.785
Church	1.37*	.708	.83***	.735
Independent	1.19*	.596	.76***	.741
Born in Malta^d	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Born in Malta	1.48**	.629	.97	.738
Not Born in Malta	1.36	.729	1.06	.747
Note ^a : ¹ F(2,1826)=92.99, ² F(2,1812)=34.17, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001 Note ^b : ¹ t(1814)=5.92, ² t(1801)=2.75, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001 Note ^c : ¹ F(2,1826)=4.35, ² F(2,1812)=7.32, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001 Note ^d : ¹ t(1146)=1.96, ² t(1143)=-1.17, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001				

Living in Malta

More than three quarters of 10 and 12-year-olds have very positive views about living in Malta, with 77% to 80% agreeing that adults in Malta care about children and respects children's rights, that children are allowed to participate in decisions, and that Malta is a safe place for children to live. However, the frequency of those completely agreeing with these statements about living in Malta decreases to 50% in the case of adults care and respect children's rights, 53% in Malta being a safe place and 61% in children allowed to participate in decisions (Figure 9.3). At least half of the participants totally agree on all the four areas of living in Malta. More 10-year-old children believe that Malta is a safe place for children than 12-year-olds and more boys than girls totally agree that children in Malta are allowed to participate in decisions (Table 9.3). There do not appear to be any regional or nationality differences in children's views on living in Malta.

Figure 9.3: Children’s perceptions about Malta (10y & 12y)

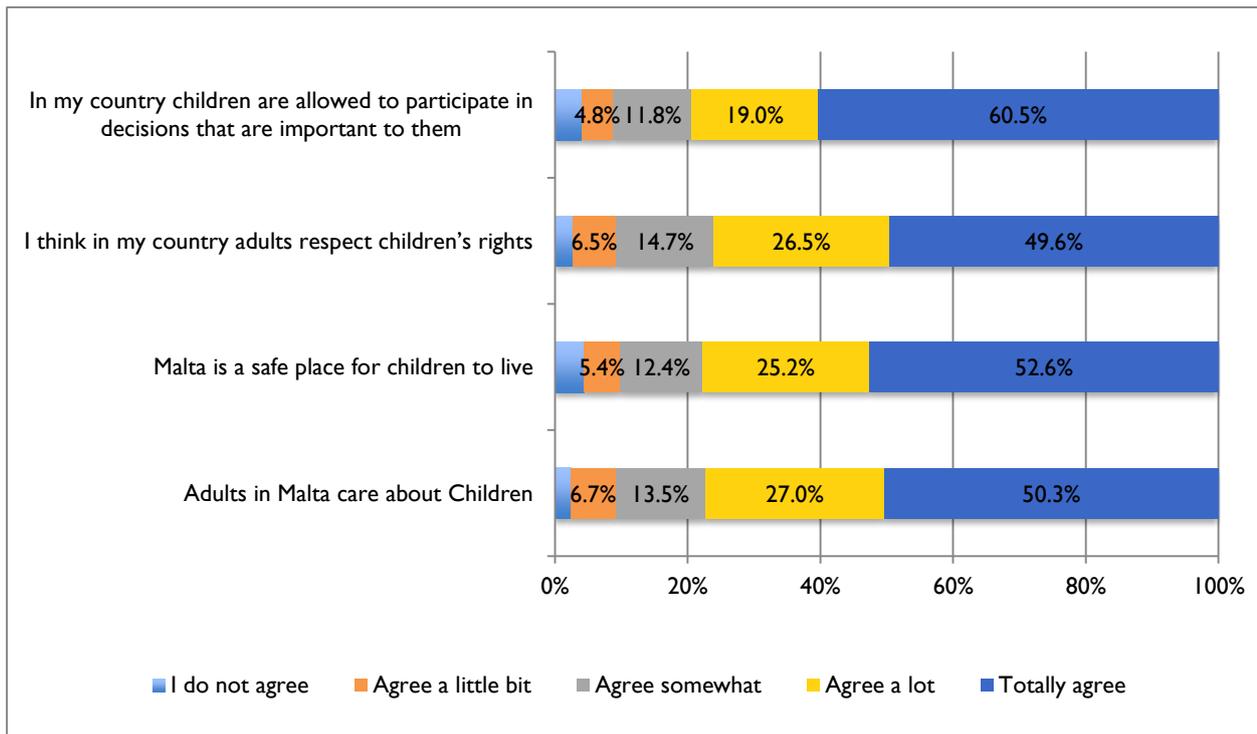


Table 9.3: Perceptions about Malta by age and gender (10/12y)

	Adults in Malta care about Children ¹		Malta is a safe place for children to live ²		I think in my country adults respect children’s rights ³		In my country children are allowed to participate in decisions that are important to them ⁴	
Age ^a	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
10y	3.18	1.037	3.22*	1.109	3.15	1.076	3.23	1.151
12y	3.14	1.060	3.09*	1.113	3.12	1.043	3.32	1.028
Gender ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Boy	3.17	1.059	3.17	1.118	3.14	1.049	3.36**	1.018
Girl	3.16	1.039	3.16	1.106	3.15	1.074	3.17**	1.179

Note^a: ¹t(1053)=0.67, ²t(1096)=2.00, ³t(1006)=0.47, ⁴t(941)=-1.22, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note^b: ¹t(1046)=0.10, ²t(1089)=0.03, ³t(999)=-0.28, ⁴t(934)=2.72, p>0.05, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Chapter 10

Conclusions and Recommendations

The great majority of participants in this study provided a positive view of their subjective wellbeing and the various aspects of their lives such as family, home, economic wellbeing, school, locality, use of time, safety and friends. They identified, however, a number of areas within these systems which they would like to see improved and which would consequently enhance their wellbeing. In this chapter we discuss these strengths and needs of Maltese children and also examine how Maltese children's subjective wellbeing compares with that of children from other countries.

Home and family

Most of the children in the study report a stable home environment with very good relationships with their parents and other family members. Ninety per cent live with their parents in one home, with 78% of such families including siblings and 16% grandparents. When compared to children from other countries in this study, ten-year-old Maltese children living in one home are ranked in the bottom 14 places on number of grandparents and bottom 8 places on number of siblings in the family, suggesting relatively smaller Maltese families in comparison to the other countries in the study (Rees, Savahl, Lee, & Casas, 2020)³.

Ten per cent of the children, however, live and sleep in different homes regularly, with more 10-year-old children living in two homes than 12-year-olds. Of these 10%, 85% live with their mother and 59% with their mother's partner in the first home, while 74% live with their father and 33% with their father's partner in the second home. Eighty-three per cent see their family they don't live with at least once or more per week. Those who live and sleep in the same home enjoy more positive wellbeing in contrast to those who live in different homes, though the great majority of participants in both groups report a high level of positive wellbeing. This finding merits further exploration as the number of Maltese children who spend time living in two homes is becoming increasingly common. Another finding worth further exploration is the number of children whose parents live or work away from home for more than a month, namely 12% of fathers and 5% of mothers.

The great majority of Maltese children are happy with the home they live in, with 81% of 8-year-olds and 71% of 10/12-year-olds being completely satisfied. Eighty-six per cent have their own bed, whilst 89% of 10 and 12-year-olds have a place where to study at home, and half have their own bedroom. When compared with the second wave study (Cefai & Galea, 2016), there are indications that the present cohort of 10 and 12-year-olds are somewhat more satisfied with their homes, a key indicator of children's wellbeing (Newman, Tay & Diener, 2014).

The great majority of Maltese children reported a high level of satisfaction with the people they live with, with 81% of 8-year-olds and 73% of 10/12-year-olds being highly satisfied. Ten-year-olds are more satisfied than 12-year-olds, in line with the international trend (Rees et al., 2020). Maltese children across the three age groups are amongst the top 10 countries most satisfied with the people they live, with a relatively low percentage of those being dissatisfied (Rees et al., 2020). They also reported very positive feelings about other family members, with 81% completely agreeing that there are people who care about them, 75% that if they have a problem their family will help and that they feel safe at home and 74% that they have a good time with their family. They are relatively less satisfied with their autonomy, however,

³ Rankings are out of 23 countries for 8-year-olds, 35 countries for 10-year-olds and 30 countries for 12-year-olds.

with only 61% completely agreeing with statements about being listened to and parents making decisions with them. In line with the international trend, Maltese children scored high on feeling safe and cared for, but relatively lower on being listened to and participating in decisions (Rees et al., 2020). Although the majority reported positive relationships with siblings, close to one fourth reported being frequently hit by their siblings, particularly 8-year-olds.

These findings are in line with those of the second wave study carried out four years ago, with similar results in feeling safe at home and having a good time with the family (Cefai & Galea, 2016). The recent Health Behaviour School Checklist (HBSC) study by Inchley et al. (2020) reported similar findings, with the great majority of 11 and 13-year-olds feeling supported by parents. Those enjoying family support report a higher level of emotional wellbeing (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). When compared with the views of children in the other countries in the present study, 10-year-old Maltese children's views are similar to those of their peers, with the highest level of agreement in feeling cared for and safety at home and the lowest level of agreement on parents listening and on making joint decisions with parents. On almost all the six areas of family life, Maltese children have a higher score than the international average, particularly in having a good time, in participating in decisions and in feeling cared for. When asked if they completely agree with various aspects of family life, 10-year-old Maltese children rank 10th place in having a good time in their family, 13th place in making decisions together with their parents, 14th place in family care and getting help with their problems, 18th place in parents listening, but 22nd place in feeling safe (Table A1, Appendix).

Overall, these findings suggest that while Maltese children feel satisfied, cared for and safe at home, they would appreciate to be treated with more attention and respect such as being listened to and being given a more active say in decisions. It is a yearning for more recognition and autonomy, challenging traditional views of children in a state of becoming who need adults as they are incapable of making responsible decisions. It is also interesting to note that in the case of feeling safe at home amongst 10-year-olds, Maltese children ranked amongst the bottom half of the countries, even if their scores on safety are high. This suggests that although three fourths of Maltese 10-year-olds feel completely safe at home, on the whole they feel less safe than same age children from 21 other countries (out of 34 countries) (Table A1, Appendix). This is worth further exploration, also in view of the finding that the participants who felt safe at home report a higher level of positive affectivity and lower level of negative affectivity when compared to those who feel less safe.

Friends

Overall, most of the participants have positive and supportive relations with friends, with most being satisfied with their friends (78% of 8-year-olds and 57% of 10/12-year-olds completely satisfied), with 60% completely agreeing that they have enough friends, 56% that friends are usually nice to them, 65% that they get along well together with their friends, and 68% that they have a friend to support them if they have a problem. However, 14% indicated that they may not have enough friends. Younger participants appear to have better relationships than older ones. In line with the international trend, having friends for support in times of difficulties elicited a high level of agreement, whilst friends being nice had the least agreement (Rees et al., 2020).

Maltese children are amongst the most satisfied children with their friends when compared to international peers, ranking 4th place (8 and 10-year-olds) and 6th place (12-year-olds), with satisfaction scores of 9 or higher (out of 10) and a low level of dissatisfaction (3%) (Figure A1, Appendix). Maltese 10-year-old children are in the top half in getting on with friends (9th place), friends being nice (11th place) and friend support in times of difficulty (15th place), but slip down to 23rd place on having enough friends (Table A2, Appendix). In contrast to international peers who tend to agree that they have enough friends,

Conclusions and Recommendations

Maltese children are not as satisfied with the number of friends they have. Similarly, whilst the international trend is for girls to feel more supported by friends than boys, no such gender difference was found amongst Maltese children. There are no major differences in the findings from those of the second wave study, though there appears to be a slight decrease in having enough friends (across all age groups) (Cefai & Galea, 2016). Friends constitute one of the major sources of children's subjective wellbeing (Newman, Tay & Diener, 2014) and the finding that a considerable number of Maltese children, particularly 8 and 10-year-olds, do not have enough friends, is an area of concern. This relates also to the low ranking of Maltese 15-year-olds in confidence in making friends in the PISA study (OECD, 2019). Schools, families and the local communities may join forces to seek how to provide more opportunities to, and support children in making and maintaining friendships.

School

Most students in this study are happy with their school life and their learning and have positive relationships with their peers, with complete satisfaction ranging from 67% to 70% amongst 8-year-olds and 44% to 57% amongst 10/12-year-olds. Similar to the international findings, younger students report significantly higher levels of satisfaction with school life, while 8-year-old girls are more satisfied with their school life than boys, but this difference is not significant amongst the older students in contrast to the international trend (Rees et al., 2020). Ten and twelve-year-old students who speak Maltese are more satisfied with their life as students, the things learned at school and with other children in their class than those who speak English.

Maltese children also have very positive views of their teachers across the three age groups, with 84% to 91% agreeing that teachers care about them, will help them if they have a problem, and listen to them and take them seriously. Ten-year-olds are with the top students internationally to completely agree on the three items on teachers (Rees et al., 2020). More than 80% agree that they feel safe at school and 76% that other children will help them if they have a problem, with younger students expressing higher levels of agreement in line with the international trend (Rees et al., 2020). However, only 66% feel completely safe at school and 65% completely safe on the way to and from school. About three fourths of 10/12-year-olds agree or strongly agree that they have opportunities to make decisions at school, with 12-year-olds scoring higher than 10-year-olds.

When compared with international peers, there is an inconsistent pattern amongst the Maltese three age groups. Maltese 8-year-olds are in the middle rank in terms of satisfaction with school life (10th out of 22 countries), 10-year-olds feature in the bottom half (22nd place), whilst 12-year-olds compare better with international peers (12th place), but amongst the top five in low level of satisfaction (Figure A2, Appendix). When compared with international peers on satisfaction with peers, learning and teachers, Maltese students are amongst the top half of the countries, with some very good rankings. With regards to satisfaction with other children in their class, Maltese students are amongst the most satisfied with their classroom peers, with 8-year-olds ranked 2nd, 10-year-olds ranked 9th, and 12-year-olds ranked 8th place. Maltese 8, 10 and 12-year-old children are also with the top half places on satisfaction with learning, with 8-year-olds ranked 8th, 10-year-olds 14th, and 12-year-olds in 10th place respectively (Figures A3, A4, Appendix). Maltese 10-year-olds consistently show positive views of their teachers, ranking amongst the top places on completely agreeing that teachers listen and take note (3rd place), help when they need support (4th place) and care about them (5th place), and 13th place on teachers providing students with opportunities to make decisions (Table A3, Appendix).

These results do not differ considerably from those reported in the second wave study in 2016 (Cefai & Galea, 2016) and in general show similar trends to findings from other recent studies (Inchley et al., 2020; OECD, 2019). However, when compared with the 10/12-year-old cohort in the present study, 11-

year-olds in the HBSC study appear to be less satisfied at school, with only around half being satisfied (Inchley et al., 2020). The older the students get the less satisfied they appear to become at school, both in the present study from 8 to 12-year-olds, and in the HBSC study (Inchley et al., 2020) from 11 to 15-year-olds (e.g. compare 67% of Maltese 8-year-olds completely satisfied with school life in the present study with less than one fourth amongst 15-year-olds in the HBSC study). The HBSC study (Inchley et al., 2020) also found that Maltese students are the students mostly likely to feel pressured by schoolwork from all 45 countries in the study (from around half of 11-year-olds to 80% (girls) and 62% (boys) of 15-year-old students). These findings have important educational implications, as Maltese students who have a sense of school belonging have better academic achievement and a higher level of life satisfaction (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic experience where schools were closed for one full term with teaching and learning held online, gave an opportunity for a review of the teaching and learning processes, with the role of teachers moving more and more from a sage on the stage to a guide by the side. It provided more space for children's autonomy and self-directed learning, helping to make learning, schools and education more attractive and meaningful for students. If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that we need to try new approaches to education.

More than one third of Maltese children in the present study indicated frequent arguments and fighting in their class and one half frequent fighting at their school. One in five reported frequent physical or verbal bullying, whilst ten per cent reported being hit or called names three or more times in the last month. Physical bullying appears to be more frequent amongst younger and male students and in independent schools, whilst there are more instances of relational bullying in independent and church schools. This finding is similar to that reported by the recent PISA study with 15-year-old students, with a higher rate of victimisation in socially advantaged schools such as independent and church schools (OECD, 2019). Students not born in Malta were more likely to be the victims of frequent physical and verbal bullying. As expected, bullying is associated with a decreased sense of wellbeing and life satisfaction, a common finding in other studies (Downes & Cefai, 2016; UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). Maltese 10-year-olds are amongst the top 10 countries on not feeling safe at school. When compared with the second wave study, there are indications of a decline in the incidence of physical and relational bullying, with less bullying reported in the current study (Cefai & Galea, 2016). Although it is encouraging to observe this apparent decline, bullying remains a painful reality for a considerable number of children with a negative impact on their wellbeing. It is one of the factors most strongly negatively associated with children's wellbeing (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020).

The finding that non-Maltese children are more at risk of victimisation warrants further investigation in view of the increasing number of foreign children living in Malta. A well implemented and monitored whole school policy, with clear definition of procedures and roles in addressing incidents of bullying need to be accompanied by a focus on discriminatory bullying to address the needs of children more at risk of bullying, such as children from other nationalities or cultures (Downes & Cefai, 2016). This also entails the promotion of a whole school climate recognising and celebrating the strengths of cultural diversity (Cefai, Keresztes, Galea & Spiteri, 2019).

Neighbourhood

On the whole, most 8, 10 and 12-year-old children in the study are satisfied with the area where they live (75% of 8-year-olds and 59% of 10/12-year-olds are completely satisfied). Seventy-six per cent feel safe, 79% believe that neighbours are kind to children, 66% that there are enough places to play and have a good time, and 65% that they have opportunities to participate in decisions about things that are important to children. It is interesting to observe, however, that while the highest agreement on average in the international study is having enough places to play, this registered the lowest level of agreement amongst the Maltese participants. In line with the international trend, satisfaction with neighbourhood decreases

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with age, with more 8-year-olds satisfied with the different aspects of their locality than 10 and 12-year-olds. A substantial minority, however, expressed dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood, with close to one fourth saying there are not enough places where to play and have a good time, that neighbours are not helpful, that there are frequent fights amongst adults, and that they do not have enough opportunities to participate in decisions about things that are important to them. Gozitan children have more positive views about adults in contrast to some of the other regions, whilst participants from the Western and South Eastern regions are more likely than children from the other regions to be satisfied with the socialising places in their neighbourhood. Compared with the second wave study (Cefai & Galea, 2016), the present cohort appears to be more satisfied with their area and feel safer when they are walking.

When compared with international peers, Maltese students are amongst the upper group of countries to be satisfied with the area where they live, with 8-year-olds ranked 6th place, 10-year-olds 11th place, and 12-year-olds 7th place (only 5% to 6% expressing a low level of satisfaction) (Figure A5, Appendix). On the other hand, when asked about specific items related to the neighbourhood, a less favourable view emerges, with a profile of strengths and weaknesses. Ten-year-old Maltese children are almost at the bottom of the group (31st out of 33 places) in completely agreeing that there are enough places to play; they are also within the bottom half (18th place) in agreeing that their neighbourhood is a safe area for children. They move to the middle rank (16th) in agreeing that adults in their community support them, but then climb up to the top ten with respect to listening and kind adults (5th and 8th place respectively). These findings go against the international trend where the highest level of agreement is on there being enough places to play (in Malta this is the lowest) and the lowest level of agreement on adults listening to children (in Malta, this is a strength) (Table A4, Appendix).

Overall these findings suggest that whilst Maltese children perceive adults in their community as kind and caring, they are particularly dissatisfied with the places available for them to play and to a lesser extent on the level of safety in their locality. This lack of space for children to play and engage in physical exercise has been documented in other studies (e.g. Cefai, 2018) and may be linked to the low level of sports and physical exercise. A recent study with primary school children reported that during weekdays children were mostly physically active during Physical Education lessons and school breaks rather than in their spare time (Fenech, Chokalingam., Formosa, & Gatt, 2020). It is also important to mention that Maltese children who play outside regularly are happier than those who do so rarely (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020).

Use of free time

Most of the students are satisfied with their use of time and their free time (73% of 8-year-olds and 56% of 10/12-year-olds are completely satisfied), with the younger children being more satisfied. Most go to sleep between 8 and 10pm, but 14% sleep after 10pm; the latter are less calm and more stressed than the former. The children spend most of their time with family (83%), doing homework (91%), watching TV, using social media, playing electronic games (71%-74%), and outside play, sports and physical exercise (61-62%). These practices are in line with those usually found in wealthier countries (Rees, 2018). Helping with household chores, taking care of family members and going to religious places or services are also frequent activities. It is also interesting to note that one in five work frequently with non-family members for money or food. These findings suggest a strong cultural influence, with the strong family ties and the family holding a central place in children's lives. Whilst 61% play or spend time outside frequently, less than half do so every day whilst close to one fourth do so less than once a week or never. Similarly, only 37% do physical exercise everyday, while 10% never do exercise or sports. More than one fourth spend their time resting or doing nothing. One fourth attend private tuition after school hours on a frequent basis, 15% on a daily basis.

Eight-year-olds are more likely to engage more frequently in these activities than older peers, with the exception of social media and electronic games, which is the other way round. This reflects the international trend showing that as children enter into adolescence they spend less time on physical exercise and more time behind the screen, especially on social media (Rees, 2018). The latest HBSC study has found that Maltese 13 and 15-year-olds have the highest problematic social media usage when compared to peers from 45 countries (Inchley et al., 2020). Excessive use of social media has been linked to a decrease in adolescent mental wellbeing (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020).

More boys than girls spend time everyday on social media and electronic games, whilst the opposite is true of taking care of family members and frequent attendance of religious services. On the other hand, the second wave gender differences in the practice of sports, physical exercise and playing outside, and spending time on schoolwork and studying, have disappeared (Cefai & Galea, 2016). The present cohort appears to spend less time on extra study and tuition and more time on sports and physical exercise, helping in the house and taking care of siblings and other family members when compared with the 2016 cohort. It also appears, however, that the present cohort is less satisfied with time use when compared with the second wave study.

Children's use of leisure time and the quality of the spaces they have for play, exercise and socialising are related to children's level of overall wellbeing and health (Rees, 2018). Children who play outside regularly are happier than those who do so rarely (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). In view of the inadequate play areas and issues of neighbourhood safety (lack of safety may inhibit outside play and sports) mentioned by a substantial number of respondents, and the relative low level of physical exercise and sports, increasing good quality and child friendly spaces for play and physical exercise, and enhancing security for children in localities, is set to increase children's activity level and consequently their physical and mental health (Cefai, 2018). For the past decades, Maltese children have been at the top of the league of countries as the most obese children in the world (Inchley et al., 2020) with around 40% of children being overweight or obese (Grech, Aquilina, Camilleri, Camilleri, Busuttil, Sant'Angelo, & Calleja, 2017). The associations found in the present study between socio-economic status and outside play and physical exercise, and between outside play and happiness, suggest that improving equity in access to play and physical exercise, will enhance children's health and wellbeing, particularly vulnerable and marginalised children. In seeking to improve play and social spaces for children it is also important to consider children's own perspectives and include children in the design of such spaces. It is encouraging to note that a number of such projects are being organised in a number of localities in Malta.

Economic wellbeing

Most of the participants enjoy a good quality of life and economic wellbeing, with the great majority satisfied with the things they have (86% of 8-year-olds and 73% of 10/12-year-olds are completely satisfied). When compared with the second wave cohort (Cefai & Galea, 2016), the present 10 and 12-year-olds appear somewhat more satisfied. Few students lack basic necessities, with older students, especially the 12-year-old cohort, more likely to enjoy better economic wellbeing than 8-year-olds. Practically all families have at least one bedroom and one washing machine, whilst the vast majority have at least one car or other means of private transport and one or more computers at home. More than one fourth, however, worry frequently about how much money the family has. Children from Gozo are less worried than those from the other regions particularly the Northern region, whilst children not born in Malta appear to be more worried than Maltese children. Similarly, younger children worry more often than the 12-year-old children, in line with the international trend (Rees et al., 2020). When compared to children from other countries on how worried they are about their family's financial situation, Maltese children rank with the less worried countries. Whilst they are more worried than children in Norway, Finland, France and Wales for instance, they are less worried than other Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy, reflecting the impact of the

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last global recession on those three countries (Rees et al., 2020). Another positive indicator of economic wellbeing for Maltese children is the high level of Internet access. Malta is one of the 13 countries where more than 95% of 10-year-old children have access to the Internet, now a key aspect of children's material circumstances and an indicator of social inclusion (Rees et al., 2020). On the other hand, on another indicator of social inclusion, namely possession of mobile phones, 8 and 10-year-old Maltese children are with the lower ranked countries (though not in the case of 12-year-olds) (Rees et al., 2020).

When comparing the items they lack compared to children from other countries, Maltese children are with the upper half of the countries: half of the Maltese children do not lack any of the 8 items, another one third lack only 1 item, 12% lack 2 items, but no Maltese children lack five or more items (Figure A6, Appendix). Malta is also one of 11 countries where more than 90% of children aged around 10 years old said that they always have enough food to eat each day (Rees et al., 2020). Maltese 10-year-old children also compare very well on five out of eight items (good clothes and good shoes, school trips and school equipment, are average on pocket money and Internet access, but below average on mobile phones (Table A5, Appendix). However, if we take the three age groups together, Malta ranks 12th place in the use of mobile phones, which is within the top half of the countries (Rees et al., 2020).

A small percentage of Maltese children in the present study, however, appear to be living on the poverty line and at risk of social exclusion, with 15% not having enough pocket money, 11% no equipment for sports/hobbies, while 3% to 4% do not have clothes in good condition, enough money for school trips, activities or access to the Internet at home, two pairs of shoes and the equipment they need for school. According to the recently published UNICEF report on children's wellbeing in rich countries (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020), Malta is included with the list of countries where one child in five lives in poverty (21.4%; average=20%, based on 2018 statistics).

Cognitive, affective and psychological wellbeing

The different measures of children's subjective wellbeing consistently show the participants in this study are highly satisfied with their lives. The great majority of 8, 10, and 12-year-old children reported very high levels of satisfaction in their cognitive wellbeing, such as completely agreeing that they are enjoying their life (71% - 78%), having a good life (73% - 76%) and are happy with their life (74%- 80%). They are also completely satisfied with how safe they feel, the way they look and their health (74% - 77% of 8-year-olds and 64%-71% of 10/12-year-olds). However, 10/12-year-olds are relatively less completely satisfied about the freedom they have and what will happen to them in the future (53% - 56%); the latter being the area they are least satisfied with. More 8-year-old girls are satisfied with various aspects of their lives than boys, whilst 10-year-olds enjoy a higher level of cognitive wellbeing than 12-year-olds, in line with the international trend (Rees et al., 2020). In the three age groups, the highest level of satisfaction amongst Maltese children is being happy with their lives and life as a whole, whilst the least satisfaction is that things in their lives are excellent. When compared to children from other countries, Maltese 8, 10 and 12-year-old children reported higher levels of cognitive wellbeing (ranked in the top 8) and lower levels of dissatisfaction (Figure A7, Appendix).

Overall, Maltese children have a consistent high level of positive affect (happiness and energy) (67% - 69% completely agree) and low levels of negative affect (sadness, stress and boredom) (15% or below). On the other hand, they have a relatively lower level of calmness and a higher level of stress: 15% reported being extremely stressed, 12% extremely bored and nearly 11% feeling less calm or not calm at all. One fourth of both 10 and 12-year-olds have a high level of negative affect, which is still relatively low when compared to those of most of the other countries (Rees et al., 2020). Younger students appear to enjoy a better state of affective wellbeing in line with the international trend, whilst students in independent schools report a higher level of negative affectivity (sad, stressed, bored) than those in state schools. In

contrast to the finding that boys express a higher level of affective wellbeing in a substantial number of other countries, no gender differences were found in the Maltese cohort (Rees et al., 2020). The levels of happiness, energy and calmness reported in this study are similar to those in the second wave study (Cefai & Galea, 2016).

Maltese 8-year-olds are amongst the happiest children in the international sample (4th place) while 10 and 12-year-olds are similarly ranked with the top ten countries in positive affect, with low levels of low positive affect (Figure A8, Appendix). In the case of 10-year-olds, Maltese children are similarly amongst the top children to feel happy (5th place) and full of energy (7th place) but moved to the middle of the group in feeling calm (16th place) (Table A6 Appendix). Maltese 8-year-olds are amongst the top 10 countries with low levels of feeling sad whilst 10 and 12-year-olds are similarly ranked with the top 10 countries in low levels of negative affect (Figure A9, Appendix). In the case of 10-year-olds, Maltese children are similarly amongst the top children to express low levels of boredom (3rd place) and feelings of sadness (9th place) but move down significantly to 20th place in the case of low levels of stress (Table A7, Appendix). This relates to other studies (Inchley et al., 2020) which reported that Maltese children are amongst the most stressed children, particularly in relation to academic stress. Stress and nervousness appear to be the weakest point of Maltese children. Whilst one notices the positive trend in decreasing extra tuition and increasing physical exercise (Cefai & Galea, 2016), this finding underlines the need for less academic pressure, more outside play and more physical exercise amongst Maltese children (c.f. Fenech et al., 2020). Stress management techniques such as mindfulness are also very promising strategies to reduce stress and improve positive affectivity in children (Greenberg & Harris, 2012; Weare, 2013).

When asked about themselves and their future, the great majority of 12-year-olds reported being satisfied with the way they are, feeling positive about the future, and that they are learning a lot, that people are generally friendly towards them, that they are good in managing their responsibilities, and that they have enough choices about how to spend their time (58% - 72% completely agree). Whilst the highest level of satisfaction is liking the way they are, on the other hand having enough choices on how to spend their time and people being friendly had the lowest frequency rate of the six areas, suggesting potential areas for intervention. When compared with the second wave study (Cefai & Galea, 2016), the present cohort expresses comparable levels of satisfaction with health, safety, looks, and future and life in general. The present cohort of 12-year-olds, however, appears to be more completely satisfied with life as a whole, choices regarding free time, the way they are, sense of responsibility, and people being friendly.

When compared with children from other countries, Maltese 12-year-old children are in the top three countries to report a high level of psychological wellbeing (Figure A10, Appendix). An analysis of the mean scores for individual items on the psychological wellbeing scale, shows that on all items Maltese 12-year-old children are amongst the better off children psychologically when compared to international peers, with particular strengths in liking who they are, being positive about the future and learning (Table A8, Appendix). It is interesting to note, however, that in other recent studies, Maltese 11, 13 and 15-year-olds are amongst the least satisfied children with life when compared to peers from other countries, namely 45 countries in the HBSC study (Inchley et al., 2020) and 33 countries in the PISA study (OECD, 2019). In these latter studies, Maltese children were being compared with peers from the richest countries in contrast to the countries in the present study which includes both rich and poor countries. It must also be underlined however, that the children in the present study are also younger than the 13 and 15-year-olds in the other studies. In fact, the HBSC study does indicate that satisfaction with life decreases from 11 to 13 to 15-year-olds (Inchley et al., 2020). Finally, both the PISA and HBSC studies made use of a single statement to measure satisfaction with life, in contrast to the various subscales used to examine children's cognitive, affective and psychological wellbeing in the present study.

Children's rights and living in Malta

There were mixed reactions to the awareness of children's rights, with only about one half of participants appearing confident about their awareness of children's rights. They become more aware of their rights, however, as they grow older (8 to 12-year-olds). Older children, boys and students in church and state schools know more about children's rights and the UN Convention of Children's Rights. These findings are quite similar to those expressed by participants in the second wave study (Cefai & Galea, 2016). More than three fourths of 10 and 12-year-olds have very positive views about living in Malta, agreeing that adults in Malta care about children and respects children's rights, that children are allowed to participate in decisions, and that Malta is a safe place for children to live. However, only about half completely agree that adults in Malta care about children and respect children's rights, and that Malta is a safe place for children (the issue of safety has recurred in other aspects of children's lives explored in this study, including family, neighbourhood and school). More 10-year-old children believe that Malta is a safe place for children than 12-year-olds and more boys than girls completely agree that children in Malta are allowed to participate in decisions.

Overall international rankings

When Maltese 10-year-olds were compared on 15 global domains of wellbeing with children from the other 35 countries in the study, they were ranked with the top 10 countries overall (Table A9, Appendix). They are with the top five countries in being satisfied with their friends and appearance, top ten countries in satisfaction with family, time use, possessions, safety and classroom peers, and top half in satisfaction with neighbourhood, being listened to, learning and health. In four domains they are with the bottom half, however, namely house, life as a student, freedom and future, in the latter three being ranked in 22nd place (Table A10, Appendix). When ranked across the 15 domains of wellbeing within each country, Malta's rankings are in line with the international trend, but with indications that Maltese children are relatively less satisfied with their future, freedom and school learning than the international average, but more satisfied with their appearance and safety (Table A11, Appendix). An analysis of the positively and negatively evaluated aspects both across and within countries, reveals that on most of the 15 domains, Maltese 10-year-old children have positive evaluations, with the exception of three areas, namely freedom, future and learning (Table A12, Appendix). Ten-year-old Maltese students would benefit from more motivating and engaging learning at school, more autonomy in their lives, and a more positive outlook for the future.

Conclusion

The major systems in Maltese children's lives, namely the family, the school, friends, and the community, appear to be functioning well for the majority of children. These systems are key indicators of children's subjective wellbeing, as indeed indicated by the high levels of cognitive, affective and psychological wellbeing reported by most of the participants in the study. Maltese children consistently ranked in the upper half of the 35 countries across overall subjective wellbeing measures. In line with the international trend, satisfaction with family, home, material possessions, health, and safety ranked high, in contrast to the lower levels of satisfaction with classmates and bullying, neighbourhood, freedom and being listened to, and prospects for the future.

This study has identified various aspects which children are relatively less satisfied with, such as the relative lack of freedom and lack of participation in family decisions, lack of sufficient space to play and lack of safety in the neighbourhood, not having enough friends, learning, classmates and bullying at school, low level of physical exercise, and concerns about the future. These aspects need to be further explored

and/or addressed through policy actions at systems level such as families, communities and schools, as well as broader macro-systems such as social, educational and health services and programmes. Maltese children will enjoy a higher level of wellbeing if they are given more autonomy and voice in their families and other systems such as school, if they have more opportunity to play and engage in physical exercise in child friendly and safe open spaces, if they are given the opportunity and support to make more friends, if their learning experiences at school become more meaningful, and if they are protected from bullying and fighting at school. Some of these issues may also require an examination of some of our deeply ingrained social and culture norms, such as the way we construe childhood and look at children. Children are not the possessions of adults and they are not simply in a state of *becoming*, waiting to become adults, but they are *beings* and the subject of their own rights.

The positive findings for the majority of Maltese children in this study must not override the reality that a number of Maltese children are not satisfied with their lives and the conditions they are living in at home, in their locality, at school and other systems in their lives. They yearn for more love and care at home, for more safe places where to play, for better living conditions to break away from the poverty trap, for more caring friends, for protection from bullying at school, for more support at school and more meaningful education. These are the most vulnerable children, their present condition exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and their needs need to be foregrounded and effectively addressed.

We hope that these findings and recommendations will be given their due attention by policymakers, educators, community leaders and other state and non-state stakeholders involved in the wellbeing of children, through a transdisciplinary, integrated approach to create healthier physical and social spaces for Maltese children⁴.

In this study we provided a space for Maltese children to have their say on what they think and how they feel about themselves, others and the world around them. They clearly indicated what is going well in their lives and what may be improved to enhance their wellbeing, health and quality of life. Their voices do not always resonate with the prevalent adult discourse on what children need, clearly underlining that in seeking to understand what is 'good' for children and what children 'need', we also need to listen carefully to what the children themselves have to say. It is thus crucial that initiatives to enhance the wellbeing of children will involve the children themselves as key partners in the process of bringing about positive change. We already have some examples of good practices where children are working together with adults in designing policies, spaces and services for Maltese children. Such practices however, need to become more integrated in policy actions related to the children's health, education and wellbeing, so that it becomes mainstream practice for children's voice to be heard and acted upon. In this way, children's participation in society will become "part of consensus-building between generations on what matters most" (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020, p.58).

This study is focused on children's subjective wellbeing before COVID-19. Children's wellbeing all over the world has been negatively impacted by the pandemic in the past months, with increasing stress and anxiety resulting from school closure, social distancing from friends and relatives, increased exposure to domestic violence, decreased access to essential services, increased poverty and more exposure to online sexual exploitation and cyberbullying (OECD, 2020). Vulnerable children are the ones who are the hardest hit, with the pandemic contributing to rising inequality, with poor children finding themselves even poorer. It is thus crucial that the present needs emerging from the pandemic are addressed effectively by

⁴ The recent UNICEF report on children's wellbeing (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020) indicates that Malta has overall good conditions that support child wellbeing, including education and health services and programmes, and overall social, economic and environmental contexts (ranked 21st out of 41 countries). The exception is social services and programmes, where Malta is placed with the bottom third ranking.

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providing timely and adequate support for children negatively impacted by COVID-19 (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). In responding to issues specifically related to COVID-19, we must not lose sight, however of the patterns in Maltese children's subjective wellbeing as identified in the present study. Research may need to untangle the issues and needs that have emerged from COVID-19 and those that are related to longer term trends in children's subjective wellbeing (Children's Society, 2020).



*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the world*

Anna Frank (1929-1945)

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Appendix

Comparative Tables from International Report (Rees et al, 2020)⁵

⁵ The tables and figures in the Appendix are being reproduced with permission from Rees et al. (2020).

Table A1: % of children aged around 10 years totally agreeing with questions about family

	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%

Children aged around 10 years old

Figure A1: Level of satisfaction with 'friends'

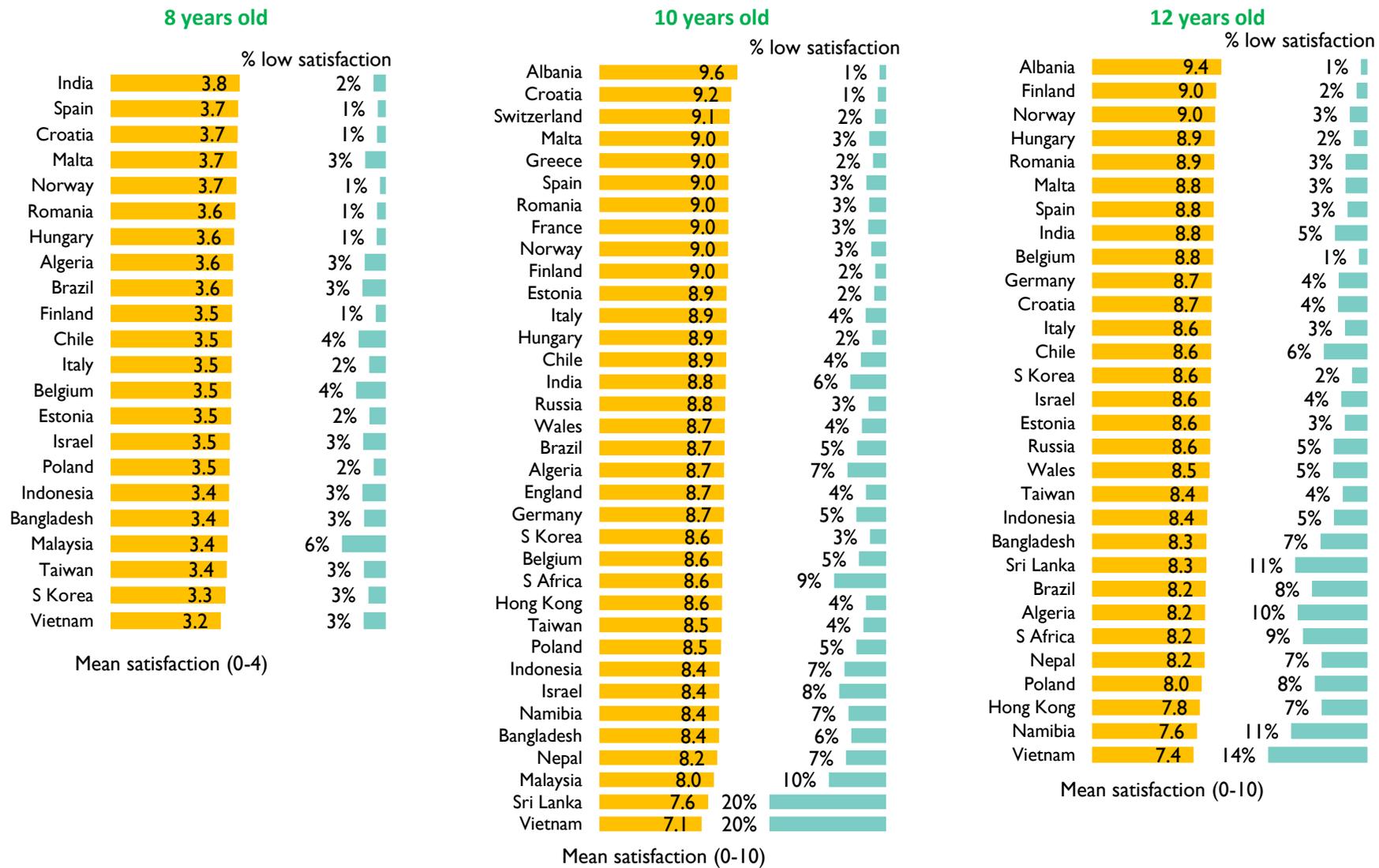


Table A2: % of children aged around 10 years totally agreeing with questions about friends

	Enough friends % rank	Friends nice % rank	Friends get along % rank	Friends support % 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%

Children aged around 10 years old

Figure A2. Satisfaction with life as a student

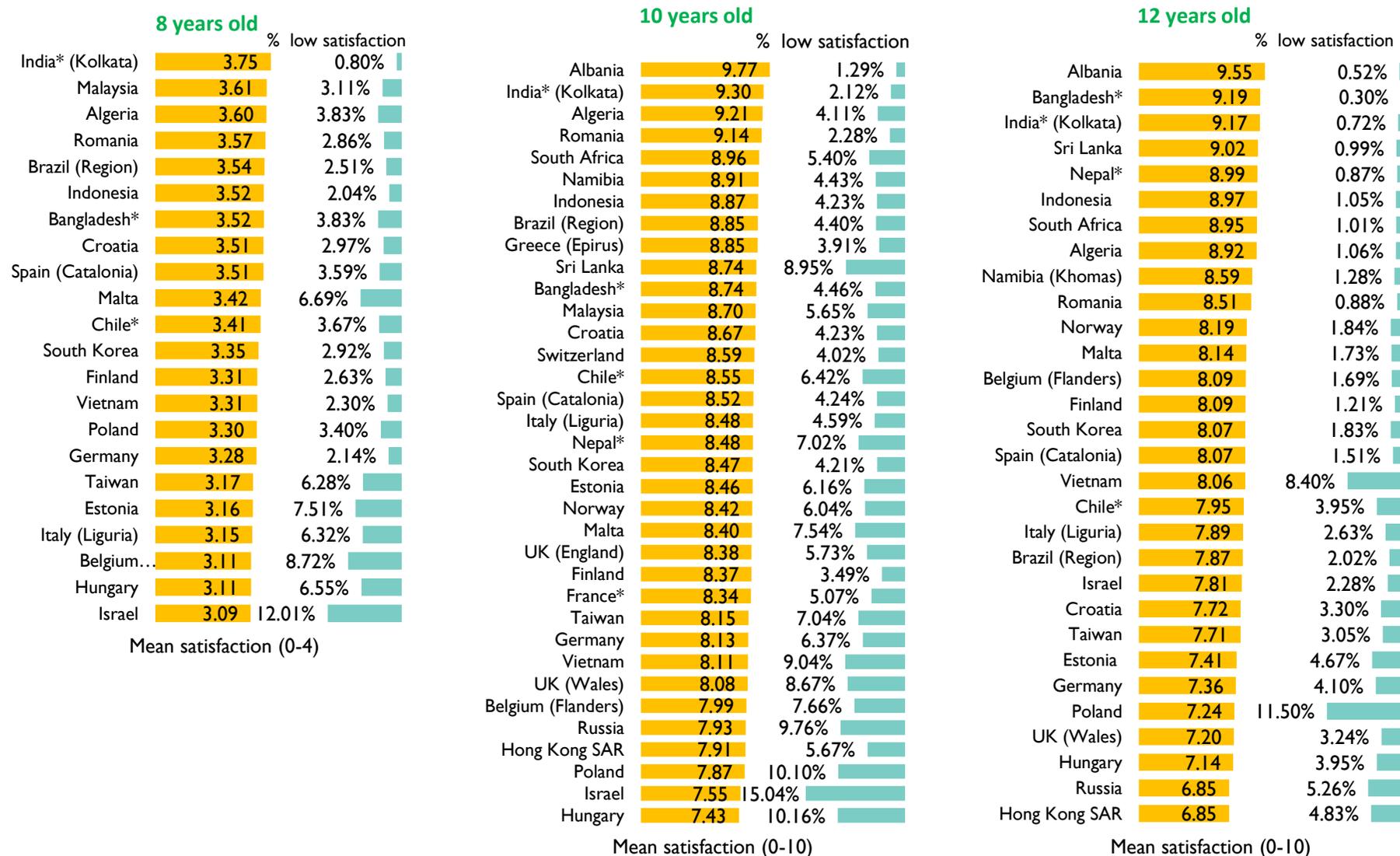


Figure A3: Happy/Satisfied with: Other children in your class

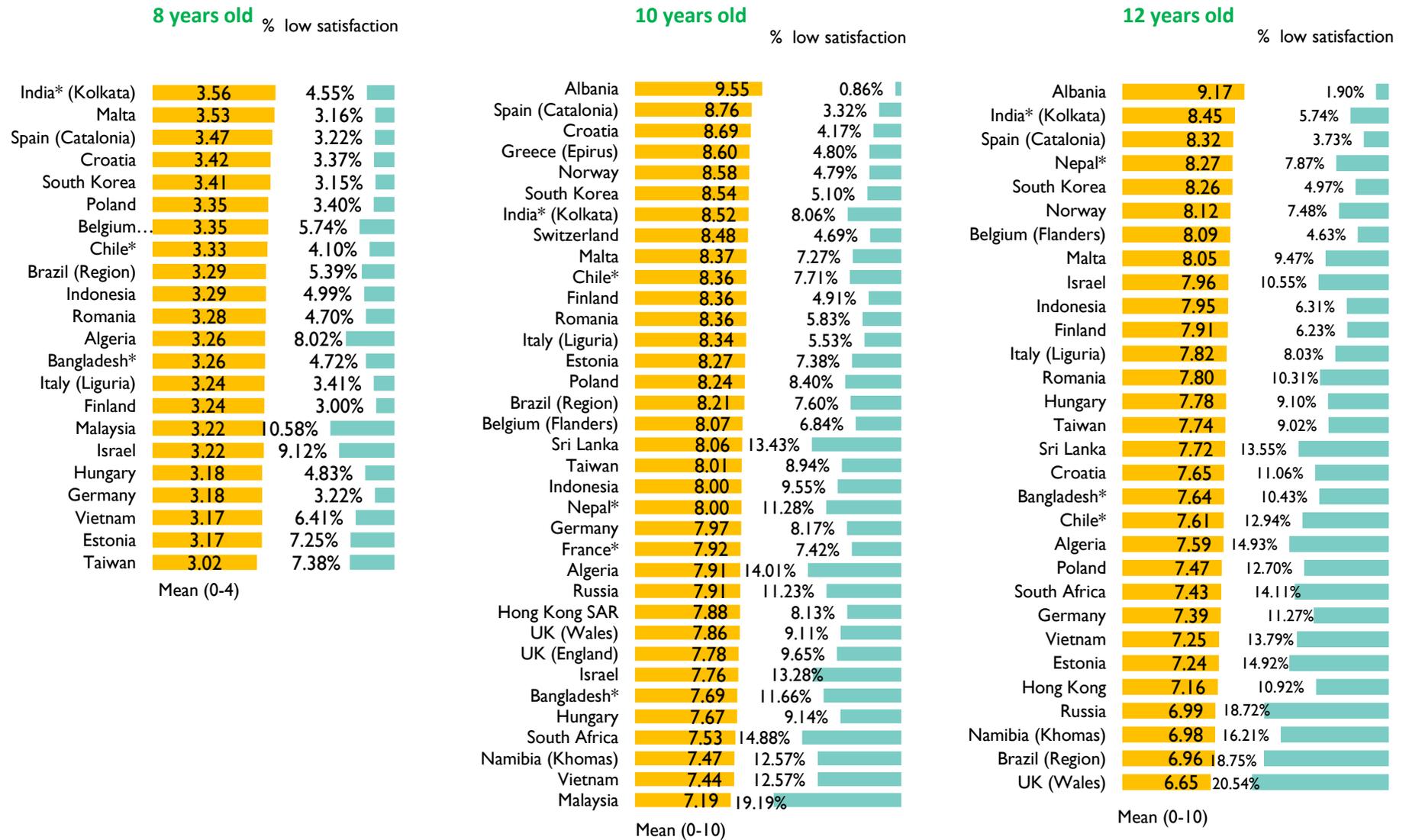


Figure A4: Satisfaction with things learned at school

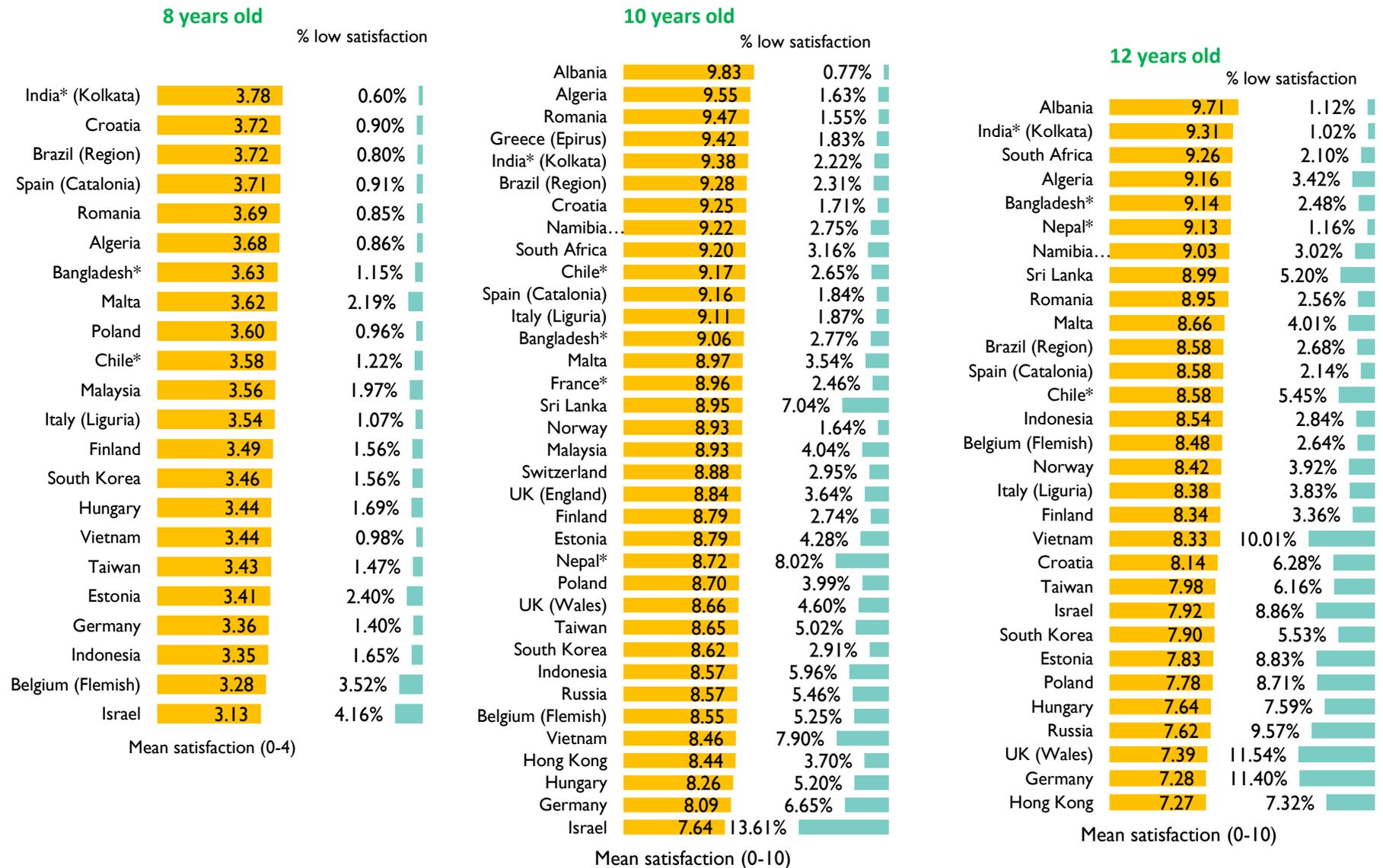


Table A3: Teacher variables (% totally agree across country for the 10-year-old sample)

	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

Children aged around 10 years old

Figure A5: Level of satisfaction with 'the area where you live'

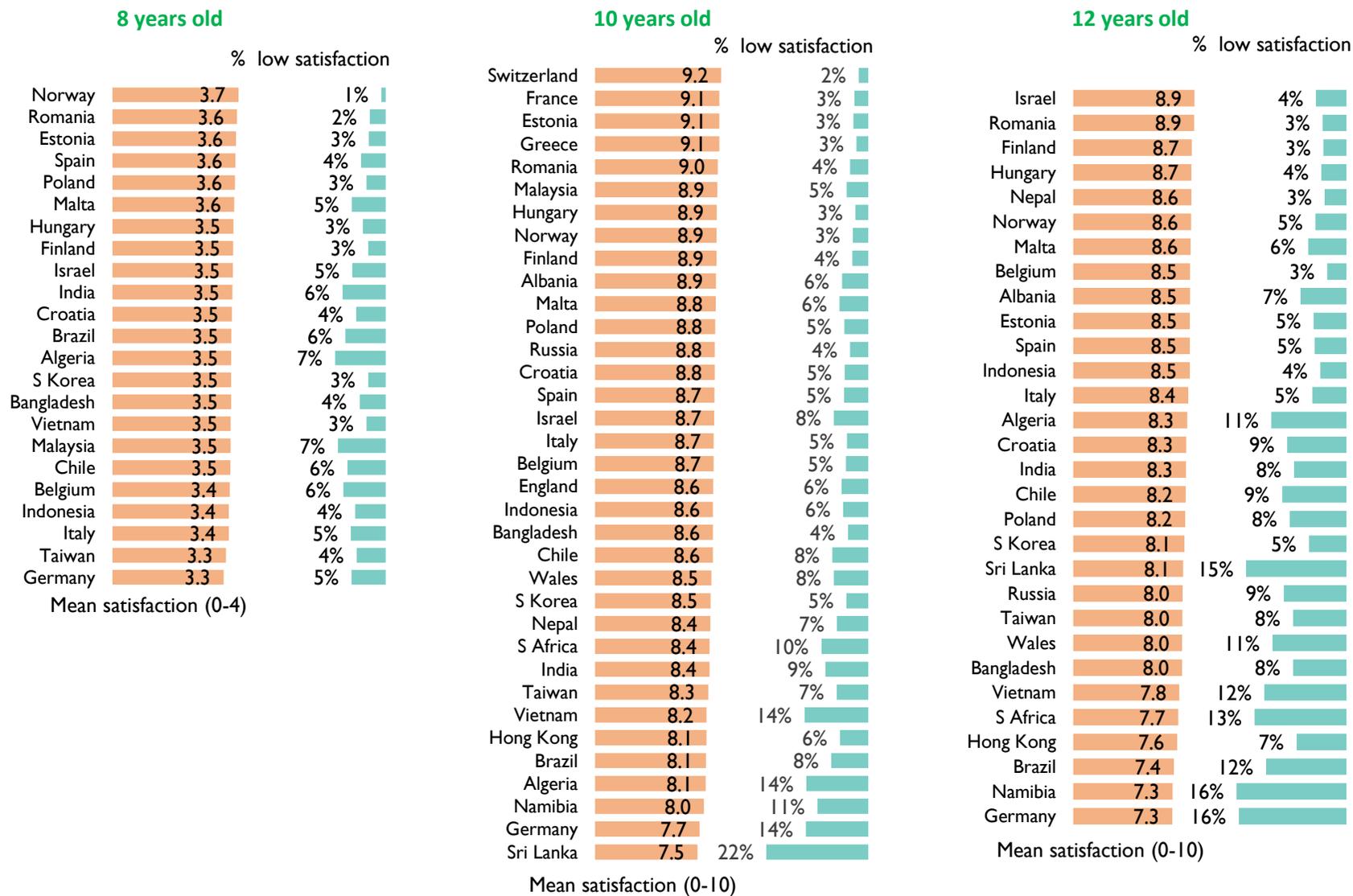
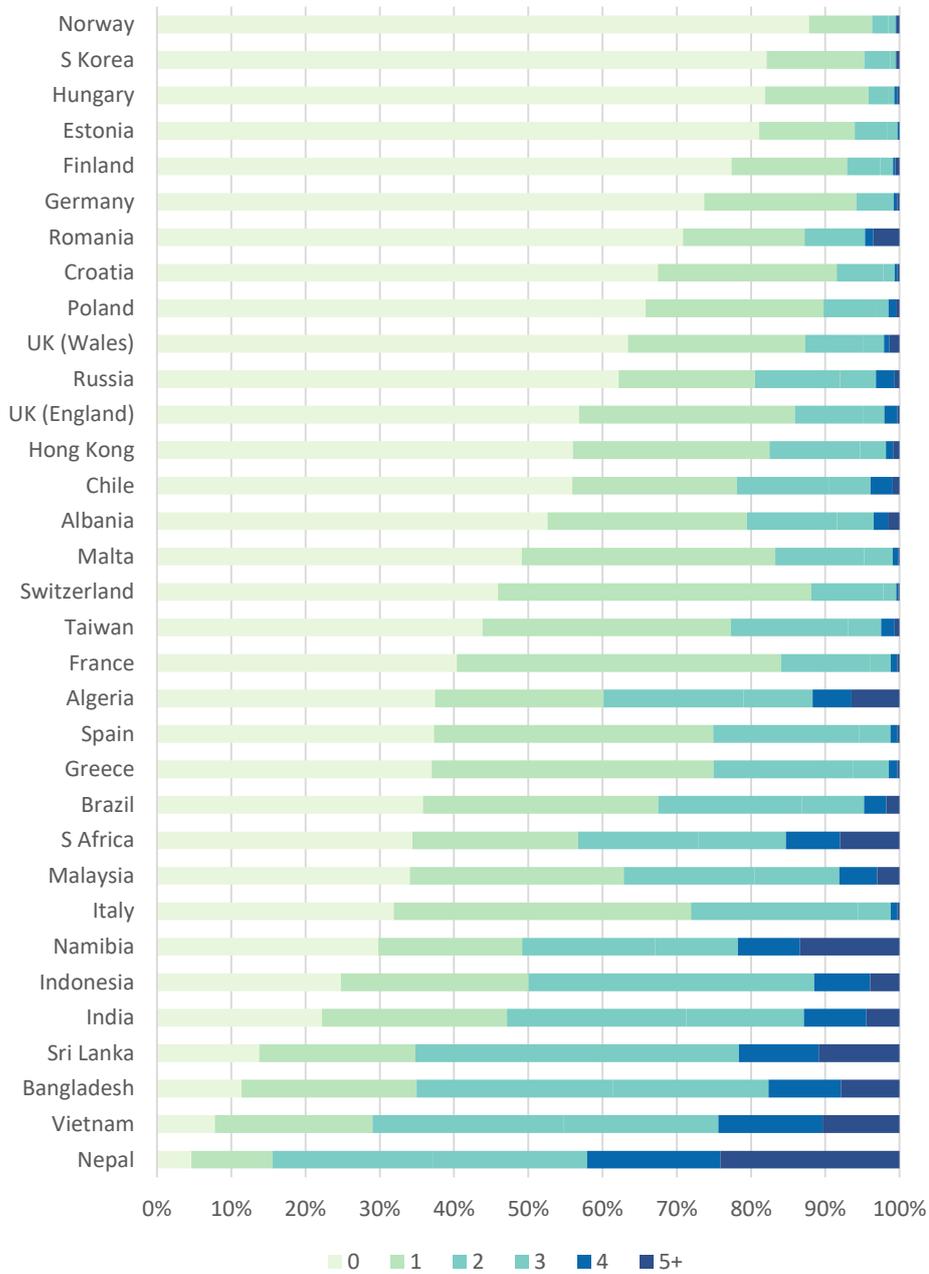


Table A4: % of children aged around 10 years totally agreeing with questions about neighbourhood

	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%

Children aged around 10 years old

Figure A6: Number of items (out of 8) lacked in each country



Children aged around 10 years old

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

Table A5: Proportion of children aged 10 years old who had items 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%

Children aged around 10 years old

Figure A7. Children's Worlds Subjective Wellbeing Scale (Mean scores and percentages with low-satisfaction)

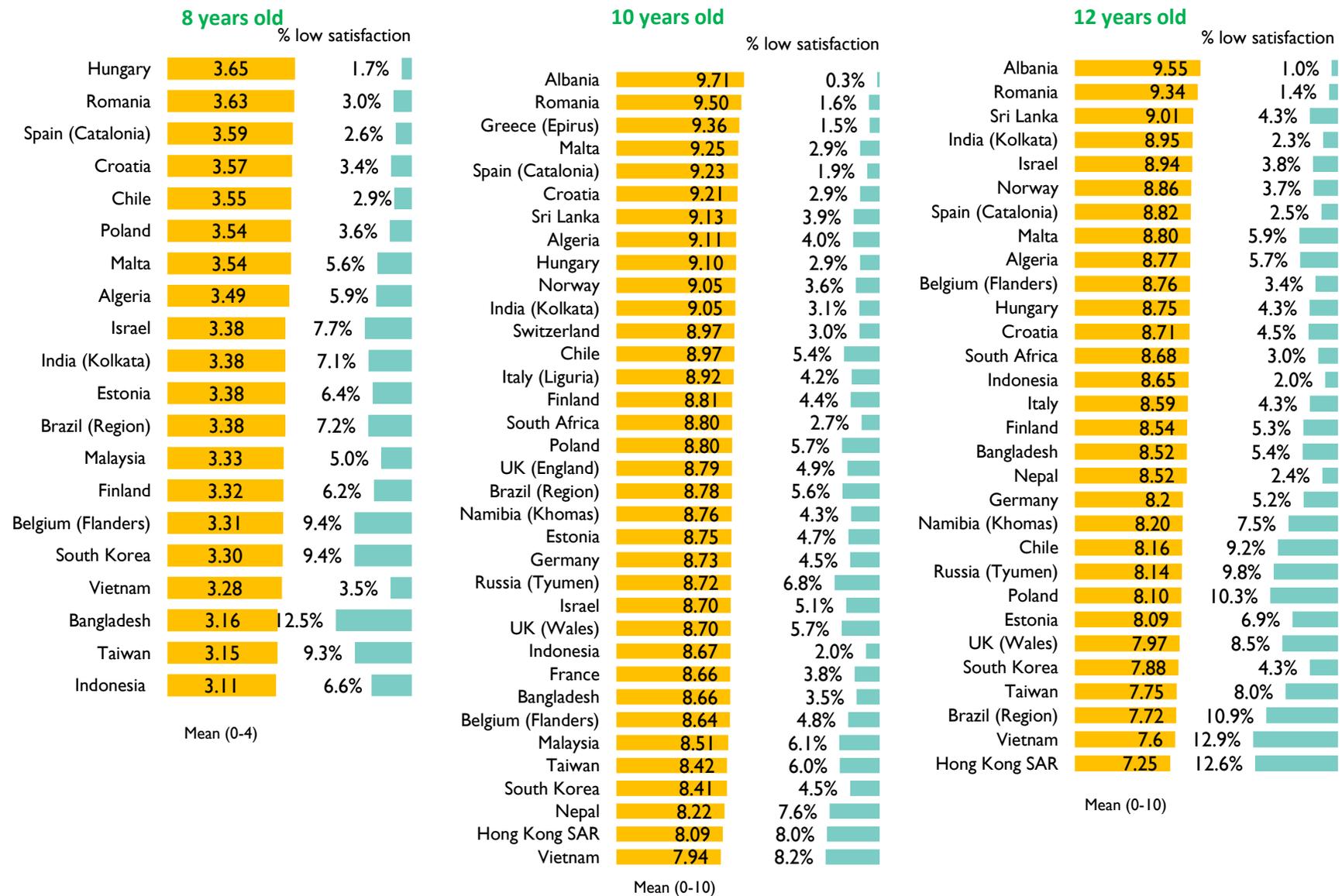


Figure A8: Positive effect (Mean score and percentage low positive effect: 10- and 12-year-olds)

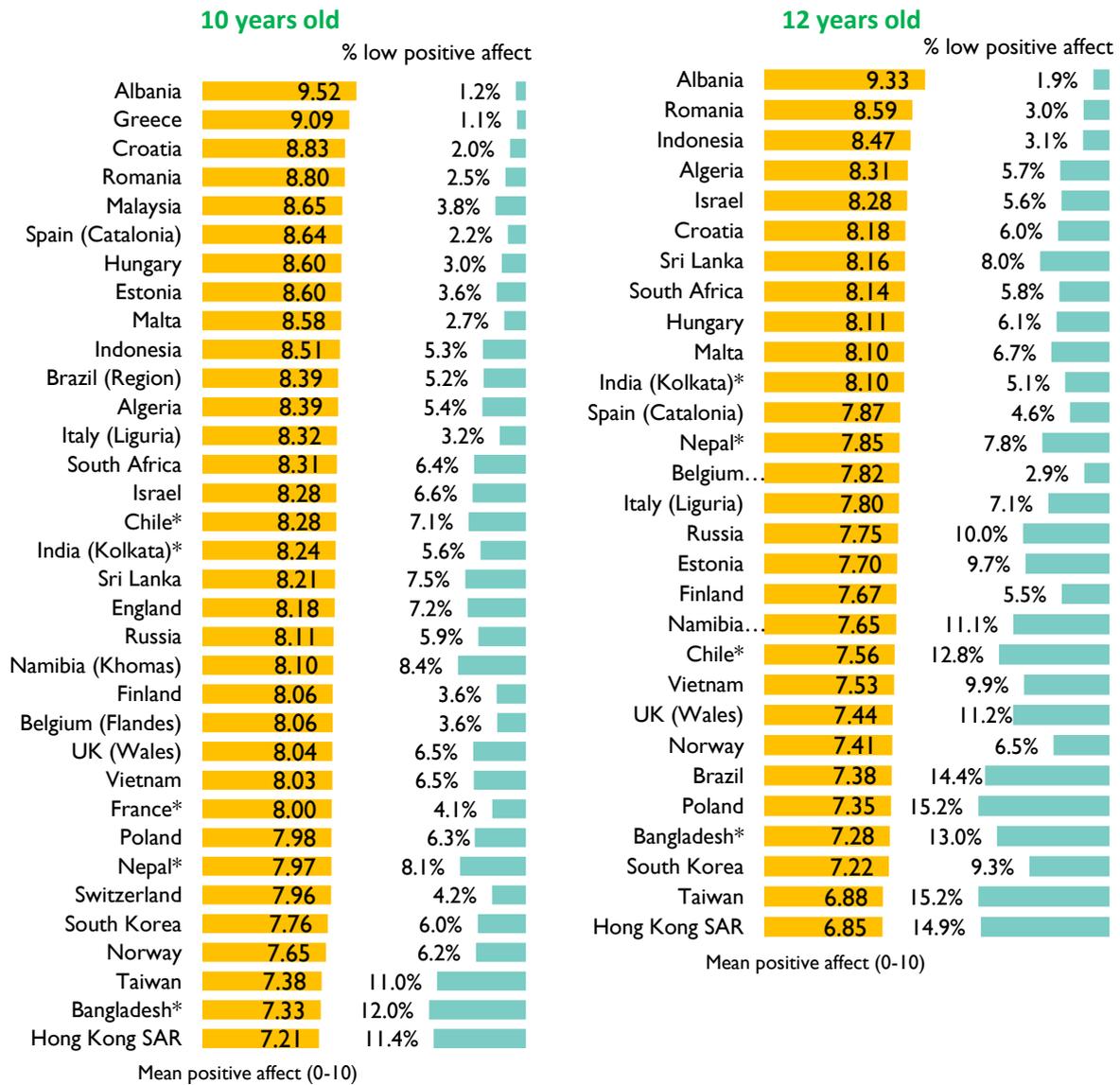


Table A6: Summary of responses for each positive affect item

	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

Children aged around 10 years old

Figure A9: Negative effect 10- and 12-year-olds

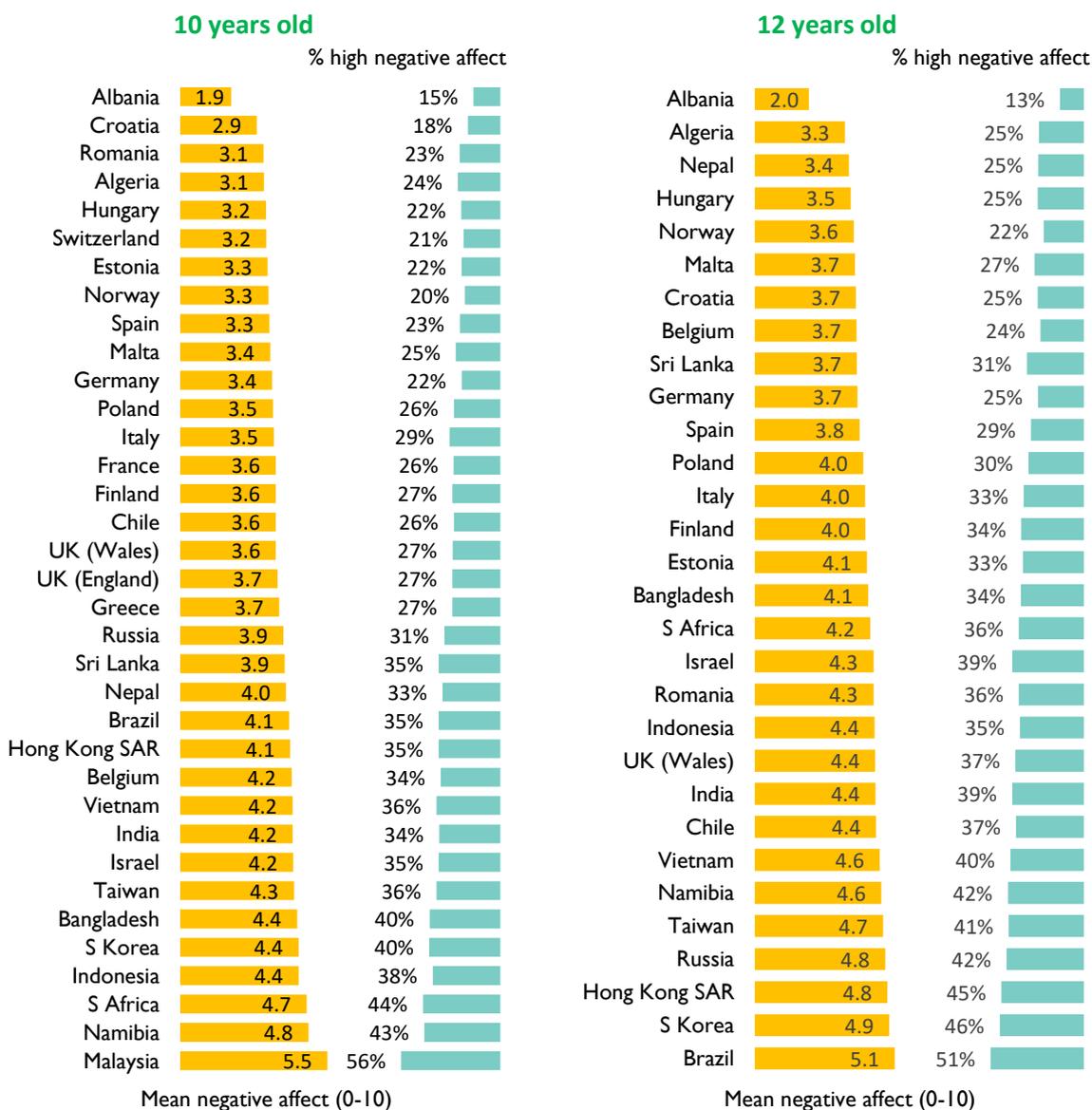


Table A7: Summary of responses for each negative affect item

	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

Children aged around 10 years old

Table A8: Items of psychological wellbeing scale

	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

Children aged around 12 years old

Figure A10: Children's Worlds Psychological Wellbeing Scale

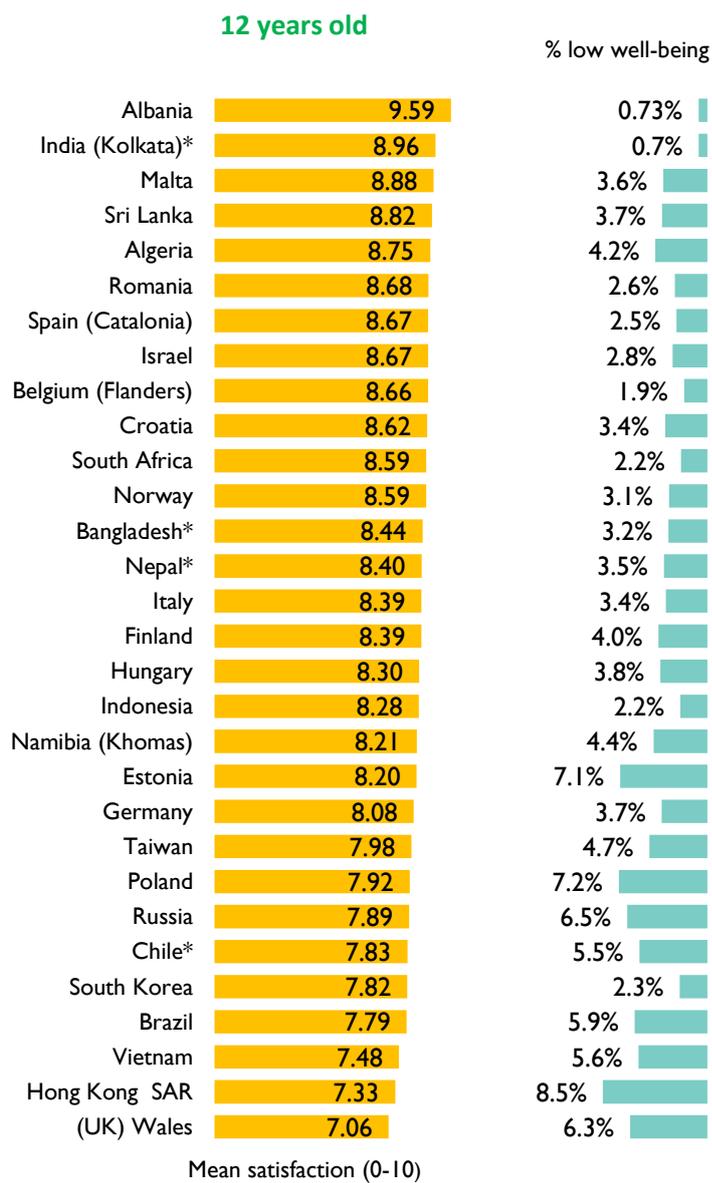


Table A9: Mean scores for satisfaction with 15 aspects of life

	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

Table A10: Between-country rankings for mean satisfaction with 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 aspect of life ranks within countries. A higher rank indicates higher mean satisfaction.

Table A11: Within-country rankings for mean satisfaction with 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 A12: Relative scores for satisfaction with 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



This report indicates that the major systems in Maltese children's lives, such as the family, the school, friends, and the community, appear to be functioning well for the majority of Maltese children. These systems are key indicators of children's subjective wellbeing, as indicated by the high levels of cognitive, affective and psychological wellbeing reported by most of the participants in the study. Maltese children consistently ranked in the upper half of the 35 countries across overall subjective well-being measures. This study has also identified, however, various areas and issues in children's lives, such as the relative lack of freedom and lack of participation in family decisions, lack of enough public spaces to play and lack of safety in the neighbourhood, not having enough friends, learning, classmates and bullying at school, low level of physical exercise, and concerns about the future. These need to be further explored and investigated or addressed through policy and practice at systems levels such as families, communities, and schools as well as broader macrosystems level. Some of these issues may also require an examination of some of deeply ingrained social and culture norms, such as the way we construe childhood and look at children. We hope that these findings and recommendations will be given their due attention by policymakers, educators, community leaders and other state and non-state stakeholders involved in the wellbeing of children, to create healthier physical and psychological spaces for our children. We also hope that the children themselves will be invited to participate actively in this process as key stakeholders.

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