

Quality of life and wellbeing in adolescence: the influence of schools

Fiona Gillison
University of Bath



Outline

1. Quality of life (QoL) as an outcome measure
 - what is QoL and why is it important?
 - are QoL measures reliable and sensitive to change?
2. Research on QOL in schools
 - applying theoretical models
 - generalisation of daily experience



What is quality of life?

“an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.”

World Health Organisation, Quality of Life (QoL) Group, 1993



Why is QoL important to measure?

- Person centred means of assessing distress /function
 - Called for following improvements in medical care
 - Accountability of social and educational services
- Facilitates multi-dimensional assessment



Skevington & Gillison, 2006

UNICEF

- UK adolescents scored poorest for overall QoL among 21 “rich” nations, in a 2008 report
- Ranks by domain:
 - Material well-being 18th
 - Health & Safety 12th
 - Educational well-being 17th
 - Peer and Family relationships 21st
 - Behaviours and risks 21st
 - Subjective well-being 20th



Comparison of QoL measures

Instrument	No. domains (items)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Generic Children's Quality of Life Measure (GCQ) (Collier J, 1997)	5(25)	- easy to read response format for younger adolescents - UK norm values available	- 30 mins completion time
KIDSCREEN (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2001)	10 (52) short version	- broadest range of domains studied - valid across Europe - UK norm values available	- needs statistical software for evaluation
Quality of Life Profile-Adolescent Version (QLPAV) (Raphael et al., 1996)	9 (54)	- measures both importance and satisfaction of items	- 30 mins completion time - weighted towards environmental domain
Youth Quality of Life –research version (YQOL-R) (Patrick, Edwards, & Topolski, 2002)	9 (49) short version	- well used in clinical practice in the US - contextual and subjective items	- less availability of rigorous psychometric properties

Gillison et al., in preparation

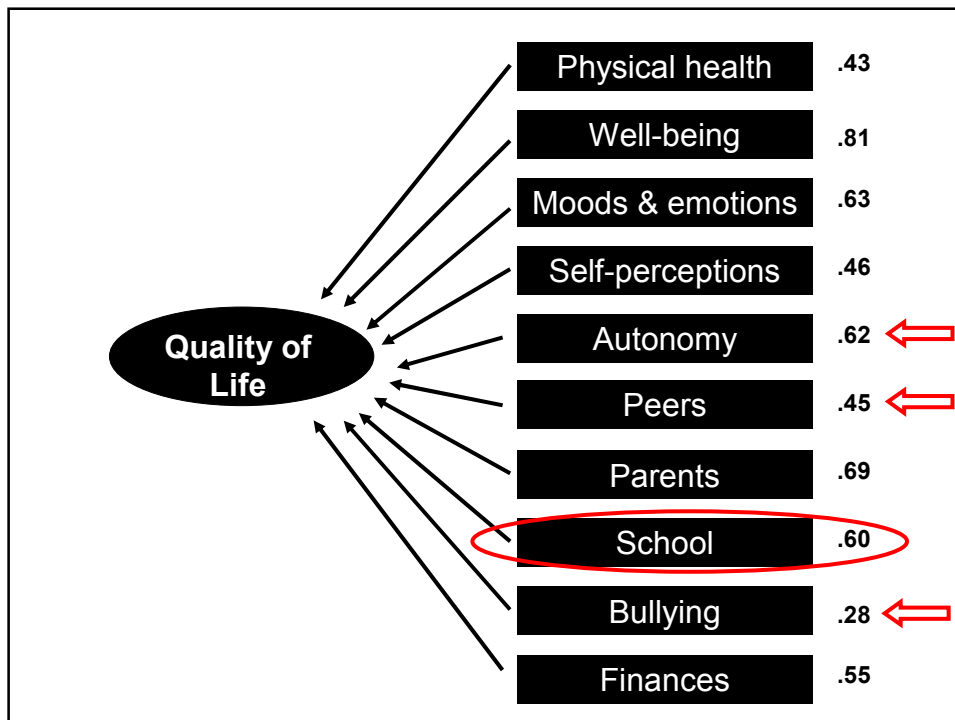
Sample items Kidscreen

8. Friends

Thinking about the last week ...		never	seldom	quite often	very often	always
1.	Have you spent time with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	Have you done things with other girls and boys?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	Have you had fun with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	Have you and your friends helped each other?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	Have you been able to talk about everything with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	Have you been able to rely on your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. School and Learning

Thinking about the last week ...		not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely
1.	Have you been happy at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	Have you got on well at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	Have you been satisfied with your teachers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



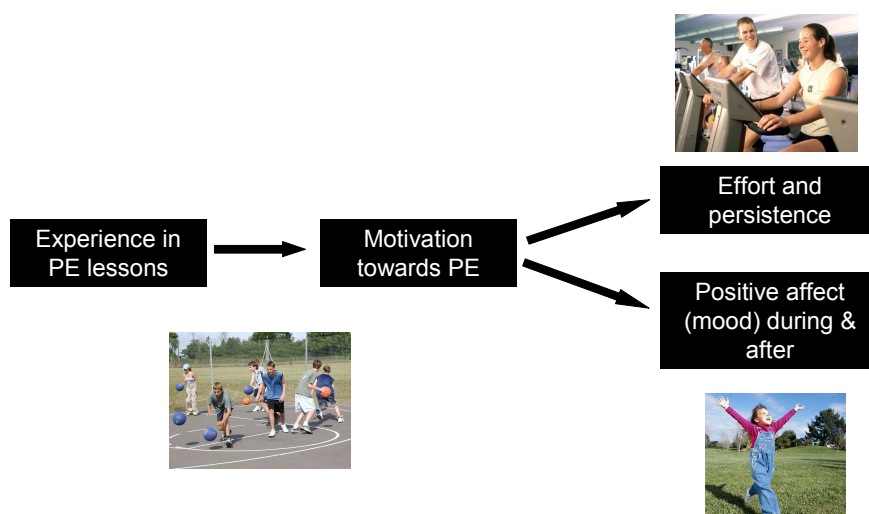
Applying a theory of motivation to understanding change in QoL

- Using a theoretical approach allows systematic investigation of why and how effects occur
- E.g., “self-determination theory”

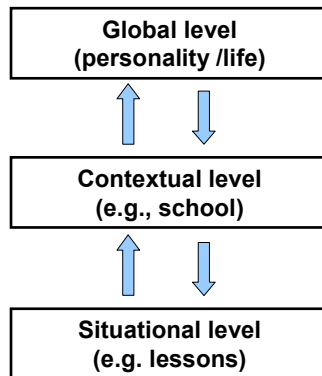


Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991

Example in school setting



Hierarchical effects of motivation



Vallerand, 1997

What is so important about the social environment?

- Three basic psychological needs:
 - Autonomy
 - Feeling that one is the origin of one's actions
 - Competence
 - Feeling effective, and having the opportunity to demonstrate efficacy
 - Relatedness
 - Feeling valued by and connected to others around you

What is the active ingredient in the “social environment”?



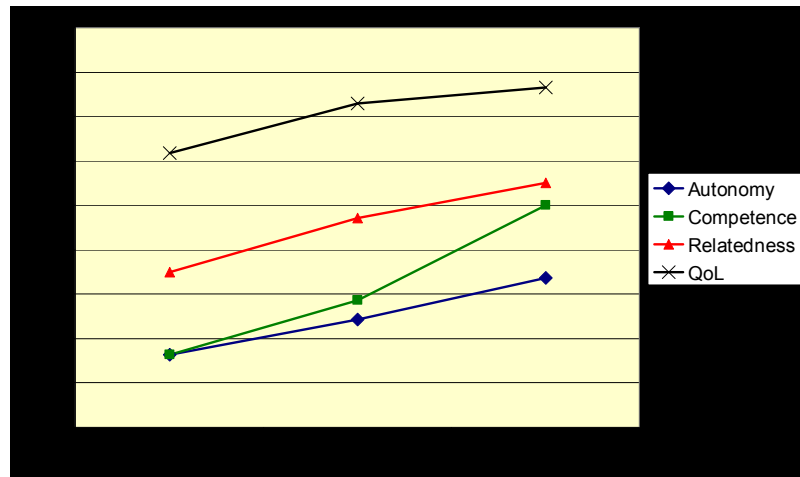
Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991

Transition from junior to senior school

- Study of QoL changes in a complete year group (N=63)
- Need satisfaction and QoL measured on 3 occasions over 1st term at new school



Adjustment in need satisfaction and QoL over one term



Longitudinal study

Tracked QoL over 1 year (Yr 9 to Yr 10) with 356 adolescents in 4 schools:

Average QoL ranged from 70.38 to 73.70 between schools

- Time 1 overall QoL: 72.56
- Time 2 overall QoL: 71.32



Change in QoL in a school sample

- 356 adolescents tracked over 1 school year

	Time 2 Good QoL	Time 2 Poor QoL
Time 1 Good QoL	216 (61%)	36 (10%)
Time 1 Poor QoL	40 (11%)	64 (18%)

What predicts QoL?

- QoL predicted by all 3 needs at a particular point in time.
 - $R^2 = 0.52$
- QoL one year later predicted by initial autonomy and competence
 - $R^2 = 0.32$



How can schools boost need satisfaction?

- School climate and ethos
 - e.g., opportunities and aspirations
- Individual teacher behaviours
 - Providing choice, non-controlling language
 - Setting challenging and achievable goals, providing individual feedback on performance
 - involvement with students, co-operative tasks



Good teachers already do this

Summary

- QoL measures can provide a child-centred assessment of project outcomes
- It provides a multi-dimensional means of assessing well-being over time
- QoL is responsive to the school environment
- Motivation frameworks provide one way of systematically targeting improvements in child /adolescent QoL through boosting social climate

Key References

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Resources

- Kidscreen:

<http://www.kidscreen.de/>

- WHOQOL:

http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/research_tools/whoqolbref/en/