

Niamh at 9 months



Niamh at 3 years



Niamh at 5 years



Child Well-Being in Ireland and the UK: A comparative analysis of the data from the Growing Up in Ireland study and the UK Millennium Cohort Study.

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Exploratory research questions

- **Do the UK and Ireland's children differ in terms of their reported psychological well-being?**
- **What other aspects of child well-being are predictive of psychological well-being for the children of these two nations?**



The Literature

- **Child well-being;**
 - **Ecological Approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)**
 - **Wellness & the Developmentalists**
 - **Strengths-based approach**
 - **Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969)**



Child Well-Being; Its definition, classification & measurement.

...definition...

- **“The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children – their health & safety, their material security, their education & socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included into the families and societies into which they are born” (UNICEF, 2007)**





...classification...

- **Domains utilised for research are equally varied**
 - Within developmental psychology: 5 domains (psychological, social, cognitive, economic, physical).**
 - Within health, sociology, social work: 6/7 domains utilised, usually linked in with a UNICEF-style definition (health, relationships, education, housing/environment, risk & safety, etc.)**



...measurement...

- **No agreement as to how best to measure child well-being.**
- **Past research;**
Interviews, standardised tests (for different purposes), single questions from a data set.
- **Multiple measures...and its limitations**



Child Indicators Movement & its research



Child Indicators Movement

- **Notwithstanding the problems associated with researching child well-being, the area remains popular, and hence valuable, for two reasons;**
 - The value of ‘best practice’ research for governments**
 - Professionals require more accurate depiction of child & family life due to cultural & societal changes**



Previous research for child well-being & its domains

- **International;**
 - Bradshaw & Richardson, 2009**
Netherlands → Former Eastern bloc (w-b)
 - Heshmati, Bajalan, & Tausch, 2007**
N America scored poorly (relationships, subjective w-b)



...continued...

- **Domestic;**
 - Heshmati, Bajalan, & Tausch, 2007**

UK scored poorly for well-being and all the domains except for education.

Ireland scored 'average' on overall well-being and its domains
 - Bradshaw & Richardson, 2009**

Similar results to above.

Predictors of child well-being and its domains

UK

- Area & community (Jack, 2006)
- Economic deprivation & maternal depression (Kiernan & Huerta, 2008)
- Smoking in pregnancy (Hutchinson, Pickett, Green, & Wakschlag, 2010)
- Changes in family structure (Robson, 2010)

Ireland

- Socioeconomic disadvantage & family stressors (McAuley & Layte, 2012)
- Chronic illness & academic ability (Layte & McCrory, 2013)
- Relationships & engagement in activities (NicGabhainn & Sizsmith, 2006)



The research process...

Child well-being

Domains of child well-being

Predictive variables



The Current Study



Method

- **2 data sets combined; GUI & MCS – secondary data analysis.**
- **Indicator of psychological well-being; Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997)**
- **Analyses of the responses given by main caregiver.**
- **GUI; 9year old cohort (2007/08), n= 8553 (TP) and n=8518 (TD).**
- **MCS; 4th wave (2008), 7years old, n= 13476 (TP) and n=13363 (TD).**
- **Predictors of well-being; 7 matched variables**



Predictor Variables

- **Whether the child has any longstanding/chronic illness**
- **Main carer's general health**
- **Whether the main carer is currently pregnant**
- **Whether the child has ADHD**
- **Whether the child has autism/aspergers**
- **Whether the child has a tv in his/her bedroom**
- **Country of interview**



Analyses

For Group Differences:

- **2 x Independent Samples T-tests;**
 - 1) Total Difficulties and Group (UK or Ireland)
 - 2) Total Prosocial and Group
- **2 x One-way between-groups ANOVAs;**
 - 1) Total Difficulties and Country of Interview
 - 2) Total Prosocial and Country of Interview
- **One-way MANOVA;**
Assessed differences between Group on both Total Difficulties and Total Prosocial

For Predictor Variables:

- **2 x Standard Multiple Regressions;**
 - 1) Total Difficulties and 7 matched IVs
 - 2) Total Prosocial and 7 matched IVs
- **Correlations based on these results**



Results

- **Significant difference found for Total Prosocial scores between UK and Ireland**
- **Significant difference between the UK and Ireland on the Total Difficulties and Total Prosocial scores combined.**
- **Statistically significant difference found for Total Difficulties and Country of Interview...though actual difference quite small. Same result for the Prosocial scores.**
- **Mean scores for various groups also significant;**
 - England significantly different from all other countries, except Wales(TD).
 - Republic of Ireland significantly different from England and Scotland(TD).
 - England significantly different to Wales and Rep. of Ireland (TP).
 - Rep. of Ireland significantly different to all other countries (TP).



Results

- **Regressions;**

-7 matched only accounted for 1% of the total difficulties model...however 3 of these V's were found to be significant predictors of TD; carer's general health, child illness, tv in room

***Correlations confirmed the direction of these relationships**

-7 matched only accounted for .8% of the total prosocial model...only country of interview was a significant predictor of TP; known already given previous analyses.



Discussion

- **Results highlight interesting points;**
 - UK and Irish parents differ significantly on their reported prosocial behaviours of their children, no such difference reported with emotional & behavioural difficulties.**
 - Ireland and UK differ significantly in terms of their children's psychological well-being.**
 - Higher scores on the emotional & behavioural difficulties scale is associated with carer's poor health and also if the child has a longstanding/chronic illness.**
 - Higher scores on the emotional & behavioural difficulties scale is associated with the child having a tv in his/her room!**



Limitations of current research

- **No measure of subjective well-being**
- **Research focused on psychological well-being hence full picture of child well-being is lacking**
- **Did not make use of teacher and child reported data within these data sets**



Future Directions

- **Conduct a more comprehensive study on child well-being, ie: utilise items and measures that fall into the other domains of child well-being**
- **A step further from the above would involve creating an index of child well-being, applicable to both UK and Ireland, by analysing interdependency and relationships between all domains and items.**
- **Analysis over time...**



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**Growing Up
in Ireland**
National Longitudinal
Study of Children

Thanks!



Thank you for listening... any questions??

