Elizabeth Eckermann *Editor*

Gender, Lifespan and Quality of Life

An International Perspective

Springer

Gender, Lifespan and Quality of Life

Social Indicators Research Series

Volume 53

This new series aims to provide a public forum for single treatises and collections of papers on social indicators research that are too long to be published in our journal Social Indicators Research. Like the journal, the book series deals with statistical assessments of the quality of life from a broad perspective, It welcomes the research on a wide variety of substantive areas, including health, crime, housing, education, family life, leisure activities, transportation, mobility, economics, work, religion and environmental issues. These areas of research will focus on the impact of key issues such as health on the overall quality of life and vice versa. An international review board, consisting of Ruut Veenhoven, Joachim Vogel, Ed Diener, Torbjorn Moum, Airjam A.G. Sprangers and Wolfgang Glatzer, will ensure the high quality of the series as a whole.

Elizabeth Eckermann
Editor

Gender, Lifespan and Quality of Life

An International Perspective

Springer

Editor
Elizabeth Eckermann
Deakin University
Geelong, Victoria
Australia

Contents

Contributors

Sergiu Bălţătescu Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Oradea, Strada Universitatii nr. 1, Oradea, Romania

Josip Burusic Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Marulicev trg 19, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Ferran Casas Department of Psychology, Research Institute of Quality of Life, University of Girona, Plaça Sant Domenec 9, 17071, Girona, Spain

Matthew Clarke School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

Robert A. Cummins School of Psychology Burwood Campus, Deakin University, Burwood Highway 221, 3125 Burwood VIC, Australia

Elizabeth Eckermann Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Waurn Ponds Campus, Pigdons Rd 75, Waurn Ponds 3217, 3220 Geelong, VIC, Australia

Cristina Figuer Department of Psychology, Research Institute of Quality of Life, University of Girona, Plaça Sant Domenec 9, 17071, Girona, Spain

Margret Fine-Davis Senior Research Fellow (Emerita) and Visiting Research Fellow, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy, Trinity College Dublin; Director, Social Attitude & Policy Research Group

Mònica González Department of Psychology, Research Institute of Quality of Life, University of Girona, Plaça Sant Domenec 9, 17071, Girona, Spain

Ljiljana Kaliterna Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Marulicev trg 19, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Florian Kohlbacher German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ), 7-1 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0094 Japan

Sara Malo Department of Psychology, Research Institute of Quality of Life, University of Girona, Plaça Sant Domenec 9, 17071, Girona, Spain

Piotr Michoń   Department Labour & Social Policy, Poznan University of Economics, al.Niepodleglosci 10, 61-875 Poznan, Poland

Anke C. Plagnol   Department of Psychology, City University London, Whiskin St, EC1R 0JD, London, UK

Anna Scopaz   School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

Siok Kuan Tambyah   Department of Marketing NUS Business School, National University of Singapore, BIZ1 8-11, 15 Kent Ridge Drive, 119245, Singapore, Singapore

Soo Jiuan Tan   Department of Marketing NUS Business School, National University of Singapore, BIZ1 8-8, 15 Kent Ridge Drive, 119245, Singapore, Singapore

Tim Tiefenbach   German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ), 7-1 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, 102-0094 Tokyo, Japan

Habib Tiliouine   Department Psychology & Science & Education, Universite D'Oran, El Menaouer, BP1524, Oran, Algeria

Ekaterina Uglanova   Bremen International Graduate School of Soc Sc, Bremen University, Behringstrasse 5, Hamburg, Germany

Karen Watkins Fassler   Oficina 123 Edificio Posgrados, Economics Research Centre CIIE-UPAEP, 17 Sur 901, 19-06-1902, CP 72410, Barrio de Santiago, Puebla, Mexico

Chapter 1
Gender, Lifespan, Cultural Context and QOL

Elizabeth Eckermann

The historical search for universal principles of happiness has unearthed a plethora of variables which impact on quality of life outcomes in a variety of contexts. When quality of life became a serious field of research in psychology, economics, sociology and demography in the 1960s and 1970s (Land et al. 2011), the connections between some of these variables came under the scientific purview. However, key dimensions of systematic social, cultural and (for that matter) biological differentiation, remain underexplored. In this volume we concentrate on the nexus between sex, gender, age, generation and cultural context in shaping both objective and subjective quality of life and well-being outcomes across different contexts.

Sex and gender socialization were not regarded as significant differentiators of quality of life outcomes until relatively recently. This can largely be attributed to 'a lack of sex disaggregation of quality of life findings and the absence of any significant gender analysis of the outcomes and experiences' (Eckermann 2011, p. 14). Just before the United Nations Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced two new measures of gender inequality (the Gender-related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure) to assess human development (UNDP 1995) which started the systematic sex disaggregation of data in many fields and provided the tools to measure progress in gender equality.

The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) measures the same three dimensions as the Human Development Index (HDI), (life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate and mean years of schooling, and income as measured by real gross domestic product per capita), but discounts the composite measure for gender inequality. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) compares opportunities for women and men to actively participate in economic and political life and all levels of decision-making.

E. Eckermann (✉)
Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Waurn Ponds Campus, Pigdons Rd 75, Waurn Ponds 3217, 3220 Geelong, VIC, Australia
e-mail: liz.eckermann@deakin.edu.au

Comparison of the GDI and the GEM against the HDI) over the past 15 years illustrates that, in all countries where these measures have been used, women's objective quality of life is lower than for men and limited progress is being made in most countries (UNDP 2010). The later iteration of these indices, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) combines the two indices, using five indicators across three dimensions (reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation) to compare men's and women's objective conditions of life in 138 countries (UNDP 2010, pp. 85–86). It is even more sensitive that its predecessors to gender-related disparities and indicates huge gaps in gender equality.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reveals gender disparities in reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation. The losses in these achievements due to gender inequality, as expressed by the GII, range from 17 to 85 %, with larger losses concentrated in the Arab States and South Asia. Gender inequality remains a major barrier to human development. Girls and women have made major strides since 1990, but they have not yet gained gender equity (UNDP 2010, p. 89).

The picture of unfavorable objective conditions for quality of life for women and girls (disposable income, education, job opportunities, access to power and decision-making, leisure time, competing roles) is also reflected in the lack of progress in many countries in meeting many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) including gender empowerment, increased female literacy and education, survival of girls and reduced maternal mortality (United Nations 2005). In addition, many objective variables impacting on quality of life, such as exposure to domestic violence and share of household tasks do not feature in any generally applied quality of life scales (Fine-Davis et al. 2004).

In the past ten years several quality of life researchers have asked whether these disadvantages in relation to objective indicators of quality of life translate into gendered disparities in subjective measures of quality of life (Eckermann 2000; Bowling 2005).

Research by Mercier et al. (1998) on subjective quality of life, with individuals experiencing severe and persistent mental illness, was one of the first studies to use sex disaggregated data to explore whether age and gender impact on subjective quality of life outcomes. Although Mercier et al. (1998) found significant increase in quality of life with age, they found no sex differences. By contrast, the definitive study in four European countries by Fine-Davis et al. (2004) (which not only disaggregated data by sex, but also analysed gendered patterns), reported significant gender differences in quality of life. Measures included the household division of labour and government policies on supporting gender equity. Gendered divergence was evident both in relationships practices in the domestic sphere and policy practices in the public sphere.

Gender certainly acts in ambiguous ways in health and well-being. Women live longer compared to men in most countries of the world but girls and women have much higher levels of morbidity at all stages (UNICEF 2006). Gendered analysis of quality of life produces further anomalies with age and gender interacting in complex ways to impact on subjective well-being as the chapters in this volume illustrate. Quality of life research in some countries suggests that women (particularly

older women) are worse off than men when it comes to subjective well-being. This appears to be the case particularly in the post-socialist countries of eastern and central Europe such as Romania (Baltatescu, Chap. 7 this volume) and Russia (Uglanova, Chap. 9 this volume). However, in Western economies, the Personal Well-being Index (Cummins 2000), which only uses subjective assessment of life, consistently reveals lower scores for men than women across many contexts. Cummins (Chap. 5) argues that resilience explains much of this disparity (see Cummins Chap. 3 of this volume). Women, in a Western context, tend to display more resilience than men in difficult circumstances largely as a result of being socialized to be emotionally literate (Eckermann 2011) but they are less resilient in middle age. Masculine socialization in many cultural contexts emphasizes independence which can be isolating and reduce resilience in hard times. But like women, men's well-being decreases in middle age, except in post-socialist countries such as Romania where men's quality of life tends to plateau after the age of 60 years (Baltatescu, Chap. 7 this volume). Thus in many countries both men and women are subjected to the U-curve of wellbeing (Blanchflower and Oswald 2008) but in most contexts men start from a lower base.

The authors in this volume report that sex and gender socialization are often important dimensions of differentiation in quality of life outcomes. Furthermore, they show how sex and gender interact with age, income and cultural context in complicated ways. Despite the less favourable objective conditions highlighted above, women in many countries consistently report higher levels of subjective well-being but this varies with age and across cultural contexts. Data sets from many countries participating in the International Well-being Group (which uses the Personal Well-being Index translated into local language, sometimes with modifications to suit the cultural setting) note significant and often contradictory gender differences. Chapter 2–15 of this volume reflect some of those incongruous results. Cummins (Chap. 3 of this volume) observes sex differences in quality of life outcomes in the more recent large scale sets of data for the Australian Unity Project using the Personal Well-being Index (PWI). Undertaking a gender analysis of these differences between the sexes, Cummins agrees with Earvolino-Ramirez (2007) that resilience is the key factor in producing differential outcomes between men and women. However, do these sex differences persist over the lifespan? How do sex, gender, age and generation intersect across different cultural contexts?

Blanchflower and Oswald's large scale survey of 546,038 individuals in eight European countries (using a life satisfaction question from 1973–2006 Eurobarometer Surveys) provides strong evidence that well-being for both sexes in these European countries 'follows an approximately U-shaped path through life'. They argue that well-being 'starts high in the young, then it flattens out to a minimum around middle age; then rises quite strongly up into a person's 1970s' (Blanchflower and Oswald 2008, p. 486). However, cultural context disrupts the generalizability of this European experience. Easterlin (2006) and Glenn (2009) found no such pattern in the United States. Casas et al. (2009), in the Spanish context, and Tomyn and Cummins (Chap. 5), in Australia, find a dramatic dip in subjective well-being of adolescents of both sexes between the ages of 12 and 16 years which adds another twist

to the U-bend theory. Baltatescu (Chap. 7 this volume) and Uglanova (Chap. 9 this volume) similarly find patterns of well-being trajectory which skew the U-bend. For example in Russia, although a U-curve is evident, the trough of the U-curve comes over a decade later than in Western Europe (Uglanova, Chap. 9 this volume).

The chapters in this volume point to some predictable, and some most unexpected, findings about the nexus between age cultural context and sex in Spain, Australia, the United States, Algeria, 26 countries of the European Union, Romania, Lao PDR, Russia, Poland, Latin America, Japan, Ireland, Singapore and Croatia. Gonzalez et al. look at the relationship between adolescent girls and their mothers and the intergenerational transfer of quality of life experiences in Spain (Chap. 2). Cummins uses the PWI to examine the gender dimensions of quality of life for adult women in Australia (Chap. 3) which shows overall higher scores for women but a more recent decline in the gender gap. Pagnol identifies significant gender differences in work aspirations of American men and women which impact on their quality of life (Chap. 4) and Tiliouine examines similar dimensions in Algeria (Chap. 5). Fassler's research in Latin America (Chap. 11) suggests that given the multiple roles of women in the work and domestic spheres, higher household incomes have a more positive impact on women's than men's well-being. Kaliterna and Burusic (Chap. 15) found that income played a key role in tempering the impact of gender and age on well-being in Croatia. Similar gendered responses to family savings are found by Tiefenbach in Japan (Chap. 12).

Michon provides an overview of the quality of life of mothers in 26 EU countries (Chap. 6) while Baltescu (Chap. 7) and Uglanova (Chap. 9) provide detailed analysis of the gender dimensions of quality of life in Romania and Russia respectively which contrast with Western European findings. Uglanova (Chap. 9) reports a very limited rise in well-being among older women compared to older men in Russia with both sexes reaching their lowest subjective well-being between the ages of 50 and 60 years. In Chap. 8 Eckermann and Scopaz highlight the problems of measuring quality of life among Lao women who are neither literate nor numerate to assess the impact of pregnancy, giving birth and motherhood on their lives. They report on a current project which is using alternative measures of well-being to establish women's subjective evaluations of their quality of life. Similar issues to those outlined by Michon (Chap. 6) are explored in relation to women's experiences of the impact of motherhood on their well-being. Michon (Chap. 10) also explores the impact of parenting on males arguing that having children increases men's well-being and happiness. He suggests that being childless has a greater negative impact on well-being for men than it has for women. Fine-Davis explores the dimensions of the trend towards smaller and childless families in the demographic landscape in Ireland (Chap. 13) and establishes gendered implications for life satisfaction and well-being. Singapore has had a long history of limited family size and this has created a more convergent pattern of gendered impact on quality of life. Tambyah and Tan (Chap. 14) argue that despite this convergence, disaggregation by sex and age reveals some significant implications for policy designed to improve quality of life of particular group of Singaporeans, such as older married women.

Age and gender have certainly been shown to be key determining variables in quality of life outcomes using a variety of measures as the chapters in this volume illustrate. However, these chapters also demonstrate that culture, race, geographic location, economic circumstances (particularly poverty and class factors) and political factors (especially civil strife) impact on patterns of well-being (Green 2006). Geographical location even within countries impacts on PWI scores with community connection and feelings of safety being most sensitive to the urban/rural divide (Cummins 2002).

The research from the fourteen areas of the world represented in this volume point to the importance of cultural interpretation of quality of life in reviewing findings. Lau et al. (2005), found significant differences in personal well-being scores, using the PWI, between Australian and Hong Kong Chinese adults. We need to ask whether the discrepant findings presented in the following fourteen chapters represent real differences in affective experience of well-being or can be attributed to a cultural bias towards, or against, reporting positive states of being. Either way, unpacking the factors that contribute to differential outcomes for both objective conditions for quality of life for entire populations and subjective well-being for individuals within those populations, across gender, generational, income and cultural boundaries provides an opportunity for knowledge sharing between researchers, policy makers, and service providers internationally. To this end, the chapters in this volume provide a rich source of information on the dimensions of quality of life and happiness (disaggregated and analysed by sex, gender, age, generation, income and culture) across countries and regions which can guide policy and services to improve wellbeing at all levels from the individual to the global population. In light of current international debates about what the post-MDG agenda might look like (Stiglitz et al. 2009; OECD 2011), this volume is a timely reminder of the need to examine the *actual* subjective experiences and perceptions of well-being of individuals and households, alongside identifying the objective conditions which only provide information about the *potential* for well-being for individuals, households and entire populations.

References

Blanchflower, D. G., & Oswald, A. J. (2008). Is well-being U-shaped over the life cycle? *Social Science and Medicine, 66,* 1733–1749.

Bowling, A. (2005). *Measuring health* (3rd ed.). Berkshire: Open University Press.

Casas, F., Malo, S., Bataller, S., Gonzalez, M., & Figuer, C. (2009). *Personal well-being among 12 to 18 year-old adolescents and Spanish university students, evaluated through the Personal Well-being Index* (*PWI*). Paper presented at the conference of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies, Florence, SC, 19–23 July.

Cummins, R. A. (2000). Subjective well-being from rich and poor. In W. Glatzer (Ed.), *Rich and poor disparities, perceptions, consequences* (pp. 137–156). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Earvolino-Ramirez, M. (2007). Resilience: A concept analysis. *Nursing Forum*, *42*(2).

Easterlin, R. (2006). Life cycle happiness and its sources. Intersections of psychology, economics and demography. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 27,* 463–482.

Eckermann, E. (2000). Gendering indicators of health and well being: Is quality of life gender neutral? *Social Indicators Research: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal for Quality of Life Measurement: Special Issue: Quality of Life in OZ, I*(1), 29–54.

Eckermann, E. (2011). The quality of life of adults. In A. C. Michalos & K. C. Land (Eds.), *Handbook of social indicators and quality of life*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Fine-Davis, M., Fagnani, J., Giovannini, D., Hojgaard, L., & Clarke, H. (2004). *Father and mothers: Dilemmas of the work–life balance: A comparative study in four European countries: Vol. 21. Social Indicators Research Series*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Glenn, N. (2009). Is the apparent U-shape of well-being over the life course a result of inappropriate use of control variables? A commentary on Blanchflower and Oswald. *Social Science & Medicine, 69*(4), 481–485.

Green, M. (2006). *Perceptions of quality of life: The relative influence of race and class*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Hilton San Francisco & Renaissance Parc, 55 Hotel, San Francisco, CA, 14 Aug 2004. http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p110247_index.html. Accessed 21 Oct 2013.

Land, K., Michalos, A. C., & Sirgy, M. J. (2011). Prologue: The development and evolution of research on social indicators and quality of life (QOL). In A. C. Michalos (Ed.), *Handbook of social indicators and quality of life*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Lau, A. L. D., Cummins, R. A., & McPherson, W. (2005). An investigation into the cross-cultural equivalence of the Personal Well-being Index. *Social Indicators Research, 72*(3), 403–430.

Mercier, C., Peladeau, N., & Tempier, R. (1998). Age, gender and quality of life. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *34*, 487–500. doi:10.1023/A:1018790429573, ISSN: 00103853**.**

OECD. (2011). *How's life*. Paris: OECD.

Stiglitz, J. E., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J. (2009). Report by the commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress. http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/index.htm. Accessed 21 Oct 2013.

Tomyn, A., & Cummins, R. A. (2011). The subjective wellbeing of high-school students: Validating the Personal Wellbeing Index—School Children. *Social Indicators Research, 101,* 405–418.

UNDP. (1995). *Human Development Report 2005*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNDP. (2010). *Human Development Report 2010*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNICEF. (2006). *The state of the world's children 2007: Women and children, the double dividend of gender equality*. New York: UNICEF.

United Nations. (2005). *Millennium development goal indicator database*. New York: UN.

Chapter 2
Personal Well-being and Interpersonal Communication of 12–16 Year-Old Girls and Their Own Mothers: Gender and Intergenerational Issues

Mònica González, Cristina Figuer, Sara Malo and Ferran Casas

2.1 Introduction

In recent years, an increasing number of studies have focused on adolescents' well-being (see, for instance, Ben-Zur 2003; Casas et al. 2007b; Huebner 2004) and adolescents' interpersonal communication (Casas et al. 2007c, 2007d; Malo et al. 2006; Valois et al. 2002, 2004). This research connects those two aspects of adolescent life and reflects a long term interest of the researchers (see, for instance, Casas et al. 2004).

Adolescence is a rapidly-evolving period of time so adolescents' specific age is a key variable to be taken into account in any study of the above topics. Both well-being and family interpersonal communication vary as the adolescents grow up. The tendency is for both well-being and interpersonal communication to decrease with age as adolescents express being less satisfied with life as a whole and with specific life domains (González 2006), and, the older they become up to the age of 16 years, prefer talking to friends rather than with their parents on almost any topic (Casas et al. 2001).

In most of the studies covering well-being and interpersonal communication, gender disaggregation of data for the indicators used to measure both reveals few differences between girls and boys. For some topics, important differences are found while for some others, responses do not differ much between them. In what follows, some examples are provided.

In reference to interpersonal communication, Gilligan and other authors have defended the existence of differences between boys and girls in the sense that they seem to experience and understand social and interpersonal dimensions of relationships with other people in a different way (Colarossi and Eccles 2000), including conflictive relationships with the parents (Unger et al. 2000). We have also seen in other research that girls' perceived social support from friends tends to be higher

M. González (✉) · C. Figuer · S. Malo · F. Casas
Department of Psychology, Research Institute of Quality of Life,
University of Girona, Plaça Sant Domenec 9, 17071, Girona, Spain
e-mail: monica.gonzalez@udg.edu

compared to boys (González 2006). Moreover, social support from family seems to lose ground throughout adolescence to social support coming from friends, especially among girls, who are considered to develop more intimate and social support based peer-relationships compared to boys (Bru et al. 2001).

With reference to well-being studies, Meadows et al. (2005) highlight the existence of controversial findings worth mentioning. The feminist position (represented by Gilligan 1982) defending the argument that girls' well-being has been consistently impeded by the patriarchal society is countered by the argument that boys, rather than girls, are the ones who are disadvantaged, especially within the education system (represented by Sommers 1994). González (2006) and Meadows et al. (2005) do not find empirical support for disadvantage for either sex. In relation to the latter, North-American boys' and girls' answers to the questions used for the analysis do not differ substantially in their personal well-being in general. However, there are significant gender-related differences in specific life domains.

Values have become a topic of increasing concern within well-being studies, as an important connection seems to exist with those variables traditionally considered to be the core of well-being (satisfaction with life as whole and satisfaction with specific life domains). Some interesting differences, which refer at least to some extend to "gender cultures", appear when focusing on gender, as boys tend to show higher scores in material values, and capacities and knowledge values while girls give higher importance to interpersonal relationships values (Casas et al. 2007a).

The research papers devoted to contrasting adolescents' and parents' well-being and to analysing patterns of family communication have increased significantly over the past decade (for example, Barber et al. 2003; Casas et al. 2001, 2007c; Unger et al. 2000). Most of these research projects report that parents' responses are often at odds with those of their sons and daughters. The key objective of this study was to identify similarities and differences in the patterns of communication between daughters and mothers and to analyse different perceptions and evaluations of their own and the other's well-being. As noted above, in previous research it was found that adolescents' perceptions of communication and adolescents' well-being do not necessarily coincide with that of their own parents'. These results may reflect the existence of different "generational cultures" whereby people of different ages perceive and evaluate psychological and psychosocial phenomena in quite a different manner.

Many other examples can be found around interpersonal communication and well-being in which boys' responses are systematically compared to that of girls' and, at the same time, parents' responses are analysed differently depending on whether they have an adolescent son or daughter. In general terms, this line of research has contributed to the development of *gender-sensitive* quality of life indicators (Eckermann 2000). However, we agree with Eckermann that further research towards the development of *gender-specific* (Eckermann 2000) measures on well-being and interpersonal communication need to be explored. These would be sensitive to the differential effects of gender socialization for girls and boys.

In this chapter, the study of well-being, interactions and interpersonal communication in adolescence is addressed through the study of girls' well-being and
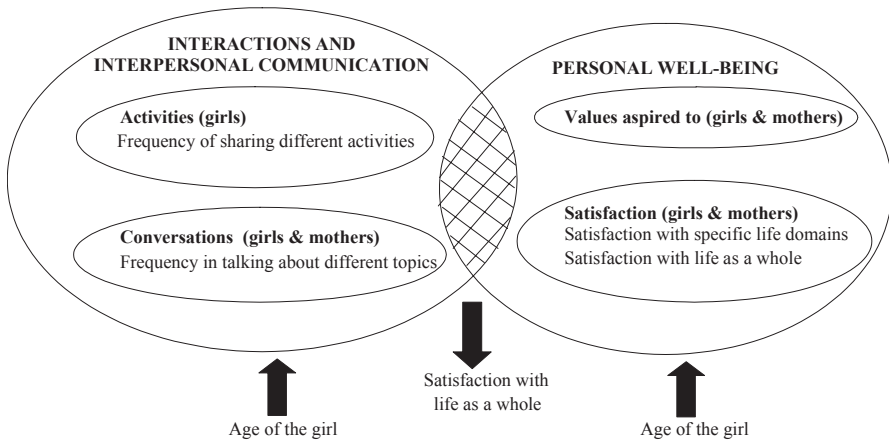
Fig. 2.1 Relationships explored in this study

perceptions compared with that of their own mothers, specifically and independent-ly of boys' and fathers' well-being and interpersonal communication. Therefore, emphasis is moved from the comparison between gender to the analysis of common and different views in the perceptions and evaluations of people of the same sex, who are regularly interacting and who differ substantially in their age. Some poten-tial gender and generational cultures aspects can be more easily detected.

The objectives of this study are the following:

1. To comparatively explore interactions and interpersonal communication of 12 to 16 year-old girls and their own mothers in terms of activities (frequency of shar-ing different activities) and conversations (frequency in talking about different topics).
2. To comparatively explore both girls' and mothers' personal well-being in terms of satisfaction with specific life domains and satisfaction with life as a whole and other related variables such as values aspired to for the girls' future.
3. To analyse potential differences in both interpersonal communication and per-sonal well-being related variables according to the age of the girl.
4. To explore which variables (between satisfaction with specific life domains, val-ues aspired to and reported frequency of some activities) better explain girls' and mothers' satisfaction with life as a whole, respectively, including perceptions and evaluations of each other.

The relationships among variables explored in this chapter are graphically dis-played in Fig. 2.1.

2.2   Method Procedure and Sample

Data were obtained from secondary school centres belonging to the four provinces of the Catalan Autonomous Region (northeast of Spain). Schools and number of classes were randomly selected to fulfil a quota for each age group and all the steps were taken according to ethical guidelines for questionnaire administration to children.

Directors, parents associations and teachers were asked for cooperation, and after their approval, children were informed about the confidentiality of the data and that they were free to refuse although they were asked to cooperate. Questionnaires were administered in their regular classroom to the whole group, where one of their usual teachers and at least one researcher were present during the administration in order to clarify any issues that arose.

Once the questionnaire was completed for the children, each child received an explanation letter and another questionnaire in a sealed envelope for their parents which they were asked to return within a week. Each parent's questionnaire was coded to be paired with their child's.

2,715 boys and girls responded to the questionnaire jointly with 1,372 of their parents. In 21.4 % of the cases the father answered alone, in 32 % the two parents answered together and in 46.4 % the mother answered alone. A sub-sample composed of 358 paired girls and their own mothers (13.18 % of the total sample of adolescents and 26.09 % of the total sample of parents, respectively) has been adopted as the sample of this research. Distribution by the age of the sub-sample of girls was: 17.3 % of 12 year-olds, 26.3 % of 13, 28.2 % of 14, 19 % of 15 and 9.2 % of 16 year-olds.

2.2.1   Description of the Variables

The variables included in the questionnaire, which are analysed in this study, were:

Frequency of Sharing Different Activities with the Mother Each girl was asked to inform the researchers about the frequency with which she shares 13 different activities with her mother: going to the school, going to out-of-school activities, going to the doctor, providing care and support, playing videogames, playing generally, listening to music, reading, watching TV or videos, going to the cinema or theatre, going for a walk, going on excursions, and going to religious events. This frequency was measured by a five-point scale: *never, not much, seldom, often* and *almost always.*

Frequency in Talking with the Mother/Daughter About Different Topics Both girls and mothers were asked about their conversations about the same 20 different topics: journals, music, feelings, what happens in the world, the future, school and learning, computers, daily life, free time and leisure, religion and spiritual issues, family, sports, responsibility and moral values, television, clothes, videogames, cities or towns, food, other people and relationships and cleanliness and tidiness. Girls

answered about the frequency with which they maintained conversation with their own mother, and mothers answered about the frequency of their conversations with their own daughter. The measure was obtained through a five-point scale: *never, rarely, from time to time, often and very often.*

Satisfaction with Life Domains and with Life as a Whole Both girls and mothers were asked about their satisfaction with 15 life domains, eight of which constitute the Personal Well-Being Index (Cummins et al. 2003) (satisfaction with health, with standard of living, with achievements in life, with the feeling of security, with groups of people belonging to -which is the Spanish adaptation of the original item on satisfaction with the community, see Casas et al. 2008, with security for the future, with the relationships with others and with spirituality or religious beliefs) and seven additional more concrete ones (satisfaction with friends, with enjoying time, with the family, with herself, with the use of time, with the sports practiced and with the body).

Four life domains were included only in the girls' questionnaire: satisfaction with preparation for the future, with learning, with the school and with school outcomes. Each mother was asked about her satisfaction with ten aspects of her daughter's life (her daughter's friends, health, responsibility, technical abilities, the sports she practices, knowledge of computers, preparation for life, school learning, acquired knowledge, use of time and her abilities with people). Mothers were also requested to respond to questions about satisfaction with their own job and their acquired knowledge.

All these variables plus a one-item scale on satisfaction with life as a whole were measured through an eleven-point scale, from 0 (*Completely unsatisfied*) to 10 (*Completely satisfied*).

Values Aspired to for the Girl's Future A closed set of 23 items referred to values the girl herself would like and their own mother would like her daughter to be appreciated by other people when the girl becomes 21 years old: intelligence, technical abilities, abilities with people, knowledge about computers, profession, family, sensitivity, 'niceness' (friendliness, sympathy), money, power, knowledge of the world, image, responsibility, solidarity, tolerance, good manners, joie de vivre (love of life), creativity, capacity for working, faith or spirituality, constancy, personality, kindness. The importance of each value was measured by a scale from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*A lot*).

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Activities

Girls' perception of mothers caring about them achieved the highest percentage to the *almost ever* response, followed by going to the doctor together (Table 2.1). It is worth commenting that the rest of percentages to the *almost ever* response do not reach 30 %.

Table 2.1 Frequency of sharing different activities with the mother (in descendant order)

Girls	Almost ever (%)	Never (%)
Caring about you	85.1	0.8
Going to the doctor	66.1	1.7
Watching TV or video	26.3	3.1
Going on excursions	23	17.8
Reading	16.4	34.8
Listening to music	12.9	20.2
Going to religious events	12.1	58.9
Going for a walk	11.9	22.6
Going to out-of-school activities	9.9	67.1
Going to the school	9.1	67.1
Going to the cinema or theatre	7.8	27
Playing to other things	2.3	47.8
Playing videogames	1.4	84.7

Table 2.2 Frequency of sharing different activities with the mother, by the age of the girl (in descendant order, only significant correlations are displayed)

Girls	Correlations (τ_c)	
	Value	Significance
Going on excursions	−0.177	*p<0.001*
Going to religious events	−0.161	*p<0.001*
Playing	−0.160	*p<0.001*
Going for a walk	−0.132	*p=0.002*
Reading	−0.118	*p=0.007*
Going to the doctor	−0.101	*p=0.027*

Significant correlations were found between 6 of the 13 activities included in the girls' questionnaire and their age. In all cases, correlations were both low and negative and so, the older the girl, the less she shares those activities with her mother (Table 2.2). Correlations ranged from 0.101 (for going to the doctor) to 0.177 (for going on excursions).

2.3.2 Conversations

School and learning, and clothes were the two topics that both girls and mothers agreed that they talk about *very often.* Most girls and also mothers expressed that two topics they *never* talk about are videogames and religion or spiritual issues (Table 2.3).

Interestingly, there were some topics which reached exactly the same percentage on behalf girls and mothers. That is the case for cleanliness and tidiness and

Table 2.3 Frequency in talking with the mother/daughter about different topics (non-shadowed column, in descendant order for girls' percentages) and differences of percentage between girls' and mothers' responses (shadowed columns)

	Very often (%)			Never (%)		
	Girls	Mothers		Girls	Mothers	
School and learning	34.4	45.5	-11.1	1.4	2	-0.6
Clothes	33	33.4	-0.4	2.8	2.6	+0.2
Cleanness and tidiness	27.1	27.1	0	4.3	7	-2.7
Family	23.3	22.6	+0.7	5.7	13.6	-7.9
The future	21.8	19.3	+2.5	12.7	5.2	+7.5
Feelings	19.4	16.5	+2.9	22.8	9.3	+13.5
Food	18.9	29.6	-10.7	8.6	1.4	+7.2
Responsibility and moral values	17.6	19.7	-2.1	8.5	7.2	+1.3
Daily life	16.8	22.5	-5.7	15.9	2.9	+13
Music	16.5	20.1	-3.6	12.5	6.9	+5.6
Free time and leisure	16.5	27.2	-10.7	14.2	3.5	+10.7
What happens in the world	14.6	19.6	-5	13.8	5.3	+8.5
Other people and relationships	14.2	21.8	-7,6	12.5	2.3	+10.2
Television	13.3	17.1	-3.8	7.4	4.1	+3.3
Journals	11.1	11.7	0	40	17.3	+22.7
City or town	11.2	18.5	-7.3	21.8	4.6	+17.2
Sports	10.3	10.8	-0.5	22.2	13.7	+8.5
Computers	5.4	21	-15.6	31.9	10.1	+21.8
Videogames	3.1	5.6	-2.5	63.7	39.2	+24.5
Religion or spiritual issues	2.6	10.2	-7.6	55	14.8	+40.2

journals. In other cases, percentages were very similar: clothes, family and sports. In contrast, for some other topics the difference between percentages was noticeable: school and learning, food, free time and leisure, and computers, for example. This difference was even higher when the *never* response is considered, especially on the topics of journals, computers, videogames and religion or spiritual issues (shadowed column on the right).

When only girls' responses are taken into account, we observe significant, although low, correlations between some topics and the age of the girl, only one of them being positive: the future ($\tau_c=0.094$; $p=0.030$), and the other two negative: videogames ($\tau_c=-0.110$; $p=0.015$), and music ($\tau_c=-0.115$; $p=0.009$).

2.3.3 Satisfaction

In reference to satisfaction with life as whole, girls obtained a mean of 7.71 in a 0–10 scale (with a standard deviation of 2.345), whereas mothers' mean was 7.50 (with a standard deviation of 1.898).

Means and standard deviations have been calculated for girls' and mothers' own responses to those life satisfaction domains included in the questionnaires. The results are shown in Table 2.4. Means ranged in the case of girls from 5.50 (satisfaction with spirituality or religious beliefs) to 8.74 (satisfaction with friends), and in the case of mothers from 5.78 (satisfaction with the sports practised) to 7.84 (satisfaction with herself). The most satisfactory satisfaction domains for girls were, in this order: (1) Satisfaction with friends, (2) Satisfaction with groups of people belonging to and (3) Satisfaction with standard of living.

In the case of mothers the three most satisfactory satisfaction domains were quite different. They were the following: (1) Satisfaction with herself, (2) Satisfaction with the family, and (3) Satisfaction with health. The least appreciated satisfaction domains of girls were: (1) Satisfaction with spirituality or religious beliefs, (2) Satisfaction with the body, and (3) Satisfaction with the school outcomes. And for mothers: (1) Satisfaction with the sports practiced, (2) Satisfaction with the body and (3) Satisfaction with security for the future.

Remarkably, girls' means were higher compared to their own mothers' with the exception of satisfaction with herself, with the use of time, with the body and with spirituality or religious beliefs. The differences between girls and mothers were significant for all the satisfaction life domains considered except for satisfaction with health, with achievements in life and with the feeling of security.

The two life domains only considered for mothers, ranged from satisfaction with acquired knowledge (6.90) to satisfaction with work (7.44), while in relation to the life domains only considered for girls (satisfaction with learning, with preparation for the future, with the school and with the school outcomes), indicated that the highest mean corresponds to satisfaction with learning; all four means being between 6.84 and 7.48 (Table 2.4)

Significant and negative correlations were observed in 12 satisfaction life domains, ranging from 0.104 to 0.224, when the age of the girls was considered (Table 2.5). This means that as the age of the girl increases, the less importance she gives to these life domains.

In relation to the satisfaction of mothers with some of their daughter's aspects of life, the highest means corresponded to satisfaction with the daughter's friends and satisfaction with the daughter's responsibility (Table 2.6).

2.3.4 Values Aspired to for the Girls' Future

As Table 2.7 reveals, means ranged in the case of girls from 4.14 (power) to 8.88 (personality), and in the case of mothers, from 5.28 (power) to 9.07 (personality). The most appreciated values for girls were, in this order: (1) Personality, (2) Niceness and (3) Kindness. In the case of mothers the three most appreciated values were almost the same: (1) Personality, (2) Joie de vivre, and (3) Kindness. The

Table 2.4 Girls' and mothers' own satisfaction with different life domains (in descendant order for girls' means) and differences between girls' and mothers' means (shadowed column)

Girls and mothers	Means and standard deviations (0–10 scale)		Mean differences
	Girls	Mothers	
Satisfaction with friends	8.74 (*1.704*)	7.49 (*2.269*)	$t_{325}=8.312$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with groups of people belonging to	8.29 (*2.094*)	7.74 (*1.642*)	$t_{338}=4.096$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with the standard of living	8.30 (*1.974*)	7.43 (*1.987*)	$t_{325}=5.865$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with enjoying time	8.20 (*1.949*)	6.93 (*2.202*)	$t_{325}=8.221$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with the family	8.20 (*2.086*)	7.77 (*2.550*)	$t_{336}=2.665$ (*p=0.008*)
Satisfaction with the relationships with others	7.99 (*2.133*)	7.53 (*1.970*)	$t_{337}=2.923$ (*p=0.004*)
Satisfaction with health	7.97 (*2.444*)	7.76 (*2.048*)	–
Satisfaction with achievements in life	7.85 (*2.093*)	7.74 (*1.801*)	–
Satisfaction with learning	7.48 (*2.024*)	–	–
Satisfaction with work	–	7.44 (*2.164*)	–
Satisfaction with security for the future	7.41 (*2.163*)	6.82 (*2.254*)	$t_{325}=-3.544$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with herself	7.36 (*2.650*)	7.84 (*1.857*)	$t_{335}=-2.763$ (*p=0.006*)
Satisfaction with preparation for the future	7.31 (*2.150*)	–	–
Satisfaction with the feeling of security	7.12 (*2.471*)	7.21 (*2.061*)	–
Satisfaction with the school	7.01 (*2.521*)	–	–
Satisfaction with the use of time	7.00 (*2.199*)	7.53 (*1.914*)	$t_{337}=-3.525$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with the sports practiced	6.92 (*2.890*)	5.78 (*3.072*)	$t_{331}=5.196$ (*p<0.001*)
Satisfaction with school outcomes	6.84 (*2.588*)	–	–
Satisfaction with the acquired knowledge	–	6.90 (*1.842*)	–
Satisfaction with the body	6.19 (*2.753*)	6.70 (*2.219*)	$t_{330}=-2.814$ (*p=0.005*)
Satisfaction with spirituality or religious beliefs	5.50 (*3.388*)	7.09 (*2.309*)	$t_{316}=-7.398$ (*p<0.001*)

least appreciated values by girls and also mothers were: (1) Power, (2) Money, and (3) Faith or spirituality. Mothers' means were always higher, compared to girls', with the only exception being 'niceness', profession and sensitivity. Except for the values of personality, profession, family and technical abilities, the differences between girls' and mothers' means were significant. When the age of the girls was considered, any significant correlation appeared in girls' answers.

Table 2.5 Girls' satisfaction with different life domains, by the age of the girl (in descendant order, only significant correlations are displayed)

Girls	Correlations	
	Value	Significance
Satisfaction with the school	−0.224	p<0.001
Satisfaction with health	−0.214	p<0.001
Satisfaction with the body	−0.195	p<0.001
Satisfaction with learning	−0.181	p<0.001
Satisfaction with security for the future	−0.158	p<0.001
Satisfaction with herself	−0.157	p<0.001
Satisfaction with the family	−0.157	p<0.001
Satisfaction with the standard of living	−0.144	p=0.001
Satisfaction with school outcomes	−0.140	p=0.001
Satisfaction with the feeling of security	−0.123	p=0.004
Satisfaction with the relationships with others	−0.118	p=0.006
Satisfaction with achievements in life	−0.104	p=0.015

Table 2.6 Mothers' own satisfaction with some aspects of their daughter's life (in descendant order)

Mothers	Means and standard deviations (*0–10 scale*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's friends	8.21 (*1.791*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's responsibility	7.64 (*1.976*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's health	7.58 (*2.389*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's technical abilities	7.41 (*1.749*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's preparation for life	7.33 (*1.918*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's school learning	7.22 (*2.004*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's knowledge of computers	7.01 (*2.151*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's use of time	6.99 (*1.968*)
Satisfaction with the sports the daughter practices	6.98 (*2.578*)
Satisfaction with the daughter's abilities with people	6.90 (*2.648*)

2.3.5 Explained Model of Girls' and Mothers' Satisfaction with Life as a Whole

A model including girls' and mothers' satisfaction with life domains, values aspired to for the girls' future and reported frequency of talking to each other about some activities was made to explain girls' satisfaction with life as whole. The equivalent model was made for mothers, adding the items on the mother's satisfaction with different aspects of her daughter's life. The results obtained are the following:

'Satisfaction with herself' was the best variable in predicting satisfaction with life as a whole both for girls and their own mothers being at the same time the only one included in both models. In the case of the girls in the study, three other satisfac-

Table 2.7 Means and standard deviations of girls' and mothers responses' to a list of different values aspired to for the girl's future measured through a 0–10 scale (in descendant order for girls' means) and differences between girls' and mothers' means (shadowed column)

Girls and mothers	Means and standard deviations (0–10 scale)		
	Girls	Mothers	Mean differences
Personality	8.88 (*1.674*)	9.07 (*1.402*)	–
Niceness	8.76 (*1.674*)	7.43 (*2.731*)	$t_{340} = 7.765$ ($p < 0.001$)
Kindness	8.67 (*1.752*)	8.95 (*1.464*)	$t_{347} = -2.348$ ($p = 0.019$)
Joie de vivre	8.56 (*1.888*)	8.98 (*1.494*)	$t_{345} = -3.295$ ($p = 0.001$)
Profession	8.23 (*1.982*)	8.21 (*1.911*)	–
Family	8.15 (*2.104*)	8.41 (*1.964*)	–
Abilities with people	8.10 (*1.828*)	8.48 (*1.581*)	$t_{345} = -2.933$ ($p = 0.004$)
Good manners	8.06 (*2.058*)	8.65 (*1.617*)	$t_{348} = -4.162$ ($p < 0.001$)
Responsibility	8.03 (*1.988*)	8.79 (*1.574*)	$t_{349} = -5.701$ ($p < 0.001$)
Sensitivity	7.99 (*2.098*)	7.54 (*2.832*)	$t_{347} = 2.404$ ($p = 0.017$)
Capacity of working	7.81 (*2.035*)	8.58 (*1.646*)	$t_{341} = -5.810$ ($p < 0.001$)
Solidarity	7.83 (*2.039*)	8.81 (*1.5852*)	$t_{342} = -7.161$ ($p < 0.001$)
Creativity	7.62 (*2.089*)	7.98 (*2.015*)	$t_{340} = -2.317$ ($p = 0.021$)
Tolerance	7.58 (*2.107*)	8.72 (*1.607*)	$t_{342} = -7.960$ ($p < 0.001$)
Intelligence	7.47 (*2.053*)	7.96 (*1.912*)	$t_{349} = -3.302$ ($p = 0.001$)
Technical abilities	7.24 (*2.067*)	7.37 (*1.946*)	–
Constancy	7.07 (*2.296*)	8.50 (*1.707*)	$t_{343} = -9.512$ ($p < 0.001$)
Image	6.77 (*2.829*)	7.21 (*2.626*)	$t_{344} = -2.285$ ($p = 0.023$)
Knowledge of the world	6.29 (*2.638*)	7.98 (*1.935*)	$t_{343} = -9.853$ ($p < 0.001$)
Knowledge about computers	5.85 (*2.763*)	7.24 (*2.412*)	$t_{343} = -7.827$ ($p < 0.001$)
Faith or spirituality	5.22 (*3.279*)	7.21 (*2.679*)	$t_{337} = -9.314$ ($p < 0.001$)
Money	4.39 (*3.068*)	5.32 (*3.231*)	$t_{344} = -4.243$ ($p < 0.001$)
Power	4.14 (*3.099*)	5.28 (*3.139*)	$t_{344} = -5.295$ ($p < 0.001$)

tion with life domains contributed in a positive way to explain satisfaction with life as a whole. They were: satisfaction with standard of living, with relationships with others and with preparation for future. For mothers, they were: satisfaction with family, with job, with achievements in life and with the daughter's abilities with people. Both in the girls' and the mothers' model, some domains of the "couple" were included. In the case of girls, this happened with mother's satisfaction with relationships with others, and in the case of mothers with the daughter's satisfaction with use of time (negatively).

In relation to values, only the importance attributed to the value of faith and spirituality helped to explain girls' satisfaction with life as whole, while for mothers it was the value given to abilities with people (although negatively), to personality (negatively), to joie de vivre, to creativity and to tolerance (positively in the three cases). Value given by the mother to creativity, to knowledge of computers, to abilities with people and to family were also included in the girls' model, while the

value given by the daughter to family, to knowledge of the world, and to sensitivity (although negatively) was included in the mothers' model.

The reported frequency in talking with the mother/daughter about different topics was included both in girls' and mothers' models. However, only in girls' model the own report is included (concretely, what happens in the world and about television, both negatively), as in the case of mothers they referred in all cases to the daughter's report (about sports, negatively and about other people and relationships). It is worth mentioning that in the girls' model, mother's report of the frequency in talking with the daughter about religion and spiritual issues was also included.

Finally, only in the mothers' model was the frequency in sharing different activities (TV or video watching, and mother taking care of them) included, referring in this case to the daughter's report (both negatively).

2.4   Discussion

The purpose of this research has been to explore gender specificities and intergenerational differences among a sample of adolescent girls and their own mothers in relation to their personal well-being and their interpersonal communication.

The first objective has been to comparatively explore interactions and interpersonal communication of girls and their own mothers in terms of *activities* (frequency of sharing different activities) and *conversations* (frequency in talking about different topics). In relation to activities, only girls' responses were available as this question was not included in the mothers' questionnaire due to the considerable number of items already included. In the case of conversations, both girls and mothers responded to the same question.

Some activities and topics of conversation, traditionally linked to the stereotype of a mother's behaviour obtained high percentages. For instance, going to the doctor and talking about clothes and cleanliness/tidiness. On the other hand, the frequency of sharing and talking about media related activities and religion or spiritual issues displayed the least percentage (with the exception of TV or video watching). We have already seen in other studies that videogame playing is not among girls' favourite media related activity and that their favourite interlocutor for media related activities is not the mother but the father (Casas et al. 2007c).

When we analysed concordances and discrepancies between girls and their own mothers, in terms of frequency of conversations we observed that they *strongly agree* in saying that they talk to each other about cleanliness and tidiness, family, journals and sports. However, only in the case of cleanliness and tidiness did the percentage of responses go far beyond 25 % to the *very often* response. At the same time, mothers tended to overestimate, in comparison to girls, the frequency with which they talk about all the other topics with the exception of family, the future and feelings. This tendency, which we have seen in other research (Casas et al. 2001, 2007c) reinforces the need of taking into account both adolescents' and adults' perceptions when studying family interpersonal communication and relationships, because the perspective of each generation may differ when answering such questions.

The second objective has been to explore both girls' and mothers' personal well-being in terms of satisfaction with specific life domains and satisfaction with life as whole and other related variables such as values aspired to for the girls' future. Mothers' satisfaction with life as a whole was lower compared to the girls' and the girls' means for life satisfaction domains were higher with the exception of satisfaction with herself, with the use of time, with the body and with spirituality or religious beliefs.

The three most satisfactory domains for mothers were quite different compared to girls: satisfaction with herself, with the family and with health for the mothers and satisfaction with friends, with groups of people belonging to and with standard of living for the girls. This way, girls' preferences seemed to reflect the importance of social relationships at these ages while mother's hierarchy reflected the importance given to the family and personal aspects such as oneself and health.

More similarities were found, however, when the least satisfactory domains were considered. In this case, both girls and mothers coincided in considering satisfaction with the body and with the sports practised to be within the least appreciated ones. They differed, however, in the third one, which was, satisfaction with spirituality or religious beliefs for girls and satisfaction with the security for the future on behalf mothers.

In reference to values, the difference between girls' and mothers' means were statistically significant, with the only exceptions being personality, profession, family and technical abilities. Mothers' means were always higher compared to girls', with only few exceptions (niceness', profession and sensitivity). However, their responses were quite similar for those values considered most and least important. A rather low discrepancy between adolescents and their parents in relation to the importance given to a series of values was also found in Casas et al. (2005), which might suggest that both adolescents' and parent's values have changed in last years'.

In a study conducted with 75 European-American mothers of young adolescents, Buchanan (2003) highlights the close connection that exists between holding negative beliefs about adolescents as a group and mother's expectations for difficulty with their own child independently of the child's current attributes (in terms of temperament, feelings and behaviours in daily living). We have not asked mothers about their opinion on adolescence in general, however, we have included mothers' expectations about their daughter being appreciated by other people in the future on a list of 23 values.

The third objective has been to analyse potential differences in both interactions and interpersonal communication and personal well-being related variables according to the age of the girl. In reference to interpersonal communication, it is evident that as children grow up into adolescents, less family time is spent on many activities (Wartella and Jennings 2001), including media use, because adolescents experience those activities more and more outside the scope of the home environment. These observations would explain why the frequency of girls and mothers sharing some activities decreased with the age of the girl in our study, especially those related to leisure and, why the frequency of conversations about some topics between them also diminished.