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YOUNG ADULTS' LIFE SATISFACTION: THE ROLE OF SELF-REGULATORY EFFICACY BELIEFS IN MANAGING AFFECTS AND RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS TIME AND ACROSS CULTURES

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Two studies were conducted to examine the structural path of influence through which perceived self-efficacy to regulate positive and negative affect in concert with perceived self-efficacy to manage parental and social relationships contributes to young adults' global life satisfaction in two diverse cultural contexts. The first prospective study was conducted in Italy with 462 participants equally distributed by sex (18 to 20 years at Time 1; 21 to 23 years at Time 2); the second study was conducted in Bolivia with 307 participants aged 18 to 24 years. Findings substantially corroborated the posited path of relationships among variables of interest; yet the examined variables accounted for a much larger percentage of variance in young adults' life satisfaction in Italy than in Bolivia.

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Different stages of life present particular challenges and demands in order to promote successful functioning and well-being. Age changes in the psychological and social realms do not represent lock-step stages through which everyone must inevitably pass as part of a preordained developmental trajectory, as there are a large variety of pathways and, at any given point, people widely differ in how successfully they manage their lives in the contexts in which they live. Over recent years, much theorizing and research has been devoted to major personal and social determinants governing successful transition to adulthood across socio-economic conditions, as well as across cultural contexts. In most western countries, social changes have required prolonged education and led to individuals' delayed entrance into the work force. Thus, youths tend to rely on their parents for financial support and delay traditional social role transitions associated with becoming financially independent, leaving home, and forming a family.

Yet, prolonged time to acquire skills and competences necessary for employment and lack of financial independence are not incompatible with numerous societal invitations to take proactive roles in the area of civic, economic, and political participation. As young people play an active role in charting the course of their lives and negotiating new roles outside the family while maintaining rewarding and supportive ties within it, it is important to identify the personal characteristics that are conducive to rewarding relationships with one-self and others.

The beliefs young people hold about their capabilities to manage important life domains and to produce specific results by their own actions are crucial to cope effectively with the external world through the life cycle. It is likely that the more the transition to adulthood allows choices among a variety of paths, the more its success depends on the capacity of young people to select goals, paths, and activities that maximize the consistency of their talents with the opportunities and obligations set by the environment. The more young people feel equipped to effectively manage their emotions and interpersonal relationships, the more they can expect to be engaged in rewarding relations with others, to cope properly with uncertainties, and to be resilient in the face of adversities. This is particularly true in societies that value individual freedom and control and that allow a higher degree of latitude for individual's talents and choices; it's less obvious in societies where the full ex-

pression of individual potentials are inhibited by a variety of socio-structural constraints.

The present paper adopts an agentic view of young adulthood by focusing on the role of self-efficacy beliefs in managing affect and interpersonal relationships in promoting life satisfaction. A model of relationships among self-efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction has been tested in two countries characterized by large cultural differences and diverse degree of growth opportunities: Italy and Bolivia.

AN AGENTIC PERSPECTIVE ON YOUTH'S DEVELOPMENT

Several theories have focused on individuals' capacity to control their lives and manage specific tasks and domains. Likely various self-referent processes operate in concert allowing people to function as self-regulating agents who actively negotiate with the social world and exert extended control over personal experiences. Thus particular attention has been given to individuals' beliefs about their competence and efficacy, expectancies for success or failure, and sense of control over outcomes.

Skinner and colleagues have proposed a model of perceived control that includes three critical beliefs; means-end beliefs, control beliefs, and agency beliefs, all involved in starting and driving actions directed to specific goals (Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Connell, 1998).

Eccles and colleagues have elaborated one of the most influential modern expectancy-value models widely tested in the domain of achievement-related choices (Eccles, Adler, & Meece, 1984; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992, 2000). In this model, both expectancies and values are assumed to directly influence performance, persistence, and task choice and to be influenced by task-specific beliefs, such as perceptions of competence, perceptions of the difficulty of different tasks, and individual goals and self-schema. In particular, ability beliefs are conceived as broad individual beliefs about competence in a given domain.

Our program of research is guided by Bandura's social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2001) that points to the pervasive and influential role of self-efficacy beliefs, namely, beliefs that individuals hold about their capacity to exert control over events and specific tasks of their lives. According to this theory, even though other fac-

tors may operate as guides and motivators in people's efforts to reach desired goals and results, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce effects by one's own action (Bandura, 1997, 2001). Unless people believe they can be successful in attaining desired outcomes, they have little incentive to undertake challenging activities or to persevere in case of difficulties or failures. Perceived self-efficacy plays a crucial role in self-regulation processes, in affecting behavior directly, and through its impact on cognitive, motivational, decisional, and affective determinants. Findings from diverse lines of research have documented the important role of self-efficacy beliefs in various domains of functioning such as learning, work, sports, health, social adjustment, and well-being (for a review, see Bandura, 1997, 2001, 2006).

Previous studies have shown that self-efficacy beliefs related to various life domains and specific tasks independently contribute to distinct outcomes during childhood and adolescence (Pajares & Urdan, 2003, 2006). Findings from cross-sectional and longitudinal studies pointed out the positive influence that self-efficacy beliefs exert on children and adolescents' academic motivation and achievement (Bassi, Steca, Delle Fave, & Caprara, 2007; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Kim & Park, 2006; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Schunk & Pajares, 2005; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992), on occupational choices and performance (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Betz & Hackett, 2006; Chen, Casper, & Cortina, 2001; Sadri & Robertson, 1993; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), on prosocial behavior and social functioning (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003), and on quality of family functioning and satisfaction (Caprara, Pastorelli, Regalia, Scabini, & Bandura, 2005). Furthermore, self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to play a protective role in promoting health (Bandura, 2004) as well as in contrasting psychological problems as depressive states (Bandura, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli, & Caprara, 1999; Hermann, & Betz, 2004; Muris, 2002), shyness (Caprara, Steca, Cervone, & Artistico, 2003), and antisocial behavior (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001; Caprara, Regalia, & Bandura, 2002; Caprara et al., 1998).

In an earlier version of the theory, self-efficacy belief have been viewed as reflecting highly contextualized knowledge structures supervising appraisal processes that, in turn, guide individual actions. This view has led researchers to emphasize self-efficacy beliefs' task

specificity and to pursue a multifaceted approach in the study and in the evaluation of human agentic properties across various life settings. Pointing to the specificity of perceived self-efficacy has been critical in addressing the processes and mechanisms that are at the core of individuals' capacities to produce given attainments. However since the beginning it has been acknowledged that self-efficacy beliefs do not operate in isolation from one another as they may generalize across activities and situations. As people confront complex challenges and reflect on their experiences across various settings, they construct interrelated beliefs about capabilities that pertain to realms of life that include clusters of interrelated tasks and situations. Thus, in order to account for the unity, continuity, and coherence of individual functioning across activities and settings one needs to address self-efficacy beliefs that pertain to broad domains of functioning across activities and situations. Furthermore one should investigate the degree of interdependence among various self-appraisals, in order to know which self-efficacy belief exerts higher determinative influence in given domains of functioning, which self-efficacy beliefs generalize more widely, and which ones are more accessible to change.

Consistent with this line of reasoning, Caprara (2002) extended the analysis of self-efficacy belief systems to self-beliefs linked to the regulation of affect and interpersonal relationships and to their impact on diverse forms of psychosocial functioning. He proposed a conceptual model in which perceived self-efficacy in managing one's own affect (including the regulation of negative and positive affective states) influences perceived self-efficacy in managing one's interpersonal relationships, with both affective and interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs contributing in concert to a variety of aspects of individual psychosocial functioning (see Figure 1). The model draws on social-cognitive theory and relies upon two hypotheses: (1) the capacity to regulate affect and to manage interpersonal relationships are both needed to achieve multiple attainments and are decisive for positive adaptation; and (2) the capacity to adequately experience and express positive and negative affect is decisive for handling rewarding and productive relationships with others. The first hypothesis is based on a number of scientific contributions attesting to the pivotal role of affective regulation (Bandura, 2006; Larsen, 2000; Saarni, 1999) and quality of interpersonal relationships for individual well-functioning and well-being (Caprara & Cervone, 2000; Myers, 1999; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997; Taylor,

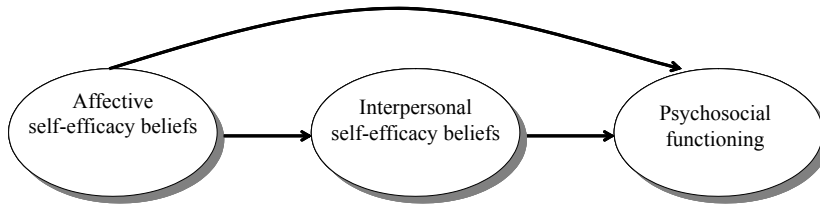


FIGURE 1. Integrative conceptual model of the influence of self-efficacy beliefs on individual psychosocial functioning.

Dickerson, & Klein, 2002), whereas the second hypothesis refers to a number of studies showing how emotional regulation fosters psychosocial functioning and, in turn, positive interpersonal relationships (Larsen, 2000; Saarni, 1999). Feeling and expressing positive emotions improve social exchanges, cooperativeness, and good intimate relationships (Aspinwall, 1998, 2000; Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Isen, 2002), whereas a reduced capability to manage negative emotions jeopardizes the quality of interpersonal relationships (i.e., Ohman, 2000; Watson, 2000).

We are quite aware of the influential role that interpersonal relationships exert on the development of emotion regulation as well as of the importance of being able to handle positive relations with others in nurturing positive affect and in enabling the management of negative affect. Yet, we believe that people cannot be confident in their capacity to manage interpersonal relationships if they do not believe they are able to manage the positive and negative affect associated with interpersonal relationships. Thus, we assign a kind of primacy to emotional self-efficacy in contributing to interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs.

Yet we do not doubt that reciprocity is more appropriate than unidirectionality in accounting for the complex relations between emotional and interpersonal capacities, as well as between emotional and interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs. Nor we exclude the significant variations over time and across situations either in the posited pathways or in the strength of influence that one set of variables may exert over the other.

A first wave of studies have attested to the above model, positing as outcomes a variety of behavioral tendencies and syndromes including aggression, prosocialness, depression (Bandura et al., 2003), ego-resiliency (Caprara, Steca, Capanna, & Caprara, 2004),

shyness (Caprara, Steca, Cervone, & Artisticco, 2003) and delinquency (Caprara et al., 1998). All of these studies examined how adolescent's perceived self-efficacy to regulate positive and negative affect act in synergy with perceived academic, social self-regulatory, and empathetic self-efficacy beliefs. Other studies on adolescents and adults have corroborated the same model positing as outcomes various components and correlates of subjective well-being like positive thinking, namely, the latent variable resulting from self-esteem, life satisfaction and dispositional optimism, and hedonic balance (Caprara & Steca, 2005, 2006; Caprara, Steca, Gerbino, Paciello, & Vecchio, 2006). These studies targeted people of different ages and examined how self-efficacy beliefs to regulate negative and positive affect operate in concert with self-efficacy beliefs related to one's own relationships within and outside the family.

In this paper we present two studies aimed at examining how self-efficacy beliefs to regulate negative and positive affect operate in synergy with self-efficacy beliefs to keep positive relationships with parents and peers in affecting life satisfaction of young adults in two different cultures. Likely, many other self-efficacy beliefs, more specific to particular life domains and tasks may be considered as having a role in promoting and maintaining youth's satisfaction with the various aspects of their life. Nevertheless, we believe that no other set of beliefs may be considered as pervasively influential as those related to the management of affect and interpersonal relationships. Both the capacity to effectively manage relationships with significant others and the large social world and the capacity to control and properly express positive and negative affect are in fact crucial in order to deal properly with most daily life situations. Thus, one may expect that the beliefs people hold about their capacities to manage affect and relationships are crucial for the satisfaction people experience over their own life.

YOUTH'S LIFE SATISFACTION

Over the last few decades, life satisfaction has been given extensive attention by sociologists and psychologists, as a useful concept, although general, to evaluate individuals and societies' quality of life and, ultimately, for monitoring social changes and improving social policies (Andrews & Robinson, 1991; Diener & Diener, 1995).

Studies on children and adolescents have documented the benefits associated to high life satisfaction, including physical and mental health, good interpersonal relationships, and educational and vocational success (Frisch, 2000; Park, 2003, 2004). Moreover, recent longitudinal findings show that adolescent's high life satisfaction may serve as a protector factor buffering the impact of stressful life events (Suldo & Huebner, 2004) suggesting the importance of early identification of factors that may contribute to life satisfaction. However, compared to the abundant research on adults, only a few studies have been conducted with adolescents and young adults in order to identify main determinants of life satisfaction in those stages of life.

Recent studies on American children and adolescents have shown that some intrapersonal (e.g., internal locus of control) and interpersonal variables (e.g., family and peer relationships) account for a much larger amount of variance in global life satisfaction than demographic variables, such as gender and family income (Huebner, 1997, 2004; Park, 2004). In addition, a recent study by Lent et al. (2005) showed the positive influence of youth's confidence in their ability to manage academic tasks and relationships with peers on their domain-specific and global life satisfaction, after statistically controlling for broad personality dimensions such as extraversion.

AIMS OF THE STUDIES

The aim of the following two studies was to enrich the knowledge of life satisfaction's determinants in young adults, examining the role of their self-efficacy beliefs in the domains of affect regulation and social relationship management. The first study is part of a longitudinal project that is aimed at identifying the personal determinants and developmental pathways conducive to successful adaptation from childhood to adulthood.

The second study is part of a cross-cultural project aimed at investigating and comparing psychosocial functioning associated to successful adaptation of young people in Italy and Bolivia, namely two countries that show quite different conditions of life with regards to cultural traditions and economical opportunities. To our knowledge, this investigation is the first focusing on life satisfaction and self-efficacy beliefs in emerging adulthood, aimed to examine their relationship longitudinally and to compare two very different

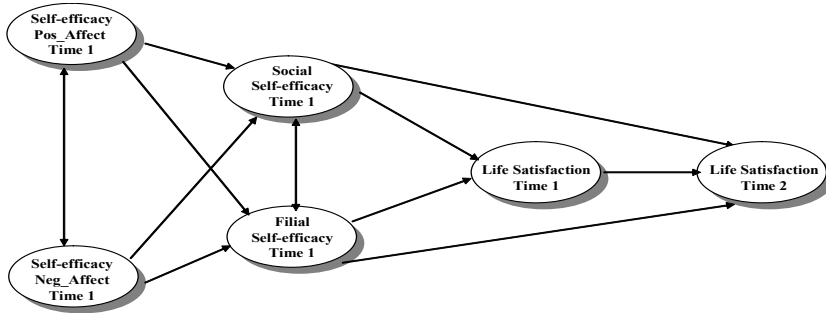


FIGURE 2. The hypothesized longitudinal causal structure in which Italian youth's perceived self-efficacy for affect regulation and perceived self-efficacy in managing interpersonal relationships influence their life satisfaction.

countries. Whereas a number of studies have attested to the beneficial role of self-efficacy beliefs in Western countries such as the U.S. and Italy, much less is known about their role in economically underdeveloped countries, where individual freedom and agency are constrained by different challenges and opportunities.

We selected Bolivia for different reasons. First, for a matter of convenience as we have a collaborative project within the realm of a scientific collaboration between the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and the "San Pablo" Catholic University of La Paz, Bolivia. The project started in 2003 to investigate risk and protective factors of psychosocial adjustment in Bolivian adolescents and young adults. Second, Bolivia is one of the most complex and interesting countries of Latin America, placed in the middle of the Continent, without any access to the sea, with high mountains and tropical forest, and populated by a mixture of nationalities including approximately forty ethnic groups with their own language, traditions, and habits. Bolivia is also one of the poorest and politically unstable countries in South America. As these characteristics make Bolivia very different from European countries such as Italy, the access to a large population of students made possible by the above collaborative agreement offered a unique opportunity to test the generalizability of the posited model that was previously corroborated in Italy.

As a result of previous findings, we point to self-efficacy beliefs in the regulation of positive and negative affect and to self-efficacy beliefs in managing interpersonal relationships with parents and peers as major determinants of life satisfaction. Figure 2 schematically summarizes the direct and mediated paths of influence in the

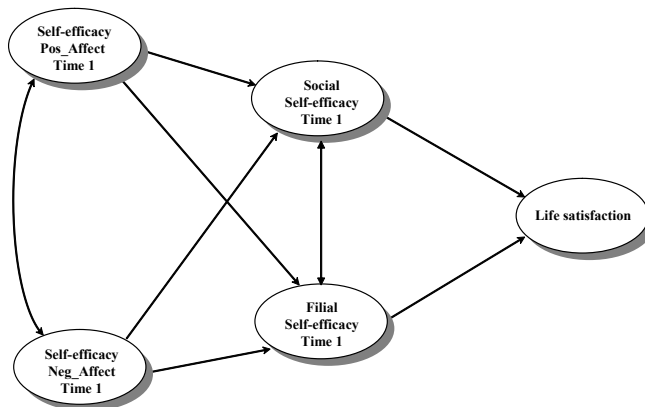


FIGURE 3. The hypothesized cross-sectional causal structure in which Bolivian youth's perceived self-efficacy in managing positive and negative affect and interpersonal relationships influence their life satisfaction.

posited structural model of Study 1. We hypothesized that perceived self-efficacy to manage positive and negative affect influences youth's life satisfaction indirectly by their impact on perceived self-efficacy to manage relationships with parents and peers that directly influences life satisfaction both synchronically and over time. In accordance with previous studies, a correlation between perceived self-efficacy to manage positive and negative affect has been posited. As shown in Figure 3, the second study was cross-sectional and was aimed at examining the extent to which the above paths of relationships among variables of interest held in youth in Bolivia.

As stated by Bandura, there are some social forces "homogenizing some aspects of life, polarizing other aspects, and fostering a lot of cultural hybridization" (Bandura, 2006, p. 33) and as a consequence could reduce the impact of cultural differences on daily behaviors and transactions. However this does not mean that these differences are irrelevant. Cross-cultural researches attested to the functional role of self-efficacy beliefs independently from the specific national or regional context under study (Earley, 1993, 1994; Gibson, 1995); structure and functional properties of self-efficacy beliefs as well as the mechanisms by which they influence the performance can be considered cross-culturally invariant (Bandura, 2002; Pastorelli et al., 2001). Instead the development of self-efficacy beliefs and the way in which they can be exercised vary in relation to the cultural context. To summarize, Bandura highlighted that "there is a com-

monality in basic agentic capacities and mechanisms of operation, but diversity in the culturing of these inherent capacities" (Bandura, 2006, p. 34).

Following Bandura's reasoning the main purpose of study 2 was to investigate what Bond and Van de Vijver (in press) named "linking effects," meaning the different strength and significance that may be possible to find with respect to some or all the paths in a model of relationships between variables in different cultural contexts.

Considering the centrality of "familism," namely the family orientation in terms of feelings of loyalty and reciprocity for Latin American countries (i.e., Cortés, 1995; Marin, 1993), we hypothesized a stronger effect of self-efficacy beliefs in managing relationships with parents than efficacy beliefs in managing relationships with peers in Bolivia.

We do not disregard the fact that in both countries many other psychological (i.e., traits), constitutional (i.e., genes), and external factors (i.e., income) may influence a broad construct such as individual global life satisfaction. We also do not ignore the fact that many objective life conditions may be more relevant in Bolivia than in Italy due to the economic difficulties and chronic political instability of this country in the last decades (Liberato, Pomeroy, & Fennell, 2006). Nevertheless, one should not acknowledge that objective indicators have shown to explain only a small portion of life satisfaction variance, even when highly heterogeneous cultural and socio-economic contexts have been considered (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Diener, 1984; Inglehart, 1990; Veenhoven, 1994).

Hence, it is our intention to isolate, among the many social-cognitive constructs, the specific contribution of young adults' beliefs in their capacity to deal effectively with affect and interpersonal relationships on their life satisfaction.

STUDY 1

As stated above, the first study is part of an extended still ongoing longitudinal research project aimed to better understand the psychosocial factors affecting the transition from childhood through adolescence, to adulthood.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

The participants were 462 youth (202 males and 260 females), with a mean age of 19.28 years ($SD = 1.08$) at the time of the first assessment (Time 1), and a mean age of 21.28 years at the time of the second assessment (Time 2). Eighty-one and 89% of the participants were enrolled in high school or college, respectively, at the first and second assessment times; the remaining participants were employed in the community. They varied widely in socioeconomic background, coming from families of skilled workers, farmers, professionals, and local merchants, as well as their service staffs. The socioeconomic diversity of the sample and the high integration among residents adds to the generalizability of the findings.

The participants in the present study were contacted via phone by a researcher who provided an explanation of the research aims and procedures in accordance with a protocol well-established in previous years. All participants were invited to sign written consent to complete a large set of measures including the scales measuring the variables of interest in the present study. Subjects were asked to complete the various scales at home, following instructions stating the sequence and the interval of time between the various measures to avoid, as much as possible, overloading, habituation and other response-set biases. Students returned the completed set of scales ten days later and received 15 Euros for their participation at Time 1, and a gift certificate for a dinner for two at a local restaurant at Time 2.

Measures

Participants were administered a set of scales measuring the four perceived self-efficacy dimensions and global life satisfaction at both assessment times.

Affective Self-Regulatory Efficacy Beliefs. Participants' perceived affective self-regulatory efficacy was measured by 14 items reflecting their capacity to regulate their affect, both negative and positive (Caprara & Gerbino, 2001; Caprara et al., 1999). In particular, seven negative affect items assessed their self-efficacy beliefs in (a) regulating their affect in the face of threats, anger provocation, and rejection, (b) controlling worrisome ruminations when things go wrong,

and (c) calming oneself in the presence of taxing situations as well as recovering emotionally after suffering perturbing experiences. Sample of negative affect items were: "I can keep from getting discouraged by strong criticism," "I can get over irritation quickly for wrongs I have experienced," and "I can reduce my upsetness when I don't get the appreciation I feel I deserve."

In comparison, the remaining six affect items measured participants' self-efficacy beliefs in expressing affect toward others, allowing oneself to express enthusiasm and enjoyment, and feeling satisfaction with personal accomplishments. Sample of positive affect items were: "I can express joy when good things happen to me," "I can feel gratified over achieving what I set out to do," and "I can express enjoyment freely at parties." With both sets of items, participants rated the strength of their self-efficacy beliefs on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (perceived inability) to 5 (complete self-assurance in one's ability).

Interpersonal Self-Regulatory Efficacy Beliefs. Participants' perceived interpersonal self-efficacy was measured by 28 items reflecting their capacity to manage family and social life (Bandura et al., 1996; Caprara, Gerbino, & Delle Fratte, 2001; Caprara, Regalia, & Scabini, 2001; Caprara, Regalia, Scabini, Barbaranelli, & Bandura, 2004). In particular, twenty items assessed participants' perceived filial self-efficacy in terms of their ability to hold an open dialogue with their parents and to influence their parents' attitudes and behavior constructively. Sample of filial self-efficacy items were: "I can talk with my parents about my feelings toward them," "I can get my parents to pay attention to my needs, even when they are completely absorbed by their problems," and "I can handle my parent's intrusions into my privacy without irritation and resentment." For each item, participants rated the strength of their beliefs on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (perceived inability) to 7 (complete self-assurance in one's ability).

The remaining eight social self-efficacy items were derived from a larger scale and measured participants' ability to form and maintain social relationships, work cooperatively with others, voice their opinions, and manage different types of interpersonal conflicts. Sample of social self-efficacy items were: "I can express my opinions when other peers disagree with me," "I can deal with situations where others are annoying me or hurting my feelings," and "I can make friends among peers." For each item, participants rated

the strength of their beliefs in on a 5-point response scale (from perceived inability to complete ability).

In order to investigate the dimensionality of the sets of self-efficacy items and to avoid any overlapping among the four measures, a principal factor analysis with Oblimin rotation was performed at both assessment times. Only items loading .40 or higher were considered to be included in a factor; eleven items have been deleted. The actual item loadings in the factors ranged from .40 to .85 at the time of the first assessment and from .40 to .82 at the time of the second assessment. According to the scree-plot, the two analyses yielded a four-factor structure corresponding to the hypothesized four domains of self-efficacy functioning.

At the first assessment time, the percentage of total variance in the items' scores explained by the four self-efficacy factors was 28% for self-efficacy in managing positive affect, 10% for filial self-efficacy, 9% for self-efficacy in regulating negative affect, and 10% for social self-efficacy. The alpha reliability coefficients for the self-efficacy factor scales were uniformly high; .86 for self-efficacy in managing positive affect, .84 for self-efficacy in regulating negative affect, .76 for social self-efficacy, and .88 for filial self-efficacy.

At the second assessment time, the percentage of total variance in the items' scores explained by the four self-efficacy factors was 9% for self-efficacy in managing positive affect, 28% for filial self-efficacy, 5% for self-efficacy in regulating negative affect, and 5% for social self-efficacy. Again, the alpha reliability coefficients for the four scales were high and similar to those at Time 1; .85 for self-efficacy in managing positive affect, .86 for self-efficacy in regulating negative affect, .70 for social self-efficacy, and .91 for filial self-efficacy.

Life Satisfaction. Participants' life satisfaction was assessed by using the 5-item set of the "Life Satisfaction Scale" (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). For each item, participants rated the extent to which they felt generally satisfied with life on a 7-point rating scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Sample life satisfaction items were: "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal" and "The conditions of my life are excellent." The reliability coefficients for this scale were .87 at Time 1 and .88 at Time 2. The scale has been extensively validated on a large population of Italian adolescents and adults, spanning from 15 to 80 years of age (Steca, 2004).

TABLE 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the Four Forms of Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Life Satisfaction at the Two Assessment Times in the Italian Study, Separately by Gender

	Males (<i>N</i> = 202)		Females (<i>N</i> = 260)	
	Mean	D.S.	Mean	S.D.
Self-efficacy to manage positive affect Time 1	3.99	.63	4.39	.50
Self-efficacy to manage positive affect Time 2	4.00	.68	4.33	.56
Self-efficacy to manage negative affect Time 1	3.36	.59	3.16	.64
Self-efficacy to manage negative affect Time 2	3.42	.67	3.10	.68
Social self-efficacy Time 1	4.28	.49	4.43	.48
Social self-efficacy Time 2	4.02	.54	4.16	.47
Filial self-efficacy Time 1	4.29	1.12	4.50	1.13
Filial self-efficacy Time 2	4.44	1.10	4.51	1.15
Life satisfaction Time 1	5.25	1.12	5.13	1.32
Life satisfaction Time 2	5.20	1.16	5.12	1.26

RESULTS

Before testing our hypotheses, we examined the variables' univariate and multivariate distributions, using the procedure devised by Tabachnick and Fidel (1989); none of the subjects were outliers. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for all of the variables at the two assessment times, separately for males and females. Table 2 outlines the correlation matrix among the four types of perceived self-efficacy and life satisfaction, both measured at Time 1 and 2. None of the variables presented problems of normality.

One-way analyses of variance revealed significant gender differences on six of the assessed variables (the degrees of freedom for all *F* values were 1 and 460). Males demonstrated a stronger sense of efficacy in regulating negative affect both at Time 1 ($F = 11.88, p < .01, \eta^2 = .025$) and Time 2 ($F = 25.19, p < .001, \eta^2 = .052$), whereas females reported higher self-efficacy in regulating positive affect at Time 1 ($F = 58.32, p < .001, \eta^2 = .113$) and at Time 2 ($F = 34.80, p < .001, \eta^2 = .070$). Females also felt more efficacious in managing interpersonal relationships with peers at both assessment times, ($F = 11.56, p < .01, \eta^2 = .025$) and ($F = 9.22, p < .01, \eta^2 = .020$), respectively. No gender differences were found for either filial self-efficacy beliefs or life satisfaction at Times 1 or 2.

TABLE 2. Correlations Among Affective and Interpersonal Self-Regulatory Efficacy Beliefs and Life Satisfaction Measured at Time 1 and Time 2 in the Italian Study, Separately by Gender

	(1) Self- efficacy to manage positive affect Time 1	(2) Self- efficacy to manage negative affect Time 1	(3) Social self- efficacy Time 1	(4) Filial self- efficacy Time 1	(5) Life satisfaction Time 1	(6) Self- efficacy to manage positive affect Time 2	(7) Self- efficacy to manage negative affect Time 2	(8) Social self- efficacy Time 2	(9) Filial self- efficacy Time 2	(10) Life satisfaction Time 2
(1)	—	.38***	.52***	.41***	.36***	.45***	.22***	.39***	.28***	.29***
(2)	.32***	—	.34***	.39***	.44***	.22***	.60***	.34***	.31***	.36***
(3)	.38***	.37***	—	.26***	.31***	.37***	.28***	.51***	.29***	.20**
(4)	.47***	.43***	.34***	—	.47***	.33***	.33***	.35***	.65***	.43***
(5)	.42***	.38***	.34***	.45***	—	.29***	.36***	.29***	.41***	.65***
(6)	.45***	.13n.s.	.30***	.30***	.36***	—	.35***	.49***	.46***	.38***
(7)	.32***	.45***	.25***	.28***	.37***	.43***	—	.43***	.47***	.38***
(8)	.37***	.29***	.36***	.36***	.32***	.52***	.42***	—	.40***	.37***
(9)	.38***	.34***	.23***	.53***	.39***	.45***	.51***	.41***	—	.50***
(10)	.27***	.28***	.23**	.31***	.47***	.44***	.44***	.34***	.47***	—

Note. Values under the diagonal refer to males (N = 202), values over the diagonal refer to females (N = 260). ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001; n.s. = not significant.

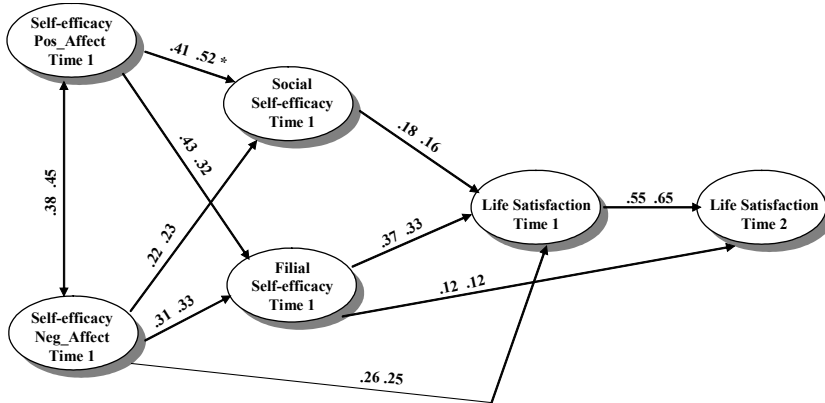


FIGURE 4. Structural equation model coefficients for the hypothesized longitudinal causal structure in the Italian study. For each path, the first coefficient is for male youth, whereas the second coefficient is for female youth. All the path coefficients are significant beyond the $p < .05$ level; the asterisk indicates a significant difference in the path coefficient between males and females.

Repeated ANOVAs of time variation revealed significant differences only in the case of social self-efficacy beliefs. In particular, as youth grew older, both males and females reported a decrease in their perceived self-efficacy in managing social relationships ($F = 117.06, p < .001, \eta^2 = .203$). No gender by time effect was found.

Path of Influences

We tested the posited structural model diagrammed in Figure 2 on the covariance matrix with the EQS program (Bentler, 2001). Items of the scales were used to identify latent variables. Because of gender differences, the structural model was analyzed by using the multiple groups model approach, which simultaneously estimated the same pattern of relations among the variables in both males and females. In this approach, equivalence among different samples is evaluated by constraints that impose identical estimates for the model's parameters (Byrne, 1994; Scott-Lennox & Scott-Lennox, 1995). In EQS, the plausibility of these equality constraints is examined by the Lagrange Multipliers (LM) test (Bentler, 2001). As demonstrated by statistical theory, the LM statistic is asymptotically equivalent to the chi-square test commonly used to compare two nested models (Satorra, 1989); in other words, the LM statistic can be interpreted as an approximate decrease in the model's goodness-of-fit chi-square

resulting from freeing previously fixed parameters and from eliminating equality restriction. For each of the constraints specified, the LM test provides evidence that the constraint applies to the populations involved. In the present study, the equality constraints were imposed on path coefficients across the gender groups. Figure 4 presents the results of the structural equation model using the four forms of self-efficacy beliefs as predictors of life satisfaction, both concurrently and prospectively.

Regarding the interrelations among self-efficacy beliefs, results indicated that youth's higher perceptions of their ability to regulate positive and negative affect were related to higher levels of both social and filial self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy beliefs in regulating negative affect exerted a stronger effect on filial self-efficacy than on social self-efficacy, whereas self-efficacy in regulating positive affect showed the opposite pattern (i.e., a stronger effect on social self-efficacy than on filial self-efficacy). These findings were limited to the female sample. In addition, the two forms of affective self-regulatory efficacy were positively correlated, whereas no significant association was found between perceived social and filial self-efficacy.

Males and females' life satisfaction assessed at Time 1 was positively influenced by the two forms of interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs, namely perceived self-efficacy in managing relationships with others and parents, with the latter exerting a stronger effect than the former. In addition, participant's life satisfaction was quite stable over time. However, their perceived ability to adequately manage relationships with parents made a unique contribution to variance in later life satisfaction, after controlling for differences in its earlier levels. No significant influence on young adults' later life satisfaction was exerted by perceived social self-efficacy.

The refined model, which includes the significant nonspecified relation between youth's perceived self-efficacy to regulate negative affect and their life satisfaction measured at Time 1, provided an excellent fit to the empirical data as shown by different goodness-of-fit indexes.¹ These tests yielded a nonsignificant chi square, χ^2 (19,

1. According to a multifaceted approach in the assessment of a models' fit (Tanaka, 1993), the following criteria were employed to evaluate the goodness of fit: (a) χ^2 likelihood ratio statistic; (b) Bentler-Bonnet NonNormed Fit Index (NNFI); (c) Comparative Fit Index (CFI); (d) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). For the NNFI and the CFI, values equal to or higher than .90 are indicative of a good fit. For the RMSEA index, which estimates the lack of fit in a model compared to a perfect (saturated) model, values lower than .05 indicate a good fit and values as high as .08 represent a reasonable error of approximation.

462) = 19.44, and NNFI of 1, a CFI of 1, and a RMSEA of .01 (.00,.04). The model accounted for 40 and 39% of the variance in life satisfaction for males at Time 1 and Time 2, respectively, and 35 and 51% of the variance for females at the two time points.

Alternative Models

Although the tested model provided an excellent fit to the empirical data, four alternative plausible models were tested and compared to the target one. In the first alternative model, we only included participants' affective self-efficacy beliefs and their life satisfaction, positing a path of influence from the former to the latter; in the second alternative model we only considered participants' interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction, with a path of influence from the former to the latter. These two models are more parsimonious than the proposed one in explaining life satisfaction's variance, considering only one set of participants' self-efficacy beliefs as proper and sufficient to explain their global life satisfaction.

Structural equation modeling analyses indicated an excellent fit to the empirical data for both models: $\chi^2(7, 462) = 8.77$ $p = \text{n.s.}$, NNFI = .99, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .02 (.00,.04) for the first alternative model and $\chi^2(6, 462) = 6.52$ $p = \text{n.s.}$, NNFI = 1, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .01 (.00,.06) for the second alternative model. In order to compare the three models we adopted the Akaike's Information Index (AIC), which is particularly well-suited for comparing the adequacy of nonnested models fitted to the same correlational matrix (Burnham & Anderson, 2000). The lower the AIC index, the better the goodness-of-fit. In this comparison, the AIC indices suggested a better fit for the posited model than for the alternative models: -18.56 versus -5.23 and -5.48, respectively, for the first and the second alternative models. Moreover, for both males and females, the explained variance of life satisfaction at Time 1 in the two alternative models was very low (26 and 25% in the first alternative model; 31 and 28% in the second alternative model). The explained variance of life satisfaction at Time 2 was lower in the two alternative models than in the target model for females (48 and 47%), but not for males (42 and 47%), mainly due to life satisfaction's high stability.

We then tested a third alternative model in which we reversed the direction of influence between the two sets of self-efficacy beliefs, hypothesizing that self-efficacy beliefs in managing relationships with both parents and peers influenced perceived self-efficacy in

managing positive and negative affect. This model presented an excellent fit to the empirical data: $\chi^2(20) = 16.91$ $p = n.s.$, NNFI = 1, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .00 (.00,.03). The explained variance of life satisfaction at Time 1 and 2 was also very similar to the one obtained in the proposed model: 37 and 38%, respectively, for males and females at Time 1, and 37 and 52% at Time 2. The AIC comparative fit index for this model was equal to -23.08, showing a slightly better fit to the empirical data than the target model. In this model, both perceived self-efficacy in managing relationships with parents and peers affected self-efficacy beliefs in managing positive and negative affect, that in turn, affected life satisfaction measured at Time 1. As found in the target model, youth's filial self-efficacy beliefs affected their life satisfaction both at Time 1 and Time 2.

Finally, we tested a fourth alternative model positing life satisfaction measured at Time 1 as predictor of affective and interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs measured at Time 1 and Time 2. This model represents a totally different view of the relationships among the target variables, hypothesizing that young adults' global satisfaction with their life exerts an influence on their beliefs to be able to successfully manage their affect and interpersonal relationships.

Structural equation modeling analyses indicated that this alternative model showed a much poorer fit to the data than the proposed model: $\chi^2(43, 462) = 84.53$, $p < .001$, NNFI = .95, CFI = .93, and a RMSEA of .05 (.03,.06). The AIC comparative fit index for this model was equal to -1.47, showing the poorest fit to the empirical data.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrated a good empirical fit to the posited structural model hypothesizing that perceived affective self-regulatory efficacy beliefs operate in concert with interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs in contributing to youth's life satisfaction, even though one of the hypothesized longitudinal paths was not significant and a nonspecified significant path was found between perceived self-efficacy in managing negative affect and life satisfaction measured at Time 1. The refined model fits the empirical data better than two alternative models including only one set of self-efficacy beliefs and a model that hypothesized an influence from life satisfaction to self-efficacy beliefs.

In accordance with our hypotheses, for both males and females, a strong sense of efficacy in regulating one's positive affect was associated with a strong sense of efficacy in managing one's negative affect. Furthermore, a strong sense of efficacy to regulate both positive and negative affect contributed to perceived self-efficacy to manage interpersonal transactions both within and outside the family, even though the influence of self-efficacy in expressing positive emotion on social self-efficacy resulted significantly stronger for females than for males. Whereas perceived self-efficacy to regulate positive affect contributed to life satisfaction indirectly through its impact on social and filial perceived self-efficacy, perceived self-efficacy to regulate negative affect contributed to life satisfaction directly as well as indirectly through social and filial perceived self-efficacy.

An alternative model that reversed the direction of influence between the two sets of self-efficacy beliefs fits the empirical data slightly better than the target one. This result attests to the difficulty in identifying a clear direction of influence among the two sets of self-efficacy beliefs and points to a reciprocal influence between them, at least during the age range considered in the present paper.

Among self-beliefs related to one's ability to handle efficacious interpersonal relationships, in both models, perceived filial self-efficacy contributed to life satisfaction more than perceived social self-efficacy and it was the only self-efficacy belief that influenced young adults' life satisfaction over time. This finding clearly attests to the importance that family relationships exert on Italian young adults' well-being (Caprara, Scabini, & Sgritta, 2003; Caprara, Scabini, & Regalia, 2006), as demonstrated by previous studies showing the impact of adolescents' filial self-efficacy beliefs on communication with their parents and parental monitoring, as well as on conflict avoidance and family satisfaction (Caprara et al., 2005). Given the long transition from adolescence to adulthood in Italian society, the capacity of young adults to deal effectively with their parents is crucial to shape developmental trajectories conducive to successful adaptation.

Although the main goal of the study was to test gender differences in the posited paths of relation, we extended the analysis to the mean differences, finding out results that were completely in line with previous researches (Bandura et al., 2003; Caprara, Steca, et al., 2006) and coherent with the specific cultural context. In particular males showed a stronger self-belief in the regulation of their nega-

tive affect and females reported higher beliefs in their perceived ability to manage interpersonal relationships at both assessment times; in both cases the effect sizes were low and the differences may be considered negligible. Moreover the higher mean of females in their perceived capability to manage positive emotions, with a moderate effect size, is in accordance with the traditional view of Italian women as more capable to express their positive feelings and emotions than men.

Findings also showed, for both males and females, a significant decline, that accounts for 20% of variance, in the perceived ability to manage relationships with peers in the transition from the last years of adolescence to the first years of adulthood. It is likely that as people approach adulthood and further extend their social activities and relations beyond family and school, they are confronted with responsibilities and obligations that further challenge their confidence in their social abilities.

STUDY 2

As stated above, the second study is part of a collaborative project between the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and the "San Pablo" Catholic University of La Paz and its main aim was to examine whether our reasoning regarding the contribution of perceived self-efficacy beliefs to Italian youth's life satisfaction applies to youth in Bolivia.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

The Bolivian participants were 307—135 males and 172 females, ranging in age from 18 to 24 years old and with a mean age of 20.30 years ($SD = 2.02$).

The Western area of the country, where we collected the data for this study, was the cradle of the Aymara culture, one of the most ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica. The Aymara is primarily a rural culture, but its presence is also evident in the urban areas, where it is possible to observe a kind of "mestizo" (mixture) of rural and urban values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Twenty-six percent of the participants were enrolled in high school whereas 74% were college students. High school participants were recruited in different urban and rural schools selected in order to have a broad variety of social and economic status in the sample. College participants were recruited among the students of different Faculties in the "San Pablo" Catholic University of La Paz. Considering that "San Pablo" University has a rural unit we have been able to recruit college students from both urban and rural areas.

Participants' socio-economic background varied widely, depending on their geographical position: 33.6% of the youth were residents in the urban context of La Paz and the remaining 66.4% lived in the rural area of North Yungas. Parents of the participants in the urban area were in large part bus drivers, craftsmen, public and private clerks, and local merchants. In the rural area, the majority of the families were engaged in agriculture, with men working in the fields and women devoted to the maintenance of the home. All of the participants still lived with at least one parent.

Italian and Bolivian researchers, previously trained by an Italian scholar expert in cross-cultural research, worked together on the various phases of the project. Three colleges, two in the urban and one in the rural area, and three high schools, one in the urban and two in the rural area were selected to participate in the study. Headmasters of the high schools, deans of the colleges and departmental directors were first contacted in order to obtain their authorization for the research. Following this, all students were asked to participate and none refused.

The measures selected for the project were the Spanish version of similar or the same measures used in the Italian study. These versions were the result of subsequent translations and back translations by bilingual experts. Measures were administered to the students during class time after a brief training session in which they received information on the goals of the research, contents of the scales, and instructions for answering the proposed items. To ensure students were familiar with self-efficacy beliefs scales, they were asked to answer some neutral items (i.e., How well can I play football?), using the typical response format from incapable to very capable. The presence of an Italian researcher and of at least one Bolivian researcher was guaranteed during the scales' administration. Bolivian participants did not receive any remuneration for their participation.

Measures

Bolivian participants' affective and interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction were assessed by the same scales used in the Italian study, except for perceived social self-efficacy. In the latter case we used a slightly different scale consisting of eleven items from a larger scale aimed to measure young adults' capacity of expressing personal opinions in groups, participating in group activities, and sharing personal experiences with others. For each item, participants rated the strength of their beliefs in their ability to manage social relationships on a 5-point response scale (from perceived inability to complete ability).

Psychometric Properties of Perceived Self-Efficacy Scales. Factor analysis using the principal factor method and Oblimin rotation was conducted on the items of the scales measuring the four forms of self-efficacy beliefs. As in the Italian study, only items loading .40 or higher were considered for inclusion in a factor. This analysis confirmed the expected four-factor structure, corresponding to the theoretical four domains of self-efficacy functioning. The percentage of total variance in the items' scores explained by these four self-efficacy factors was 19.9% for self-efficacy in regulating positive affect, 6.4% for filial self-efficacy, 4.2% for self-efficacy in regulating negative affect, and 2.9% for social self-efficacy. The mean loading was .50 for the first factor, -.62 for the second, .46 for the third, and -.48 for the fourth. The alpha reliability coefficients for the four scales were high and similar to those of Study 1. They were .87 for filial perceived self-efficacy, .79 for social perceived self-efficacy, .76 for self-efficacy in regulating negative affect, and .72 for self-efficacy in regulating positive affect.

Psychometric Properties of Life Satisfaction Scale. A factor analysis with principal factor method was also performed on the five items of the Spanish version of the Life Satisfaction Scale developed by Diener et al. (1985). The expected mono-factorial solution accounted for 37% of the items' total variance, confirming the mono-dimensionality of the scale. The mean loading was .59 and the alpha reliability coefficient was .71.

TABLE 3. Means and Standard Deviations for the Four Forms of Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Life Satisfaction in the Bolivian Study, Separately by Gender

	Males (<i>N</i> = 135)		Females (<i>N</i> = 172)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Self-efficacy to manage positive affect	4.05	.54	4.07	.53
Self-efficacy to manage negative affect	3.34	.62	3.16	.60
Social self-efficacy	3.62	.52	3.43	.56
Filial self-efficacy	4.90	.98	4.66	1.02
Life satisfaction	4.88	1.10	4.47	1.22

RESULTS

Before testing our hypothesis, Tabachnick and Fidel's procedure (1989) for the analysis of variable's univariate and multivariate distributions was implemented; none of the subjects were found to be outliers. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for all of the variables, separately for males and females. Table 4 shows the matrix of correlations among the four dimensions of perceived self-efficacy and life satisfaction. None of the variables presented problems of normality.

One-way analyses of variance were performed to analyze gender differences in the variables; degrees of freedom for all *F* values were 1 and 305. As found in study 1, boys presented with a stronger sense of self-efficacy in regulating negative affect ($F = 6.34, p < .05, \eta^2 = .020$), whereas no gender differences were found regarding perceived self-efficacy in regulating positive affect. Bolivian males also showed a stronger sense of social self-efficacy ($F = 9.51, p < .01, \eta^2 = .030$) and filial self-efficacy ($F = 4.16, p < .05, \eta^2 = .013$); moreover, they were more satisfied with their life ($F = 9.29, p < .01, \eta^2 = .030$) than their female counterparts.

Path of Influence

We tested the posited structural model represented in Figure 3 on the covariance matrix with the EQS program (Bentler, 2001) using the multiple groups model approach. As in study 1, the equality constraints were imposed on path coefficients across gender groups. As found in the Italian study, the affective dimensions of

TABLE 4. Correlations Among Affective and Interpersonal Self-Regulatory Efficacy Beliefs and Life Satisfaction in the Bolivian Study, Separately by Gender.

	(1) Self-efficacy to manage positive affect	(2) Self-efficacy to manage negative affect	(3) Social self-efficacy	(4) Filial self-efficacy	(5) Life satisfaction
(1)	—	.25**	.40**	.34**	.21*
(2)	.44**	—	.49**	.24**	.25**
(3)	.56**	.48**	—	.38**	.27*
(4)	.34**	.40**	.41**	—	.28**
(5)	.17n.s.	.28**	.19**	.33**	—

Note. Values under the diagonal refer to males ($N = 135$), values over the diagonal refer to females ($N = 172$). ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n.s. = not significant.

self-efficacy beliefs were highly and positively intercorrelated and they both exerted a positive influence on youth's social perceived self-efficacy and on their filial perceived self-efficacy (see Figure 5). Perceived self-efficacy in managing social and family relationships were not correlated, further confirming the same links among self-efficacy beliefs found in the Italian study. In contrast to our hypotheses, Bolivian youth's life satisfaction was only positively influenced by their perceived ability to manage relationships with their parents; furthermore, a nonspecified relation between youth's perceived self-efficacy to regulate negative affect and life satisfaction was found.

The model fit was evaluated by considering the same indices of study 1. They indicated an excellent fit of the model to the empirical data: we had a nonsignificant $\chi^2(12, 307)$ of 10.79, a nonnormed fit index (NNFI) of 1, a comparative fit index (CFI) of 1 and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of .00 (.00, .05). The model accounted for 23% of the variance in life satisfaction for males, and 19% for females.

Alternative models

As in Study 1, four alternative plausible models were also tested and compared to the target one. In the first alternative model, we only included youth's affective self-efficacy beliefs and their life satisfaction, positing an influence from the former to the latter; in the second alternative model we only considered youth's social and filial self-efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction, positing a path of in-

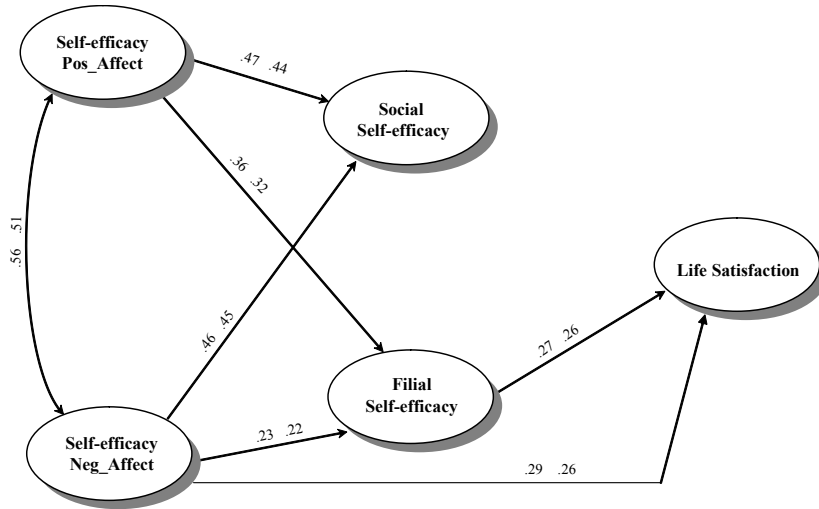


FIGURE 5. Structural equation model coefficients for the hypothesized cross-sectional causal structure in the Bolivian study. For each path, the first coefficient refers to male youth, whereas the second coefficient refers to female youth. All the path coefficients are significant beyond the $p < .05$ level.

fluence from the former to the latter. As stated in study 1, these alternative models are clearly more parsimonious than the proposed one in explaining life satisfaction's variance.

Structural equation modeling analyses indicated an acceptable fit to the empirical data for both models: $\chi^2(3, 307) = 4.17$ $p = \text{n.s.}$, NNFI = .96, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .04 (.00, .11) for the first alternative model and $\chi^2(3, 307) = 1.54$ $p = \text{n.s.}$, NNFI = 1, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .01 (.00, .07) for the second alternative model. The AIC indices suggested a better fit for the posited model than the alternative ones: -13.20 versus -1.83, and -4.66, respectively, for the first and the second alternative model. Furthermore, the explained variance of life satisfaction in the two alternative models was similar but lower than in the target one for both males and females: 17 and 13% in the first alternative model; 19 and 15% in the second alternative model.

We then tested a third alternative model in which we reversed the direction of influence between the two sets of self-efficacy beliefs, testing the hypothesis that filial, and social self-regulatory efficacy beliefs influenced affective perceived self-efficacy. This model presented an excellent fit to the empirical data: $\chi^2(12) = 21.11$ $p = .05$, NNFI = .99, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .00 (.00, .12). The explained variance

of life satisfaction was lower than in the target model: 20 and 16%, respectively for males and females. The AIC comparative fit index for this model was equal to -2.89, showing a less adequate fit to the empirical data than the target model.

Finally, as in study 1, we tested a fourth alternative model positing life satisfaction as a predictor of affective, filial and social self-efficacy beliefs. Structural equation modeling analyses indicated that this alternative model had a poorer fit to the data than the proposed model: $\chi^2(11, 307) = 19.08$, $p = \text{n.s.}$, NNFI = .95, CFI = .97, and a RMSEA of .05 (.00, .09). The AIC comparative fit index for this model was equal to 2.99, clearly indicating its poorer fit to the empirical data than that of our target model.

DISCUSSION

Findings of this study corroborate only in part the posited structural model specifying that perceived affective self-regulatory efficacy beliefs operate in synergy with filial and social self-efficacy beliefs in contributing to Bolivian young adults' life satisfaction. Nevertheless, the proposed model fits the empirical data better than all the other models tested.

In accordance with our predictions and with findings of the Italian study, a strong sense of efficacy in regulating one's positive affect is associated with a strong sense of efficacy in regulating one's negative affect. Furthermore, a strong sense of efficacy in regulating both positive and negative affect contributes to perceived self-efficacy in managing interpersonal transactions both within and outside the family.

As found in the first study, while perceived self-efficacy in regulating positive affect contributed to life satisfaction indirectly through its impact on filial self-efficacy beliefs, perceived self-efficacy in regulating negative affect contributed to life satisfaction directly as well as indirectly. Differently from the first study, with respect to self-beliefs related to one's ability to handle efficacious interpersonal relationships, only perceived filial self-efficacy exerted a positive influence on life satisfaction. These findings confirm our hypothesis on the importance of "familism" and family relationships in Bolivia and are in accordance with the central role of family in Aymara culture where it is unlikely that individual members make important decisions, organize their own work, enjoy themselves, or

accomplish spiritual needs, unless the social group to which they belong is consulted. The social group is primarily composed of parents, a number of other relatives, and the elder of the community; it exerts a strong influence on each member's life, although through norms that are often not coded and implicit (Godinez, Liberman, & Pifarre, 1989). Previous studies have also reported similar findings, showing the contribution of perceived social support from the family and the sense of family reciprocal obligation to the promotion of Latin-American youth's psychological adjustment, and adolescents' resiliency and adaptation to new urban contexts (Fulgini & Pedersen, 2002; Fulgini, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Vega, Kolody, Valle, & Weir, 1991).

As the percentage of life satisfaction's variance accounted for by the posited model, it was much lower than the one found in Italy, likely other factors than self efficacy beliefs contribute to life satisfaction in Bolivia much more than in Italy. In particular the opportunities to take advantage of one's own talents may be fewer in Bolivia than in Italy as a variety of factors associated to the material conditions of life may constrain the full expression of individual's potentials. While the symbolic environment expanded by media and information technologies (Bandura, 1986), contributes to raise the level of aspirations of young people, lack of economic resources still affect their health, education, and professional choices. Likewise the pathways to modernity of males and females still pass through the traditional bonds within families and communities, despite the pervasive exposure to western lifestyle.

Thus it is not surprising that males showed higher perceived abilities in the regulation of their negative affect, social self-efficacy, and filial self-efficacy beliefs as well as more satisfaction with their lives than females. Although the effect size of gender differences may appear negligible, they further attest to the poor and difficult life conditions for women in Bolivia (INE, 2001; UNDP, 2003).

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings from the above studies contribute in corroborating the posited conceptual model assigning a pivotal role to self-efficacy beliefs in the domain of affect regulation and interpersonal relationships management in predicting young adults' life satisfaction.

Study 1, which tested the model contingently and longitudinally, highlighted the difficulty in establishing a clear direction of influence among the two sets of affective and interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs. Both the proposed model and the alternative one, that assigned a kind of primacy to social and filial perceived self-efficacy over affective efficacy beliefs, showed an excellent fit to the empirical data; these results point out a reciprocal influence between the two sets of self-efficacy beliefs that operate in concert in promoting youth's life satisfaction. Future studies should help in clarifying the timing and processes of the reciprocal influence between the two types of self-efficacy beliefs.

Study 2 corroborated, although cross-sectionally, the posited model in a very diverse country; most of the pathways of influence in the Bolivian sample were the same as those found in the Italian sample and the target model fitted the data better than any other alternative model.

The model accounted for a much lower portion of variance in Bolivia, calling for further investigation on the various factors that may contribute to youth's life satisfaction in the two cultural contexts, and attesting, although indirectly, to the constraints associated to life conditions that may limit the full expression of individual's agentic potentials in underdeveloped countries as Bolivia.

Moreover, in both countries self-efficacy beliefs in the regulation of negative affect and filial self-efficacy beliefs contributed to life satisfaction more than self-efficacy in regulating positive affect and social self-efficacy beliefs.

The direct link between perceived efficacy in the management of negative emotions was not anticipated in the posited model, but it is not completely surprising. Indeed, a direct path of influence has been found from perceived efficacy in the management of negative emotions to depression, in addition to the indirect path of influence through the mediation of interpersonal self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 2003).

As depression is negatively correlated with life satisfaction, it is reasonable to expect that perceived efficacy to manage negative affect, a robust deterrent to despondency, be a particularly influential determinant of well-being. Furthermore, and as testified by a large literature, negative affect and emotional distress usually have stronger effects on individual functioning and well-being than positive affect and pleasant emotions; as a consequence people exert disproportionate amounts of energy trying to escape from bad moods

than they exert to induce good moods (see Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001, for a review). The perceived capacity to be able to exert adequate control over them and then to face the various life situations that may induce negative feelings makes people more secure in the social world, more socially adapted and ultimately, more happy and satisfied.

The crucial role of filial self-efficacy beliefs, both cross-sectionally and longitudinally, clearly confirmed previous findings showing the stronger influence of positive relationships with youth's well-being. Children and adolescents' perceived quality of life has been demonstrated to be more strongly associated with positive parent-child relationships rather than with either positive peer relationships (Huebner, 1991; Man, 1991), or physical appearance and academic self-concept (Dew & Huebner, 1994). Similar findings were found in various cultures (Leung & Leung, 1992; Muñoz Sastre & F erri ere, 2000) and have also been confirmed in Latin-American countries (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Fuligni et al., 1999; Vega et al., 1991), where family ties are particularly strong and individual action and wellness largely depends on family functioning and relationships (Cort es, 1995; Marin, 1993).

While the pattern of relations among self-efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction was the same for males and females, there were gender differences in self-appraisals of efficacy within each country. Consistent with previous findings, Italian females reported higher self-efficacy in the regulation of positive affect (Bandura et al., 2003; Caprara & Steca, 2005, 2006; Caprara, Steca, et al., 2006). However, gender differences in self-efficacy do not result in any gender differences in life satisfaction. Gender differences were more notable in Bolivia with females reporting lower self-efficacy in the regulation of negative affect as well as in their relations within and outside the family, and ultimately, in life satisfaction. Life continues to be difficult for women in a society where males still exert major control over females within and outside the domestic walls, even for young women attending higher education (Bustillos, 2001).

Findings from both studies further corroborated the conceptual model proposed by Caprara (2002) and supported the need to move from the analysis of task-specific to domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs. This model broadens the analysis of perceived self-efficacy beliefs to the regulation of one's affective and interpersonal life and to their impact on psychosocial functioning. In addition, while the present findings corroborate previous findings, they also extend the

generalizability of the model to a quite distant society. We are not aware of any program of research other than ours that has focused on the contribution of domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs to life satisfaction over time and across cultures.

Although the findings corroborated most of the posited paths of influence, we acknowledge the limitation of relying exclusively on self-report data. While self-efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction are subjective phenomena that are necessarily accessible through self-report we do not underestimate the importance of other informants. In this regard recent findings from ongoing research attest to high convergence between self and others' evaluation of both self-efficacy beliefs related to the management of emotions and interpersonal relations (Caprara, 2008).

The present findings carry important practical implications in view of programs aimed to promote youth's adaptation and well-being in their passage to adulthood.

As self-efficacy beliefs in managing affect and interpersonal relationships are crucial in creating the conditions and in shaping the trajectories that are conducive to satisfaction in various realms of life, social-cognitive theory provides clear directions on how to intervene in order to promote self-efficacy in young adults in the pursuit of their well-being. Modeling and mastery experiences, in particular seem well-suitable in the most diverse cultural contexts to enable young people to face the challenges of adulthood in a changing world (Bandura, 1999, 2002).

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