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THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN
EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

Psychological wellbeing is a current relevant area of study, because of the importance of its approach both individually and socially, even more when it has been related to happiness, quality of life and mental health. This can be identified clearly in the differentiation of hedonistic and eudemonic perspectives; and they captivate the interest of researchers worldwide and in Latin America, asking questions such as: why talk about psychological well-being in educational processes? It is clear that the educational process does not only involve cognitive processes, but also has to do with: self-acceptance, psychosocial links, life projects and affects, amongst others, which are an integral part of the concept of psychological well-being. Thus, the present study seeks to make an interpretation of the research regarding the psychological wellbeing in an Educational Context in Latin America. The methodology is qualitative, interpretive documentary type, the unit of work is made up of 319 documents among are: reports, books, articles, doctoral theses and policies; as an instrument we have the bibliographic and analytical content matrix. The most important results: a) to recognize that the research carried out on the topic considers that psychological well-being is directly related to academic performance, b) it is determined that the approach given to the subject of psychological well-being, is made from European or North American sources of study and c) the importance, demonstrated by many studies of society, community and family support in the understanding of psychological well-being in Latin American populations has reduced.

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1. Introduction

Undoubtedly the growing interest in the study of Psychological Wellbeing, has opened wide possibilities of understanding from conceptual construction but also from the relationship and application of such understandings to different areas of social action and human problems. In the next section there will be a brief summary of the history of the concept and then the most important conceptual ideas will be highlighted. Within the most important questions and probably those that have motivated the discussion, are the ones that initially have inquired about happiness, for example is happiness everything? Or is everything happiness?- Happiness is Everything, or is it? As Ryff (1989) would have said it, undoubtedly the question helps contribute to review and reflect the previously proposed, but also helps identify the positions that were established for the understanding of wellbeing and also helped differentiate related concepts. In this context, it is possible to identify two traditions; a hedonic, more associated with the place of happiness, happiness defends the idea that wellbeing consists mainly of pleasure (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999) and the second tradition is the eudemonic, in which it is postulated that wellbeing is not only happiness but the development of human potential (Waterman, 1993) that way, it is considered that psychological well-being is an indicator of a positive functioning individual, which enables the development of their abilities and therefore their personal growth (Vivaldi & Barra, 2012) this classification originates in the concepts of ancient Greece according to Diaz, Stavradi, Blanco, & Gandarillas (2015) but they help to orient the positions that can be assumed of this particular.

However, interest in the study of psychological well-being takes place, with Inglehart (1977), when emerged its denominated as a crisis of values in advanced industrial societies, this would favor an important cultural change with which the post-material values are consolidated and would allow new theoretical debates and new research spaces (Casas, Rosich, & Alsinet, 2000), however, as affirmed by Vielmar & Alonso (2010) in the historical aspect of the scientific study of Psychological Well-Being it is necessary to confirm that in its development some controversies have been confronted within the field of psychology, especially in the immediate date of the theoretical revision of this concept, carried out by Wilson (1967) and the scientific use of the term "psychological well-being" by Bradburn (1969). Likewise, it has been considered that it is also important to review some concepts that are related to psychological well-being that have different lengths, as Vázquez & Hervás (2009) would affirm: the architecture of psychological well-being in this makes the distinction among others in what corresponds to happiness related to a general term, not a very specific term that can become ambiguous from a scientific point of view, the psychological well-being that would make reference to a "*term that includes both reflective and evaluative elements (for example, global judgments of satisfaction with life or with specific ideas of it) as reactions and emotional states experienced in the daily course of our lives*" (pp. 18-19). On the other hand, Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith (1999) affirm that "*Psychological well-being is an important predictor of physical health, longevity, interpersonal relationships and optimal psychological functioning of people*" (Castro-Solano, 2009). And when it comes to understanding the concept, it is possible to additionally find concepts related closely to the possibilities of a good "prognosis", therefore, more is worked on the possibility that wellbeing may or may not be enhanced. In this regard, it should be noted that while "psychological interventions, many of them in their exploratory phase, realize that well-being can be modified and that it is possible to raise the hedonic capacity (set-point) of people through intentional activity (Castro-Solano, 2009).

In the different theoretical perspectives, the multiple factors and dimensions that affect psychological well-being with respect to the dimensions of psychological well-being are evidenced, Ryff (1989), it suggests expanding these dimensions; understanding psychological well-being the result of an assessment by the subject with respect to how he has lived. For a better understanding it offers an articulation of the theories of optimal human development, positive mental functioning and the theories of the life cycle. Based on their studies they propose the existence of the following dimensions: a) Autonomy: It is associated with resistance to social pressure and self-regulation of behavior, b) Purpose in life: Refers to the goals and objectives that allow the subject to give some meaning to his, her life, c) Self-acceptance: It confers a positive appreciation of oneself, d) Positive relationships with others: It alludes to the need of the subject to maintain stable social relations, d) Domain of the environment: It is related to the feeling of control over the world and influence on the context, e) Personal growth: It refers to the interest to deploy potential grow as a person and maximize their own capabilities (Zubieta, Fernández, & Sosa, 2012).

Based on these Ryff approaches, psychological well-being as a multidimensional concept to which Páramo, Straniero, García, Torrecilla, & Escalante (2012), allude to that "other authors consider Psychological Wellbeing as a multidimensional construct that includes emotional as well as cognitive elements and that, therefore, it covers diverse contexts in which a person performs (Castro-Solano & Díaz-Morales, 2002; Casullo, 2002). Ryff (1989) proposed the "Multidimensionality Model" or "Multidimensional Model of Psychological Wellbeing". In 1985, together with Keyes, he proposed six dimensions in the proposed model: self-acceptance, positive relationships with other people, autonomy, control of the environment, purpose in life and personal growth ".

Still another of the authors who have developed positive psychology and who has a great career in the study of happiness conferring importance to the satisfaction with life today considers that "... well-being is a combination of feeling well and having really felt passion in some activity that we indulge in, in addition to maintaining good interpersonal relationships and have goals that are challenging to us so that they can become achievements" (Seligman, 2011, p.84). Seligman (2011) understands the different components that are a) positive emotions, b) Commitment, c) positive relationships, d) Sense and e) Achievement with which an understanding of psychological well-being is conferred as a construct in the one that involves different components that interact with each other.

To finish, it will be convenient to consider the framework of the proposal of Hernan-Gomez, Vázquez, & Hervás, (2009). that in Measuring and promoting well-being, it becomes therefore a desirable social and political objective and should also be a goal at an educational level, because there are almost no known programs that promote psychological well-being in children, it is important to raise awareness among educators and professionals in social sciences to design programs, projects, studies on this subject at an early ages. The academic community should be concerned with the comprehensive care of school children, as has been done in studies with adults where "All data shown suggest that encouraging positive emotions could enhance health at the same level as shown by other task such as physical activity, fit nutrition or the stopping of smoking (Vázquez, Hernan-Gómez, & Hervás, 2004).

In general, this concept continues to be a subject of debate in social sciences and for its part in the approach to Latin American work, it is recognized according to Casullo (2000). This work has been initially based on Ryff's conceptual proposals, and from this exercise, it can be found, for example, that numerous

studies in the Hispanic-American context have focused on examining how happiness and well-being are related to aspects such as mental health (Barrientos & Martínez, 2014), with education (Bilbao, 2014), with work and the labor market (Graham & Felton, 2006; Graham & Pettinato, 2001; Kramp, 2014), as well as with the different life stages (Alvarado & Plaza, 2014; Casas et al., 2015) and with the environment (Cuñado & Pérez, 2013), among others. On the other hand, Muratori, Zubieta, Ubillos, González, & Bobowik (2015) open interesting possibilities to understand the way in which the subject is being addressed in Latin America; Also, if the position of Velásquez, Montgomery is taken into account, Velásquez et al. (2008) found that although the research of the well-being construct has been somewhat confusing, as it mixes notions such as psychological well-being, happiness, enjoyment and particularly quality of life-, psychological well-being can be defined in a general way as a concept linked to the subjective perception that an individual has regarded the achievements made by himself, and his degree of personal satisfaction with his past, present and future actions. In this sense, it reflects the positive feeling and constructive thinking of the person for himself (Diener et al., 1999). With the different nuances that are studied and that address well-being, it can be affirmed that there is no oneness within the comprehensions and that they continue in development from the different exercises that show how psychological well-being is applied or related to different human processes. As you can see the monitoring of the most relevant conceptual bets within the study of psychological well-being is a trend, however interesting developments are found that are more related to the collective community dimension and not so much on the individual, the hypothesis of these dimensions have a special relevance to the Latin American population. And in this sense there are researches like Espinosa, Freire, & Ferrándiz (2016) in Peru, in which "*it is corroborated that some components of collective identification are associated with different expressions of well-being*" (p. 2013) and also the autoestereotipic representations predominant in the community would be linked, it is also found that the identification and collective self-esteem would be related to the social and subjective expressions of well-being (Espinosa & Tapia, 2011).

With that it is confirmed that there are important advances on the researched subject of psychological well-being, it is necessary to broaden perspectives, deepening on the most specific particular populations, such as, it is proposed in the present project to address the construction of the concept of well-being.

2. Problem Statement

As we know, the concern for psychological well-being and happiness is a matter that surged many years ago, but it is in 1998 when a speech of Martin Seligman in the inauguration of the APA Psychologists Association, becomes "the catalyst element" (Vázquez and Hervás, 2009, p. 17), for the scientific study from a psychology point of view and other related sciences of psychological well-being and happiness as an object of study, in other words, there is a process of incorporation "decidedly the study of the positive for a more complete understanding of human nature" (Vázquez and Hervás, 2009, p.17). With this in mind, it is undeniable that since the year mentioned until now, a strong scientific research process has begun on the aforementioned issues, which, logically, have been accompanied by different conceptions and theoretical positions, among which are worth noting some such as Ryff from the United States, Carmelo Vázquez from Spain, Martin Seligman from the United States, Mihaly Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, Sonja Liubomirsky, among other prominent authors. All of these theoretical positions are valid and which various

researches around world have been, supporting and contributing different aspects towards the understanding of how human beings feel well, such a reality does not escape Latin America, where clearly, since the year 2000 there has been growing research on the subject of psychological well-being and happiness, but from what points is psychological well-being and happiness being researched? What theoretical framework moves this study? What results are being found and from what field is your study in Latin America, particularly in the fields of education and the psychology of education?

With this in mind, the present study seeks to delve more into the field of education, approaches authors and of course the results of these researched processes in Latin America, asking whether the historical tendency to adopt European and North American theories, to explain the Latino realities about well-being are enough and does it suffice explaining what makes Latinos happy in general? You know of the recognized need to seek balance and integration between the theoretical explosion of the concept of happiness, and the possibility of contrasting these concepts with the specific reality of each subject, taking as reference the research developed in the last 10 years, aspect that has not been done yet.

Likewise, interested pupils in the important advances and acknowledgments of the study of psychological well-being in the Latin American scientific community and in being able to know where the study of well-being is going in these countries, allows them to know guidelines about how Latinos conceive well-being and what variables, aspects or categories, are relevant for well-being in educational contexts. The concern of psychological well-being, for happiness "is not a passing fad" (Vázquez and Hervás, 2009, p.13) it is more, the great scholar on the subject such as Carmelo Vázquez, explain that this study has roots in the first philosophies recognized and in recent decades has developed a variety of research worldwide over psychological well-being.

3. Research Questions

a) What has been the research development on psychological well-being in educational contexts in Latin America?; b) How do research proposals on psychological well-being in school contexts relate to or distance themselves from the main world theoretical proposals?; and c) How does research development on psychological well-being relate to the particular realities of Latin American contexts?

4. Purpose of the Study

The present investigation has general intentions: to develop a state of the art scientific study on psychological well-being in educational contexts in Latin America in the areas of the educational psychology between the years 2000 to 2018.

5. Research Methods

The research is projected from the approaches of the Qualitative Naturalist paradigm, which is "guided by areas of significant research topics" (Sampieri, Fernández Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 2010, p.14), regarding the concrete method of research, it has been conceived in the hermeneutical framework. The work unit was composed of 319 documents including scientific articles, doctoral theses and book chapters of scientific research produced in Latin America whose subject was related to psychological well-

being in the field of educational psychology and meets the criteria of: having been published between the year 2000 and 2018 and have formal academic recognition, documentary review is used as a technique of the investigative process. On the other hand, the instruments, with which the information is organized, are: a) the bibliographic matrix. "Instrument that was designed around all the texts that made up the universe, were inventoried and the selection filters were applied (Vargas, Higueta, & Muñoz, 2015), b) Analytic content matrix "Instrument designed in Excel where the texts were related with analysis categories" (Vargas et al., 2015, p.26) to identify different aspects related to categories of information analysis.

6. Findings

The study and even the promotion of psychological well-being and happiness in Latin American contexts, has registered an increasing number of studies during the last eighteen years, the volume of studies of educational psychology in other subjects, it can be affirmed that it is a valuable achievement for those interested in the study of psychological well-being and happiness as a valid option to allow evolution in educational processes.

Among the Latin American countries that have achieved greater publications or developments on the subject are Chile, Peru, Argentina, Venezuela, Paraguay and Mexico occupy an important place, here authors like Hernández-Vargas & Dickinson-Bannack (2014), Frago-Luzuriaga (2015), among others, they emphasize the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, affirming among others the value of teaching emotional intelligence or the importance of emotional competences in the training of professionals. Chile, is another one of the countries with important advances in the field of wellbeing research authors such as Barra (2012), Sandoval-Barrientos, Dorner París, & Véliz Burgos (2017), Leal-Soto, Dávila Ramírez, & Valdivia (2014), make relevant approaches to topics of happiness study, psychological well-being, mental health and academic performance and their possible relationships; reaffirming findings as the importance of cultural factors in subjective well-being, or highlight the importance of psychological well-being of teachers within the educational processes and the positive relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance.

Once the distinction by countries has been made, it is worth approaching which themes and from which perspectives have been addressed. The most widespread theory in Latin America is associated with Carol Ryff, for whom psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept, proposed in a coherence six dimensions that make it up, it also proposes that well-being can depend on variables such as; culture, gender, age (Rangel, 2010), so an adult has greater autonomy and control of the environment, having the probability of greater well-being. Another one of the most used or resumed authors in Latin America, when we talk about Wellness or Happiness, is; Martin Seligman, precursor in many aspects of positive psychology and psychological well-being and the happiness of study, to conclude with the theoretical aspects of studies in Latin America about well-being, it is worth mentioning another relevant author such as Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, and the theory of flow or flow which, can be seen, has to do with happiness when performing actions, jobs or processes that are enjoyed so much that they are observed and that the person can constantly live.

Now, continuing this thread, it is worth mentioning the issues addressed in Latin America in relation to wellbeing and educational processes: the first concept and most used if in wellbeing (as expected),

however, being more detailed, specific aspects such as general well-being in schools and its relations with academic performance, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, mental health, academic stress, among others, are the bibliographic themes that are already configured and important investigative processes in the region. The second most worked concept is the emotional, emotional aspects and well-being, especially the concept of emotional intelligence; concept that has also had many approaches but, in this case, we can assume from Bisquerra (2000), who will say: "*emotional intelligence is one of the skills for life, which should be taught in the educational system*" (p. 144).

Research in Latin America shows that emotional intelligence has begun to work in school aspect in great relevance, as we are reminded, Hernández-Vargas & Dickinson-Bannack (2014): "*The concept of emotional intelligence has acquired a solid scientific base that begins to bear fruit as a study of framework and that in the coming years will surely bring interesting findings in the educational field, which will highlight even more the potential role of emotional intelligence in the classrooms and the need to integrate the development of IE skills*" (2014, p.160) into the curriculum. But apparently it still needs to strengthen, investigate and measure these highly relevant jobs and their impact in the future.

The third outstanding theme has to do with psychological distress, an aspect that draws attention, the idea is to look for what makes humans being feel good in an educational and learning context, it is very interesting to note that what is sought is what makes feel people bad. Now, talking about the study context of psychological well-being in Latin America, although all of them up to now can be said that: studies and researches have focused more on higher education; approximately 60% of the investigations are carried out at this educational level; let's remember that higher education has two levels (at least in Colombia), the undergraduate level that involves the technical, technological and professional level and the postgraduate course given by specializations, masters and doctorates, in this case more work has been done in undergraduate level , specifically in professional university programs, where you work especially with those related to health, including here psychology, this aspect may be due to the push in the study of positive psychology within the Latin American Universities and the convenience of working with undergraduate programs of nearby population such aspect is positive, however, It is worth mentioning that on the other hand when talking about the little researched over wellbeing carried out in basic education both in what we call secondary school with only 20% and in elementary school with only 10%, in other words only one 30% of what is researched in relation to wellbeing and education is carried out at the basic levels. This situation arises despite the fact that there is an imminent need to work on aspects such as psychological well-being, from an early age. Finally it is important to talk about the 10% of research found on the topic of wellbeing and education also this 10% worries over the teachers' union and their well-being, it is recognized that teachers tend to present high levels of stress, Millán, García-Álvarez, & D'Aubeterre (2014), they affirm that although the levels are high, these can be counteracted by satisfaction elements that are also high and are related to psychological well-being, although the same authors warn us about the need to continue investigating the subject.

7. Conclusion

Although there is a variety of important topics related to psychological well-being and schools, there is one that should continue to be addressed and its social support in light of well-being, it is known that significant, stable and trusting relationships, are related to an adequate process of wellbeing, but what

happens with the group, with the community; very few authors, take into account this variable when they talk about wellbeing, however it is determined that, you can see some clear aspects in which it is: "Several authors report that the characteristics of medical students are not influenced only by individual traits, but also by their social support network". Both family support and friends are an important source of emotional support and appreciation. Likewise, family support and support of friends intuit in the psychological well-being of university students.

Although authors such as Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, & Morling (2008) suggest that the link between social support and wellbeing would be moderated by cultural factors, therefore, the Latin American culture, which has always showed great importance to a group and the relational, may have this as a very significant factor rooted in their conception of well-being, so the importance that many studies of social, community and family support in the aforementioned variable in Latin American populations cannot be underestimated.

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