

Life, environment, self, and sport satisfaction

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Abstract

We analyze the relationship between life, environment, self and sport satisfaction. Participants were 1,590 students aged 12-14 from Manresa (Barcelona). Life satisfaction was assessed by the Satisfaction Life Student Scale (SLSS –Huebner, 1991), which tests global life satisfaction. For environment and self satisfaction, specific items from Multidimensional Satisfaction Life Students Scale (MSLSS –Huebner, 1994) were considered. Sport satisfaction was measured with the Sport Satisfaction Scale (ESE by its Catalan acronym –Rosich, 1999). Results show that sport can act as a mediator in satisfaction. In addition to this, gender differences have suggested some alternatives to study satisfaction; specifically, we propose to consider satisfaction related to diverse leisure activities incidence.

Key-words: Life satisfaction, Environment satisfaction, Sport, Self, Leisure.

Introduction

Studies about people-environment relations have underlined several approaches about individuals and their physical settings interinfluences. Among these approaches, research about residential satisfaction have stressed the importance of affective relationships with neighbors and emotional attachment to the environment (Amérigo, 1994). Sometimes, a relation with the environment makes people develop their capabilities of controlling their surroundings, fulfill their subjectivity, express themselves, differentiate from others, and become part of a group (Heidmets, 1994). In addition to this, some research evidence have suggested that specific factors may be related to a general feeling of satisfaction; in this sense, García, Sabucedo & Arce (1996) have pointed out that residential satisfaction, as a multidimensional phenomenon, can be predicted by a more general evaluation of environmental elements.

This importance of emotional ties with the environment and their behavioral consequences may be complemented with other psychosocial perspectives. Specifically, in this work we deal with four forms of

satisfaction: life, environment, self, and sport satisfaction. Recently, life satisfaction has been defined as the coincidences between evaluations about one's own life and previous subjective standards (Schimmack, Radhakrishnan, Oishi, Dzokoto, & y Ahadi, 2002). In this topic, Huebner (1991, 1994) has developed tools for knowing life satisfaction in students through simple and comprehensive statements, differentiating a general satisfaction (as a positive and negative affect), as well as its specific dimensions (school, family, friends, environment, and self). Huebner's studies are close to Emmons & Diener (1986) interest in getting indicators about satisfaction connected with specific elements from person's surroundings. With his contribution, Huebner has made possible to measure satisfaction in a life period whose richness makes challenging the study of indicators associated with those of life satisfaction.

Considering this, a comparison among life satisfaction as a global evaluation, and some of its specific dimensions can be useful to apprehend some elements of people-environment tie from another perspective; additionally, we associate those forms of satisfaction with that of sport. Sport is usually practiced in the daily urban out-of-home space (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 1994), not only on weekends but also on workable days (Comas, 1999). This activity and its consequences in adolescence have a wide empirical support; as a matter of fact, sport practice may illustrate sex and age differences that can be related to personal as well as environmental elements (Hickman, Roberts & De Matos, 2000; Mendoza, Sagraera & Batista, 1994).

Method

Participants

In this study we worked with a sample of 1,746 students of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd high-school grades (public and private centers) from 7 schools in Manresa (Barcelona), aged 12-14 ($M = 13.14$, $SD = .79$). The final sample was composed by 1,590 students (806 boys and 784 girls) whose questionnaires had been correctly fulfilled; that is, scales with incomplete information were not considered in the data analysis.

Instruments

Information about satisfaction was assessed by the Satisfaction Life Student Scale (SLSS –Huebner, 1991), and the Multidimensional Satisfaction Life Students Scale (MSLSS –Huebner, 1994). SLSS tests global life satisfaction in children and adolescents, with 30 items that consider both positive and negative affect; MSLSS is a 40-item scale that considers satisfaction differentiating specific aspects such as family, school, residential environment, friends and self. Both scales had been translated and validated by Alsinet (1998) and Rosich (1999), with .88 (SLSS) and .92 (MSLSS) Cronbach's indexes of internal consistency.

Sport satisfaction was studied with the Escala de Satisfacció amb l'Esport (ESE by its Catalan acronym). This scale developed by Rosich (1999) was initially composed by 14 items; after a judges panel revision, items were reduced to 8, whose Cronbach's index of internal consistency was .82.

The three instruments have four possibilities of response: Almost never, From time to time, Sometimes, Almost always, scored respectively with 1, 2, 3 and 4 points (negative statements reverse scored). Pearson product-moment correlations were used to analyze the association among SLSS general life satisfaction, the MSLSS items referred to environment and self satisfaction, and the sport satisfaction derived from the ESE.

Procedure

Participation was possible after getting authorization from the Directors of the different schools, as well as the students' parents. Informative letters with an explanation about the purpose of the research were sent. After giving consent, instruments were applied in one-hour session, during the time used for extra-academic activities.

Results

Data obtained show means around 3 points for life, environment, self and sport satisfaction (Table 1); this means that participants sometimes feel satisfaction in all aspects considered. However, lower means can be observed for participants when age increases (values whose significance corresponds to $p < .00$). Moreover, considering means by gender let us observe higher values for male participants, except for life satisfaction at 12 years old, and life and environment satisfactions at 13 years old.

Table 1. Means for Life, Environment, Self and Sport Satisfaction by Gender and Age

Age	Gender	Life	Environmet	Self	Sport
12	Male	3.22	3.24	3.03	3.27
	Female	3.30	3.23	2.99	2.91
13	Male	3.10	3.18	2.95	3.25
	Female	3.15	3.21	2.90	2.95
14	Male	3.04	3.11	2.88	3.23
	Female	2.97	3.01	2.80	2.73

When intercorrelations among scores are considered by gender (Table 2), higher correlations are observed between life and self satisfaction. Differences are observed between life and sport satisfaction ($r = .32$ for boys and $r = .17$ for girls), and between environment and sport satisfaction ($r = .15$ for male and $r = .06$ for female participants). Put differently, if boys and girls have a similar intercorrelation between life and self satisfaction, results suggest for male participants a life satisfaction in which sport plays an important role. In addition to this, sport satisfaction can be related to environment satisfaction. In the case of female participants, data make us consider different sources for life and self satisfaction not studied here.

Table 2. Intercorrelations for Scores on Life, Environment, Self, and Sport Satisfaction as a Function of Gender

Measure	1	2	3	4
Life	—	.38	.44	.32
Environment	.38	—	.23	.15
Self	.50	.22	—	.32
Sport	.17	.06	.26	—

Note. Intercorrelation for male participants ($n = 806$) are presented above de diagonal, and intercorrelations for female participants ($n = 784$) are presented below in the diagonal.

Discussion

Data obtained show that, in the case of male participants, life and self satisfaction have correspondence with sport and environment satisfaction. For female participants, the question about what makes they feel satisfied with their life and self remains open. As a consequence of this, future research about satisfaction could include some processes that act as mediators in people-environment interinfluences.

With regards to this, it could be reminded the importance of closer relationships between cognitions and behaviors oriented to physical settings. This is considered in research about place-identity (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983; Twigger-Ross & Uzzel, 1996), and similar concepts such as: settlement identity (Feldman, 1990); the symbolic component of space appropriation (Pol, 1996); place attachment (Churchman & Mitrani, 1997); and the sense of place –which tries to integrate the preceding definitions (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Even though the overlapping among these concepts (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), there seems to be that individual-environment tie depends on self-conceptions (Feldman, 1996), influences self-esteem (Krupat, 1983), and suppose the existence of an ecological self (Neisser, 1991). These researches conduct to question what it can be relevant from a specific set, and the kind of instrumental contact people may establish with their environment.

In this sense, certain approaches have focused on the *physical characteristics* of a specific set; in this sense, Moore (1986) has pointed out that well defined environments stimulate exploratory behavior and the development of cooperative activities. Furthermore, other researches have highlighted the importance of expectations about and suitability for the *activities that can be accomplished* in an environment (Genereux, Ward & Russel, 1983). Recently, it has been found that people classify their favorite places according to the possibilities that set has to make restorative experiences happen (Korpela, Hartig, Kaiser & Fuhrer, 2001; Peron, Berto & Purcell, 2002). These restorative experiences reflect in a better way the own self and life priorities, and let people: forget their concerns, diminish negative feelings, and increase both their relaxation and emotional well-being. Put differently, somebody can manifest more his/her internal characteristics, relax, have fun, and feel more satisfaction, when he/she prefers, chooses, and takes as own a given environment.

According to the above mentioned, analyzing satisfaction through indicators about environment and activities, with an emphasis on the possibilities of feeling free and getting at some interpersonal relationships, could be a challenging perspective to study people-environment relations. As a matter of fact, characteristics and importance of restorative experiences are very close to those of the leisure benefits.

Specifically, some evidences in leisure research show that activities considered as satisfactory have a special impact on the self-referents that constitute the self system (Codina, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991; Haggard & Williams, 1992; Munné & Codina, 1996; Shamir, 1992). So that, focusing on activities people accomplish during leisure time, may become evident: how identity is constructed, developed, and maintained; and the way self-referents (as self-concept, self-esteem, self-image, or self-realization) behave. In this way, it has been demonstrated that sport as a leisure activity influences boys and girls identity development during adolescence (Shaw, Kleiber & Caldwell, 1995).

Consequently, leisure implications in people-environment relationship and in selfhood and identity phenomena, can constitute an interesting source to study the different forms of satisfaction.

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Annex

A. Satisfaction Life Student Scale (Huebner, 1991). Spanish version (Alsinet, 1998; Rosich, 1999)

1. Estoy triste
2. Tengo miedos
3. Me salen mal algunas cosas que he hecho
4. Me gusta como me van las cosas
5. Estoy animado/a
6. Hago cosas que me interesan
7. Me lo paso bien con las otras personas
8. Me siento orgulloso/a de alguna cosa que he hecho
9. Me siento ridículo/a
10. Estoy aburrido/a de las cosas
11. Siento que complico la vida a los demás
12. Mi vida va bien
13. Mi vida es sencillamente correcta
14. Querría cambiar muchas cosas en mi vida
15. Ojalá tuviera una vida diferente
16. Tengo una buena vida
17. Me lo paso bien
18. Estoy contento/a
19. Estoy feliz con mi vida
20. Tengo ganas de llorar
21. Estoy satisfecho/a con lo que me está pasando
22. Estoy ilusionado/a por alguna cosa
23. Tengo lo que quiero en la vida
24. Me siento desgraciado/a
25. Me siento solo/a
26. Tengo ganas de reír
27. Mi vida es mejor que la de muchos niños y niñas
28. Tengo un problema con alguna persona
29. Tengo ganas de sonreír
30. Soy feliz

B. Multidimensional Satisfaction Life Students Scale (Huebner, 1994). Spanish version of the items related to environment satisfaction (Aisinet, 1998; Rosich, 1999)

3. Ojalá viviera en una casa diferente
8. Ojalá viviera en algún otro lugar
13. Me gusta el lugar donde vivo
18. Ojalá la gente de mi barrio fuera diferente
23. Me gusta mi barrio
28. Esta ciudad está llena de gente desagradable
33. En el lugar donde vivo se pueden hacer un montón de cosas divertidas
38. Me gustan mis vecinos

C. Multidimensional Satisfaction Life Students Scale (Huebner, 1994). Spanish version of the items related to self satisfaction (Aisinet, 1998; Rosich, 1999)

1. Creo que soy atractivo/a
6. Me gusta probar cosas nuevas
11. Las personas se divierten a mi lado
21. Me gusta a mí mismo/a
26. Gusto a casi todos
31. Hay muchas cosas que sé hacer bien
36. Soy una persona agradable
40. Tengo bastantes amigos

D. Escala de Satisfacció amb l'Esport (Rosich, 1999). Spanish version

1. Disfruto del tiempo libre que tengo haciendo deporte
2. Me agrada practicar algún deporte
3. Me aburro haciendo deporte
4. El deporte mejora mis habilidades y cualidades físicas
5. El deporte me ayuda a tener más amigos y amigas
6. Haciendo deporte gano autoconfianza y reconocimiento social
7. Me agrada más ser espectador/a que practicante de deporte
8. Necesito hacer deporte para sentirme feliz

