

Validity evidence for the School Subjective Well-Being Scale

Evidências de validade para a Escala de Bem-Estar Subjetivo Escolar

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Abstract

This study gathered validity evidence based on relations to other variables for the School Subjective Well-being Scale. The sample consisted of 434 students of both genders, with age ranging from 12 to 19 years ($M = 14.88$; $SD = 1.70$); they were all students from the 7th grade Elementary School to the 2nd grade High School, attending a public school located in Ceará, Brazil. The School Subjective Well-being Scale, a sociodemographic and school questionnaire, was applied, as well as the Baptist Depression Scale for Children and Adolescents, the Global Life Satisfaction Scale for Adolescents, the Social Support Perception Scale for Adolescents. The scale factors showed significant positive and negative, moderate to high correlations and the measure's scores of school well-being allowed differentiation among groups regarding gender and school issues.

Keywords: Affection; Educational measurement; Mental health; Students; Test validity.

Resumo

Este estudo teve por objetivo reunir evidências de validade, baseada na relação com outras variáveis, da Escala de Bem-Estar Subjetivo Escolar. A amostra foi composta por 434 estudantes de ambos os sexos com idades variando de 12 a 19 anos ($M = 14,88$; $DP = 1,70$), alunos do 7º ano do Ensino Fundamental ao 2º ano do Ensino Médio de uma escola pública localizada no Ceará, Brasil. Foram aplicados um questionário sociodemográfico e escolar, a Escala de Bem-Estar Subjetivo Escolar, Escala Baptista de Depressão versão Infantojuvenil, Escala Global de Satisfação de Vida para Adolescentes e a

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Escala de Percepção de Suporte Social para Adolescentes. Observou-se associações significativas entre os escores do instrumento com as medidas de depressão, suporte social e satisfação com a vida, e os escores da medida de bem-estar escolar conseguiram diferenciar grupos quanto ao sexo e questões escolares.

Palavras-chave: Afeição; Avaliação educacional; Saúde mental; Estudantes; Validade do teste.

The study of Subjective Well-Being (SWB) in schools and its components has grown in recent years, due to the importance of school in promoting the students well-being, providing a positive schooling experience (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017). School SWB refers to how satisfied students are with their schools and the affections they nurture in this context. The term “subjective” emphasizes that these assessments result from the interaction of different factors, which include personal and contextual aspects, for example, student coping mechanisms, school performance, social relations established at school, school climate and stressful events. The evaluation that the student makes of his school can be both cognitive and emotional, indicating the multidimensional structure of School SWB, consisting of: satisfaction with the school (SS), Positive Affects at school (PA) and Negative Affects at school (NA) (Tian et al., 2014).

Satisfaction with school is the cognitive component of the school SWB. It refers to the level of contentment that the subject perceives when he/she thinks about his/her school in general. The assessment of how satisfied or dissatisfied the student is with his/her school is based on internal norms, the student's perception of what is satisfactory or unpleasant. This judgment of satisfaction with the school expresses different information, since people are not the same and are under the influence of a multiplicity of different factors, such as moods, thoughts and feelings present, school performance and the interpersonal relationship with classmates (Casas et al., 2013; Huebner et al., 2014; Varela et al., 2017). Satisfaction with school is the most studied component of school SWB, with evidence that it is associated with aspects related to mental health, such as depressive symptoms (Barth et al., 2014), social support (Gutiérrez et al., 2017) and life satisfaction (Suldo et al., 2013). In another measure, students dissatisfied with their schools are more vulnerable to school difficulties, lower levels of academic success and school engagement (Whitley et al., 2012).

Positive and negative affects at school represent the emotional dimension of school SWB and are understood as the frequency in which students experience positive and negative emotions in the school setting. Students with higher levels of positive affect are satisfied with their school and experience intense and frequent episodes of pleasure (positive affect). They perceive themselves as confident, determined and capable students. In contrast, students with low levels of school SWB are dissatisfied with school and experience intense and frequent displeasure (negative affects), perceiving themselves as unmotivated, incapable and upset (Tian et al., 2014). Positive affects at school are associated with high levels of coping and school engagement (Reschly et al., 2008), and negative affects are correlated with dropping out of school, antisocial behavior, and substance abuse (Roeser, 2001).

Investigations about the student's well-being are based on the relevance of investigating healthy and positive aspects of the student's psychosocial development, enabling the student to participate, represent and “voice” in the development of educational policies that promote improvements in the school environment. Historically, research and practice in school psychological assessment and educational frameworks emphasized the measurement of cognitive skills (intelligence, memory, attention), as a result of a school model focused on learning pragmatic content and transmitting formal knowledge. This model makes the school environment competitive, oppressive and stressful, causing damage to the mental health of students, as feelings of anxiety, stress, loneliness, and even suicide attempts develop among students, and social and emotional aspects involved in the learning process are disregarded (Au & Kennedy, 2018). However, in addition to being responsible for formal education, the school institution is responsible for the full development and promotion of the social, physical and emotional well-being of its students (Ministério da Educação, 2018).

In recent years, educational systems in countries such as Australia, the United States and China, faced with problems such as dropout, grade repetition, school violence and poor student mental health, began to invest in the identification of variables related to students well-being, and in the application of interventions aimed at improving the school context (Simmons et al., 2014). In this connection, educational assessments play an important role in the production of these indicators, supporting the implementation of educational policies and improving the institutions' quality (Siveres & Santos, 2018).

An internationally renowned assessment is the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which assesses 15-year-old students attending the 7th year of elementary school in 72 countries, including Brazil. PISA takes place every three years and is designed to assess skills in reading, math, science, finance and problem solving, in addition to non-cognitive variables that may be associated with these skills. Examples of variables are affections, personality traits, motivation, vocational interests, among others. This information is obtained using questionnaires applied to students, parents and teachers. In the last edition, held in 2015, students were assessed on the following aspects: satisfaction with life, motivation to learn, anxiety experienced in the school framework, occurrence of bullying, relationship with teachers and correlations of these variables with school performance. The results pointed to the fact that the student's academic success is not only associated with a good academic performance, but also to the extent to which the student's well-being contributes to the acquisition of academic content and the development of social and emotional skills necessary for human development (OECD, 2017).

In this framework, considering the importance of school in promoting students' well-being, and the relevance of educational measures that intend to produce indicators with psychometric qualities for measuring student well-being, Dias-Viana and Noronha (2021) developed the *Escala do Bem-Estar Subjetivo Escolar* (EBESE, School Subjective Well-Being Scale). The EBESE preliminary study aimed to gather evidence of content validity based on the internal structure, as well as to estimate the accuracy of the instrument's scores. At the end of the study, a version of the EBESE was arrived at, consisting of 27 items, organized into three factors, corroborating the theoretical model of School SWB: satisfaction with the school (7 items), negative affects at school (10 items) and positive affects at school (10 items). In addition, the scale had good internal consistency indices, with an alpha of 0.91 for the total instrument, 0.82 for the school satisfaction factor, 0.89 for negative affects and 0.87 for positive affects.

It should be noted that investigations regarding school subjective well-being are recent in the literature, considering the year of publication of the first studies of the model (Tian et al., 2014). Thus, most of the research available in the scientific literature carried out with adolescents aimed to assess the general SWB; only a few studies address how well-being contextualized to the school, contributes to important aspects of the adolescence period (Dias-Viana, 2019). In this connection, considering the need to gather additional empirical evidence to support the use and interpretation of scores obtained from EBESE, as well as to explore the relationship of the construct with other variables, this investigation aims to gather evidence of validity based on the relationship with other variables. Thus, do the EBESE scores correlate with life satisfaction, depressive symptoms and social support? It is hypothesized that the scores of the SS, PA and NA exhibit moderate to high correlation with life satisfaction (Suldo et al., 2013), depressive symptoms (Barth et al., 2014; Benevides et al., 2015) and social support (Gutiérrez et al., 2017); it is also expected that the variance of EBESE factors help explain these constructs. In addition, will it be possible to differentiate groups considering gender, education cycle, history of school failure and summer school, and having been a victim of bullying? This study contributes to the assessment of the subjective well-being of students, indicating the importance of the construct for promoting adolescents' mental health. Likewise, it allows identifying students who are facing difficulties in their education process and the impact of such condition on their well-being.

Method

Participants

A total of 434 students participated in this study, with a predominance of female participants ($n = 240$; 55.30%), ages ranging from 12 to 19 years ($M = 14.88$; $SD = 1.70$), students attending the 7th year of the Elementary School to the second year of High School, regularly enrolled in a public school in the State of Ceará, Brazil. Students who had severe cognitive impairment and/or some disorder that made it impossible for them to participate were not included in the sample. Information on which students met the exclusion criteria was obtained from the school's coordinator. After consulting the school principals, we were informed that there were no students who met the exclusion criteria.

Instruments

Sociodemographic and School Identification Questionnaire – Instrument developed by the authors of this investigation. Composed of 16 questions that were intended to identify the students' sociodemographic and school variables such as age, date of birth, gender, grade, class, shift, whether the student had a history of failure and retake tests, and whether he/she had already been a victim of bullying at school.

School Subjective Well-Being Scale (EBESE; Dias-Viana & Noronha, 2021) – This instrument assesses how students think and how they feel about their schools. It has 27 items, distributed in two subscales. The first scale contains seven items that assess satisfaction with the school. It has an answer key on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Examples of items are: "School is a place where I feel good" and "My school is excellent" The second subscale encompasses the two affective components of the school SWB, positive affects at school (10 items) and negative affects (10 items). The items are characterized as adjectives that represent different feelings and emotions experienced at school, answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). Examples of items are: "Skilled", "Confident", "Motivated". The internal consistency coefficients were adequate for the total instrument ($\alpha = 0.91$ and $\omega = 0.93$), as well as for the factors SS ($\alpha = 0.82$ and $\omega = 0.87$), PA ($\alpha = 0.87$ and $\omega = 0.89$) and NA ($\alpha = 0.88$ and $\omega = 0.90$). The fit indices of the scale model in this research were RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.92 and TLI = 0.91.

Baptista Depression Scale Childhood's version (EBADEP-IJ; Baptista, 2018) – Self-report instrument that assesses the frequency of depressive symptoms in children and adolescents aged eight to 18 years. It has 27 items, with answer key on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (never/few times) to 2 (often/always). It has two factors, one with positive items that assess the absence of depressive symptoms and the other with negative items that assess the presence of depressive symptoms. The following are examples of the instrument items: "My days have been good" and "I feel without energy". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the instrument was 0.89. In this investigation, the precision estimates were $\alpha = 0.92$ and $\omega = 0.94$, and the fit indices were RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.94 and TLI = 0.93.

Global Life Satisfaction Scale for Adolescents (EGSV-A; Segabinazi et al., 2014) – This instrument assesses the life satisfaction of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years. The instrument is composed of 10 items response on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Examples of the items are: "I have everything I need", "I like my life", "I feel good the way I am". The internal consistency coefficient in the original study was 0.90. In this research, the precision estimates were $\alpha = 0.96$ and $\omega = 0.99$, and the model fit indices were RMSEA = 0.09 CFI = 0.99 TLI = 0.98.

Perception of Social Support Scale for Adolescents (EPSUS-Ad, Baptista & Cardoso, 2018) – The instrument assesses the perception of social support received by adolescents. The scale is composed of 23 items divided into three factors: coping with problems, social interactions and affectivity. It has an answer key on a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 3 (always). The higher the scale score, the better the perception of social support. Examples of the items are: “They show affection for me”; they “Understand my problems” and “They are attentive to my fears/concerns”. The instrument’s Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was estimated at 0.91. In this research, the precision estimates were $\alpha = 0.96$ and $\omega = 0.96$ and the model fit indices were RMSEA = 0.08 CFI = 0.96 TLI = 0.95.

Procedures

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of *Universidade São Francisco* (USF, San Francisco University) (CAAE: 97953218.2.0000.5514). The survey was carried out in a public school located in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará. Students under 18 years of age signed and received the Informed Consent Term for minors. Their parents/guardians signed the Free and Informed Consent Form. Students aged 18 years and over personally signed the informed consent form. The instrument was applied collectively and in person, in the participants’ respective classrooms. The average time to apply the instruments was 40 minutes, with the following order of application: Sociodemographic and School Identification Questionnaire, EBESE, EBADEP-IJ, EPSUS-Ad and EGSV-A.

Data Analysis

For a convergent validity study, Pearson’s r correlation analysis was used, using the raw scores obtained from the EBESE, EBADEP-IJ, EPSUS-Ad and EGSV-A factors. Then, linear regression analyses were performed using the Structural Equation Modeling to investigate the predictive potential of EBESE factors for these variables. For evidence of criterion validity, using Student’s t test, groups of students were compared considering the variables gender, school cycle, history of school failure and retest, occurrence of bullying, and the effect size was calculated using d of Cohen. Data analyses were performed in the software SPSS®IBM® (version 25, and Mplus 7.11).

Results

The Satisfaction with School (SS) factor showed a positive and moderate correlation with life satisfaction, with social support factors (Coping with Problems, Social Interactions, Affection) and with the absence of depressive symptoms, and negative and moderate correlation with depressive symptoms. Positive Affections at School (PAS), on the other hand, presented high correlations with the absence of depressive symptoms and satisfaction with life, negative correlations with depressive symptoms, and moderate correlations with social support factors. The Negative Affections at School (NAS) factor, in turn, showed high positive correlations with depressive symptoms and moderate negative correlations with absence of depressive symptoms and life satisfaction. The data are reported in Table 1.

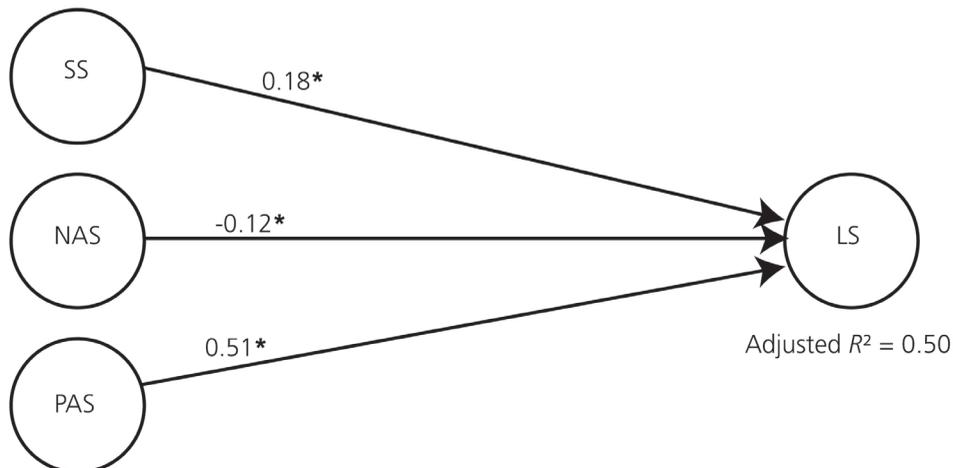
According to the main objective of this study, in order to investigate the explanatory potential of the school SWB components on the factors of the instruments; linear regression was applied, through Structural Equation Modeling, for the sample of this investigation. The three EBESE factors were used as independent variables – SS, PAS and NAS – and as dependent variables the EGSVA, EBADEP-IJ, EPSUS-Ad.

Table 1*Correlation coefficients between the factors of the study scales*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Satisfaction with the School	-							
2. Positive Affects at School	0.52**	-						
3. Negative Affects at School	-0.38**	-0.43**	-					
4. Life Satisfaction	0.48**	0.61**	-0.43**	-				
5. Absence of depressive symptoms	0.36**	0.68**	-0.46**	0.73**	-			
6. Depressive symptoms	-0.36**	-0.54**	0.54**	-0.72**	-0.63**	-		
7. Coping with problems	0.41**	0.43**	-0.27**	0.53**	0.45**	-0.46**	-	
8. Social Interactions	0.33**	0.38**	-0.18**	0.46**	0.34**	-0.38**	0.74**	-
9. Affectivity	0.38**	0.42**	-0.23**	0.52**	0.40**	-0.45**	0.83**	0.75**

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

In Figure 1 we observe that the three EBESSE factors had a significant contribution ($p < 0.05$) to life satisfaction. The data showed good fit indices to the model, with $\chi^2/gf = 2.44$; RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.95. The adjusted R^2 of the model was 0.50. Positive affects were the most explanatory factor in the model, with a value of $\beta = 0.51$, followed by satisfaction with the school $\beta = 0.18$. Negative affects at school, in turn, explained negatively, with $\beta = -0.12$.

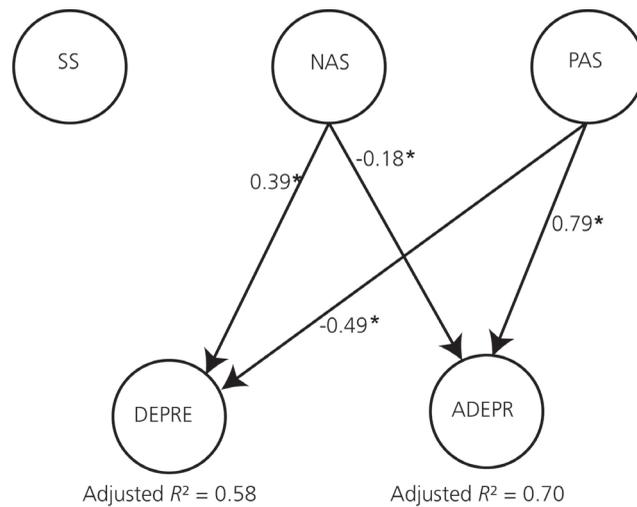
Figure 1*Structural equation modeling of EBESSE factors on the life satisfaction factor*

Note: * $p < 0.05$. LS: Life Satisfaction Factor in EGSVA; NAS: EBESSE Negative Affects at School Factor; PAS: EBESSE Positive Affects at school Factor; SS: School Satisfaction Factor in EBESSE.

As for depressive symptoms in students, from the analysis of Figure 2, it was found that PAS was the most explanatory factor in the model, contributing positively and significantly ($p < 0.05$) to the absence of depressive symptoms ($\beta = 0.79$) and negatively for the presence of depressive symptoms ($\beta = -0.49$). The NA factor presented $\beta = 0.39$ and $\beta = -0.18$ for the presence and absence of depressive symptoms, respectively. The SS factor did not significantly contribute to the model. The three EBESSE factors presented an explanatory level of adjusted $R^2 = 0.58$ for depressive symptoms in adolescents and adjusted $R^2 = 0.70$ for the absence of depressive symptoms. Satisfaction with school did not significantly contribute to the model. The fit indices of the data to the model were adequate, with $\chi^2/gf = 2.12$; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91.

Figure 2

Structural equation modeling for EBESSE factors on EBADEP factors



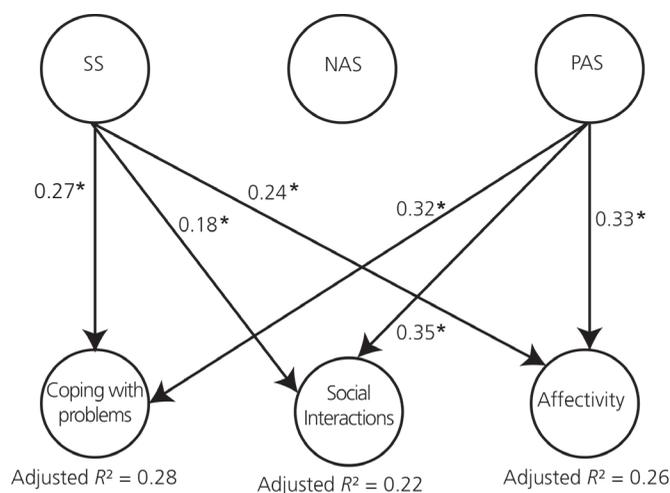
Note: * $p < 0.05$. ADEPRE: Factor of absence of depressive symptoms; DEPRED: Depressive symptomatology factor; NAS: EBESSE Negative Affects at School Factor; PAS: EBESSE Positive Affects at school Factor; SS: School Satisfaction Factor in EBESSE.

From the analysis of Figure 3, the PA factor had higher values of standardized coefficients compared to the other EBESSE factors, with $\beta = 0.35$ for social interactions, $\beta = 0.33$ for affectivity and $\beta = 0.32$ for coping with problems. Satisfaction with school, on the other hand, presented $\beta = 0.27$ for coping with problems, $\beta = 0.24$ for affection and $\beta = 0.18$ for social interactions. It was observed that the model's fit indices are adequate, with $\chi^2/df = 1.88$; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.96. Negative affects did not significantly contribute to the model. EBESSE factors presented adjusted $R^2 = 0.28$ for coping with problems, adjusted $R^2 = 0.22$ for social interactions and adjusted $R^2 = 0.26$ for affectivity.

With regard to external criteria, the data indicated significant mean differences between groups. With regard to gender, female students showed higher NAS and lower PAS, with large and moderate effect sizes,

Figure 3

Structural equation modeling of EBESSE factors on EPSUS-Ad factors



Note: * $p < 0.05$. NAS: EBESSE Negative Affects at School Factor; PAS: EBESSE Positive Affects at school Factor; SS: School Satisfaction Factor in EBESSE.

respectively. As for the education cycle, elementary school students have higher SS and PAS, with a reduced low and moderate effect size, respectively, and high school students have higher NAS, with low effect size. Students who repeat grades and retake tests as shown in the school record, have lower PAS, with moderate effect size. It was also observed that students who were victims of bullying had lower SS (low effect size), lower PAS and higher NAS (large effect size) (Table 2).

Table 2
Student's t test and Cohen's d test for EBESE in relation to school criteria

Factor	Group	M	SD	F	p	d
Satisfaction with the School	Female	24.00	4.86	-0.48	0.62	-0.05
	Male	24.30	4.69			
Negative Affects at School	Female	29.00	7.75	5.59	0.00	0.55
	Male	25.00	7.67			
Positive Affects at School	Female	31.00	6.30	-3.27	0.00	-0.32
	Male	33.00	7.01			
Satisfaction with the School	Elementary School	24.70	4.71	2.33	0.02	0.23
	High School	23.60	4.81			
Negative Affects at School	Elementary School	27.30	7.57	-2.51	0.01	-0.25
	High School	29.30	8.27			
Positive Affects at School	Elementary School	32.40	6.95	3.14	0.00	0.31
	High School	30.30	6.31			
Satisfaction with the School	no summer classes history	24.20	4.87	0.26	0.80	0.03
	with summer classes history	24.00	4.70			
Negative Affects at School	no summer classes history	28.00	7.60	-0.74	0.46	-0.08
	with summer classes history	28.60	8.24			
Positive Affects at School	no summer classes history	32.70	6.91	3.46	0.00	0.35
	with summer classes history	30.40	6.38			
Satisfaction with the School	no school failure	24.20	4.83	0.67	0.51	0.10
	with school failure	23.70	4.56			
Negative Affects at School	no school failure	28.20	7.98	-0.98	0.33	-0.14
	with school failure	29.30	8.18			
Positive Affects at School	no school failure	31.60	6.76	2.11	0.03	0.30
	with school failure	29.60	6.08			
Satisfaction with the School	no bullying	24.50	4.87	1.94	0.04	0.19
	bullying victims	23.60	4.69			
Negative Affects at School	no bullying	25.00	7.29	-7.87	0.00	-0.80
	bullying victims	31.50	7.70			
Positive Affects at School	no bullying	33.00	6.69	4.88	0.00	0.50
	bullying victims	30.00	6.37			

Discussion

This study aimed to gather evidence of convergent and criterion validity for the School Subjective Well-Being Scale in a sample of basic education students from Ceará State, Brazil. The analysis corroborated the initial hypothesis that School SWB factors would present significant positive associations with life satisfaction (Suldo et al., 2013) and social support (Gutiérrez et al., 2017), and negative ones with depressive symptoms (Barth et al., 2014). Furthermore, it was observed that the EBESE scores were able to differentiate groups, considering individual variables, and the education process, gathering evidence of criterion validity for the measure.

One of the important contributions of this survey was to highlight the explanatory potential of the School SWB for issues related to the mental health of students, such as satisfaction with life, depressive symptoms and social support. As for life satisfaction, Satisfaction with School (SS) and Positive Affect at School (PAS) explained 50% of the variance in life satisfaction, with PAS being the best predictor, indicating that students who experience positive emotions at school tend to evaluate their lives more positively.

The first explanatory models of the multidimensionality of life satisfaction highlight the importance of school as a domain of adolescent satisfaction and well-being. Thus, satisfying and stressful experiences in different contexts such as family, leisure opportunities, friendships and school have an impact on adolescents' life satisfaction (Giacomoni & Hutz, 2008; Huebner, 2004). The school, considering the daily hours lived by adolescents, years of education, established social relationships and the learning process, becomes a relevant framework for adolescents to express satisfaction with life. The relationships that students establish with peers and with their teachers, as well as those focused on academic performance, help students to develop a positive school experience, resulting in school well-being and satisfaction with life (Varela et al., 2017). Thus, the results indicate that the school SBE is a promoter of life satisfaction, recognized in the literature as being associated with externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Zhu & Chek, 2020). Furthermore, it is an important indicator of mental health, especially as a protective factor against depression (Gigantesco et al., 2019).

Prevalence studies indicate that depression is the third leading cause that hampers adolescents' health. It is estimated that 13.4% of the youth population has some psychopathology, with depression and anxiety disorders being the most common (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017). Depressive disorders are complex phenomena, influenced by biological (genetic), psychological (personality) and social/cultural (family, work, school) variables. Thus, it is important to identify the variables that can act as protective factors for the mental health of adolescents. The results of this survey showed that positive affects at school help promote mental health, predicting the absence of depressive symptoms. Negative affects at school, on the other hand, promote depressive symptoms, being a risk variable for depression in adolescents. The meta-analysis of longitudinal studies carried out by Khazanov and Ruscio (2016) showed that low positive affectivity is a risk factor for the development of depressive symptoms.

The central aspect of depressive conditions is the negative affectivity, such as sadness, loneliness, anger (American Psychiatric Association, 2014). In this sense, Baptista et al. (2016) investigated the relationships of the components of children and adolescents' subjective well-being with depressive symptoms. The research results indicated a model in which Depression and SWB are opposite poles of the same continuum, or a bi-factor model in which a general factor captures the symptoms of negative affectivity, and a specific factor is related to positive affectivity and happiness. In any case, the relationship between the variables is explained by the affective aspect of the phenomena. Although SS has shown moderate correlations with depressive symptoms, it is hypothesized that the greater shared variance of PAS and NAS with depressive symptoms may have suppressed the effects of SS in the investigated regression model.

Considering the stage of development investigated in this survey, social support plays an important role in the development of adolescents by providing instrumental and emotional resources that help them cope with negative and stressful events. Family, friends and teachers are key sources of social support and promote youth well-being (Pössel et al., 2017). The data indicated that satisfaction with school and positive affects at school significantly explained the factors of social perception, corroborating previous studies (Chu et al., 2010; Rueger et al., 2016). Thus, good interactions in the school setting with teachers, classmates and school staff, manifested through the SS and the PAS (feeling included, understood) help students to realize that they have social resources to cope with adversity.

As for the potential influence of the students' gender on the variables of school well-being, differences were observed in the affective components, in which girls have more negative affectivity and less positive

affect at school. These data converge with the results of a longitudinal study carried out with 9859 British adolescents, in which girls with a mean age between 14 and 15 years (similar to the average of the participants in our investigation, which was 14.88 years) have a greater negative affectivity and a less positive affectivity. The authors argue that at this age, the requirement to comply with established social standards is more prevalent in women, decreasing SWB levels (Booker et al., 2018). It is worth noting that the school participating in the survey adopts rules that prevent girls from wearing makeup, accessories (earrings and necklaces), their hair must always be tied, and that such imposed rules affect their satisfaction with the school. In addition, it is hypothesized that the greater engagement of adolescents in school activities can lead to feelings of tiredness and exhaustion as well as to other internalizing behaviors (Crepaldi et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2017).

With regard to the level of education, high school students exhibit higher SS and NA, and lower PA. This variable does not focus only on the education cycle, but also on age issues, which provides cognitive and maturational gains that make the assessment of how satisfied they are with their school more critical and accurate (Bradley & Corwyn 2004; Liu et al., 2015). In addition, the transition period from Elementary School to High School mobilizes a series of expectations and concerns in students who end up causing negative affective experiences in relation to school. The survey by Aguiar and Conceição (2009), carried out with 227 students concluding the 9th year of elementary school in a Brazilian private school, expect to find in high school a more pleasurable learning, expansion of the social circle, support and reception, and these expectations will not necessarily be met, causing feelings of apprehension, concern and frustration.

This affective intensity is typical of the adolescence period, especially with regard to the learning process and school performance. In this research, it was evidenced that students who do not have a history of summer classes and failure have more positive affects at school. A survey carried out by Osti and Noronha (2017) showed that students with satisfactory school performance have a better perception of their teachers' expectations and demonstrate that they have a positive affective relationship with the school environment. Students with low school performance, on the other hand, feel less bound with formal school learning and with their teachers, leading to lower beliefs of ability and self-concept. In addition, positive emotions at school, such as enthusiasm and interest in school activities, help students in their educational motivation in the learning self-regulation, and in the development of strategies to acquire knowledge.

The data spurred important reflections about the relationship of the school SWB with the student's mental health. It is also worth highlighting the differences caused by the experience of being a victim of bullying. Comparison between groups indicated that students who are victims of bullying have lower levels of satisfaction with the school and with positive affects at school, and higher levels of negative affects. Peer victimization is a subject that stands out in the educational field because of the repercussions it causes to development, and it hampers student's mental health and schooling itself. Studies show that students who are victims of bullying have reduced levels of satisfaction with life (Miranda et al., 2018), are more vulnerable to suicidal ideation (Klomek et al., 2018); in addition, they show greater susceptibility to school evasion (Baiden et al., 2020). In this connection, the low levels of school SWB can communicate high negative affectivity at school, caused by schoolmates' aggressive behavior (Troop-Gordon, 2017).

It is noteworthy that this survey advances knowledge by identifying the relationships that affections in the school context play in the understanding of depressive symptoms in adolescents, since most studies have investigated the general SWB. In this same direction, the perception of social support is a protective variable for the adolescents' mental health, related to well-being, besides characterizing a protective factor against depression in children and adolescents (Rueger et al., 2016). Hence, the importance of SWB in the psychosocial development of students should be highlighted, as well as the contribution of this construct to the debate about the importance of adolescents' mental health in the school framework.

Conclusion

The results of this survey gathered evidence of validity for the EBESSE and allowed exploring the nomological network of school subjective well-being. It is worth noting that empirical investigations on the subject have recently been issued in the literature and this work contributes to the development of science by highlighting the importance of school SWB for adolescents' mental health, as well as for the quality of social interactions. In addition, the importance of the construct and its components (satisfaction with school, negative affects at school) for the student's education process has been evidenced showing how much negative experience such as poor academic performance and being a victim of bullying affect the student's socio-emotional issues. As for the interpretative implications, the better the students' evaluation of their school and the more positive affections towards school, expressed by feelings of capacity and satisfaction with the school setting, the more positive will be the students' evaluation of their life and the perception of social support; in addition students will be less vulnerable to depressive symptoms. In addition, variables such as bullying victimization, school failure and change in the teaching cycle decrease students' SWB levels. Thus, considering practical implications, it is expected that the use of EBESSE helps educational assessments, with the development of school indicators, in addition to helping pedagogy specialists in the planning of interventions aimed at improving the school environment, making the schooling experience more pleasurable and healthier for the psychosocial development of the student.

Regarding the limitations of this investigation, the use of a non-probabilistic sample and the inclusion of a single public school located in a capital in the Northeastern region of Brazil, should be pointed out. This can prevent general interpretations for students from different cultural and school realities. Furthermore, considering the cross-sectional design of this study, it was not possible to assess how these indicators increase or decrease as a result of school events, such as exam periods, low or high school performance. In addition, because it is a SWB measure, EBESSE is susceptible to response biases, especially regarding social desirability, which is frequent in well-being measurements. Therefore, in future research, the importance of investigating the use of the instrument in students from different regions of Brazil, who attend schools located in urban and rural areas, is highlighted so that potential cultural and sociodemographic differences can be investigated. Furthermore, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be carried out to monitor the variables over time, as well as the establishment of causal relationships between them, and that aims to control the response biases.

Contributors

J. L. DIAS-VIANA contributed to the planning and conception of the work; he was responsible for data collection, analysis and interpretation of data and writing of the manuscript. A. P. P. NORONHA contributed to the planning and conception of the work, data analysis and writing of the manuscript.

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