

Psychometric Properties of the Satisfaction With Food-Related Life Scale: Application in Southern Chile

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To evaluate the psychometric properties of the Satisfaction with Food-related Life (SWFL) scale and its relation to the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) in southern Chile.

Methods: A survey was applied to a sample of 316 persons in the principal cities of southern Chile distributed with proportional attachment per city.

Results: The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed an adequate level of internal consistency and a good fit (root mean square error of approximation = 0.071, goodness-of-fit index = 0.95, adjusted goodness-of-fit index = 0.92) to the SWFL data (1-dimensional). The evaluation of a causal covariance structure analysis model composed of the SWFL as antecedent construct and the SWLS as consequent construct indicates a medium level of relation between the 2 constructs.

Conclusions and Implications: A medium level of relation between the SWFL and SWLS was found. In future studies, the SWFL may serve as a useful dependent variable in the analysis of objective indicators that may predict this variable.

Key Words: Satisfaction with Food-related Life, factor analysis, food, well-being (*J Nutr Educ Behav.* 2013;45:443-449.)

INTRODUCTION

Subjective Well-Being (SWB) is an evaluation that people make of their own lives, including happiness, pleasurable emotions, satisfaction with life, and the relative absence of unpleasant emotional states.¹ This evaluation includes cognitive and emotional aspects. The cognitive component of well-being is satisfaction with life.² The concept of satisfaction with life has been defined as a positive evaluation that a person makes of his life in general, or of particular aspects or domains

(family, studies, work, health, friends, free time).^{3,4} The best-known measure of the cognitive component of SWB is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener et al.⁵ Numerous studies have addressed overall satisfaction with life in certain domains, such as work, family, health, or marital status, but to date, little attention has been paid to the domain of food. Studies related to food have concentrated on the effects of nutrition on physical health, but few have looked at how diet affects satisfaction with life.^{6,7}

Andrews and Withey view a domain as an aspect of life about which people have feelings.⁸ For Campbell et al, a domain is an area of human experience that most people find significant.⁹ Veenhoven pointed out that the domains of functioning closest and most immediate to an individual's personal life are those with the greatest influence on personal well-being.¹⁰ As a domain, food can be expected to be related to satisfaction with life for several reasons. The centrality of food with regard to quality of life is highlighted in the recent position statement by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on nutrition in long-term care,¹¹ which states: "Food is an essential component of quality of life; an unacceptable or unpalatable diet can lead to poor food and fluid intake, resulting in weight loss and undernutrition and a spiral of negative health effects." It is incontrovertible that food is a prerequisite for people to be content with their lives. Too little food creates discontent; yet even when food is plentiful and people have access to sufficient food supplies, activities and daily considerations relating to the procurement, preparation, and intake of food are still important human concerns. Therefore, despite the

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abundance of available food, food still occupies a considerable part of an average person's life in terms of time and resources.⁷ Food fulfills a utilitarian function for the body, but at the same time, it acts as a product for pleasure and for social construction, supporting the construction of personal identity.¹² Throughout human history, obtaining suitable and pleasurable food has been considered to be a major force, which determines not only routine events, but also events of great significance in life. Thus, Rozin declares that food is the greatest source of personal pleasure.¹³ Hargreaves et al stress the emotional dimension of food associated with celebrations and social interaction.¹⁴ Food is prepared in the expectation that it will be shared and enjoyed in company,¹⁵ with the family during the week, and with friends on the weekends.¹⁶ Therefore, if one considers the relation between food and people's health,¹¹ social interaction with family and friends around food;¹⁴⁻¹⁶ activities and daily considerations relating to the procurement, preparation, and intake of food;⁷ as well as the food-pleasure connection,¹²⁻¹³ it is to be expected that food is among the important domains of life that affect a person's SWB.

In view of the importance of food for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life, Grunert et al developed and tested the Satisfaction with Food-related Life (SWFL) scale in 3 studies in 8 European countries.⁷ Like the SWLS, the SWFL scale consists of 5 items; these items exhibit good reliability as measured by Cronbach α (the reliability coefficients for the 8 country samples ranged between .71 and .89), good temporal stability, convergent validity with 2 related measures, and construct validity as indicated by relationships with other quality of life indicators, including satisfaction with life (Pearson $r = 0.36$; $P < .001$). With respect to convergent validity, the authors of the scale obtained significant correlations between participants' perceived satisfaction with their food-related life in the diary week and general satisfaction with their food-related life as measured by the scale (Pearson $r = 0.48$; $P < .001$). Additionally, the interviewers' perceptions of participants' satisfaction with food-related life had a significant correlation of

0.52 ($P < .001$) with the SWFL.⁷ Subsequently, Dean et al used the SWFL scale to explore how actual resources, perceived levels of different types of resources, and the goal relevance of these resources affected older people's satisfaction with food-related life in 8 European countries.¹⁷

The increase in various populations worldwide and the need for cross-cultural and multinational research indicate a great need for researchers to have access to reliable and valid instruments or measures validated among diverse cultural segments of the population and/or in other languages.¹⁸ The SWFL has not been validated in developing countries and has never been used in South America. The eating habits in Latin American countries are related to the population's sociodemographic, economic, dietary, and lifestyle changes. In Chile, these changes have happened quickly in recent decades, which has resulted in an increase in the consumption of food that is rich in cholesterol, saturated fats, sugar, and sodium, among others, with the ensuing consequences of a high prevalence of obesity and noncommunicable chronic diseases.¹⁹ Having the validated SWFL in the Latin American context makes it possible to ascertain this group's level of satisfaction with food-related life, together with the study of the link between specific patterns of food choice, meal preparation, and dietary intake, and food-related SWB. Inasmuch as poor eating habits and low levels of satisfaction can be detected, it should be possible to use these instruments as the basis for the design of intervention strategies and public policies aimed at healthier food consumption, the modification of potentially harmful consumption habits, and an increase in the population's satisfaction with life.

Because the SWFL was originally developed for application in European countries,⁷ it is advisable to ensure that its psychometric properties are retained when it is applied to different cultures. The aim of the present research was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the SWFL and its relation to the SWLS through the use of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in southern Chile. As the name "confirmatory factor analysis" implies, the procedure tests whether

a particular factor model is consistent with the data.²⁰ Recent studies have used CFA to analyze the psychometric properties of the SWLS in Norway²¹ and China,²² but this methodology has not been used to evaluate either the psychometric properties of the SWFL or its relation to the SWLS.

METHODS

Sample

Personal interviews were conducted with a sample of 316 people from the Biobío, Araucanía, and Los Lagos regions in southern Chile. The surveys were conducted in the principal cities of these regions, and the number of respondents was set proportionally to the number of inhabitants in the cities of Chillán (100,497 inhabitants, 47 people surveyed), Concepción (321,788 inhabitants, 149 people surveyed), Temuco (157,931 inhabitants, 72 people surveyed), and Puerto Montt (103,848 inhabitants, 48 people surveyed).

Instrument

The questionnaire included the SWLS and the SWFL. The SWLS, developed by Diener et al,⁵ is a scale consisting of 5 items grouped into a single factor to evaluate overall cognitive judgments about a person's own life (Life 1: In most ways, my life is close to my ideal; Life 2: The conditions of my life are excellent; Life 3: I am satisfied with my life; Life 4: So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life; Life 5: If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing). The scale has satisfactory standardization data and good validity in convergence with other scales in developed countries.²³

The SWFL, proposed and tested by Grunert et al,⁷ consists of 5 items grouped into a single dimension (Food 1: Food and meals are positive elements; Food 2: I am generally pleased with my food; Food 3: My life in relation to food and meals is close to ideal; Food 4: With regard to food, the conditions of my life are excellent; Food 5: Food and meals give me satisfaction in daily life.). In each scale, the respondents must indicate their degree of agreement with these statements using a 6-level Likert scale (1 = disagree completely, 6 = agree completely).

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