

Subjective Well-Being in Giftedness: A Scoping Review

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Abstract: The area of giftedness is complex, involving various theories and approaches, often hindered by myths that affect identification and support processes. Gifted individuals face unique cognitive and emotional challenges. This scoping review sought to examine the quality of life and subjective well-being of gifted individuals. Empirical articles on the self-perception of gifted people regarding their quality of life and subjective well-being, published between 2012 and 2021, were included. Fourteen articles were selected, totaling a sample of 5,256 giftedness, predominantly adolescents. Most studies were conducted in the United States and focused on the participants' subjective well-being. The results highlighted the importance of distinguishing the methods for identifying giftedness, emphasizing that advanced programs can positively impact subjective well-being by meeting the specific educational needs of these individuals.

Keywords: gifted, subjective well-being, quality of life

Bem-Estar Subjetivo nas Altas Habilidades/Superdotação: Uma Revisão de Escopo

Resumo: A área das altas habilidades/superdotação é complexa, com múltiplas teorias e abordagens, e frequentemente prejudicada pela perpetuação de mitos, que impactam nos processos de identificação e suporte. Indivíduos com altas habilidades/superdotação enfrentam desafios cognitivos e emocionais únicos. Esta revisão de escopo procurou examinar a qualidade de vida e o bem-estar subjetivo de indivíduos com altas habilidades/superdotação. Incluiu-se artigos empíricos sobre a autopercepção de pessoas com altas habilidades/superdotação da sua qualidade de vida e bem-estar subjetivo, publicados entre 2012 e 2021. Foram selecionados catorze artigos, totalizando uma amostra de 5.256 indivíduos com altas habilidades/superdotação, predominantemente adolescentes. A maioria dos estudos foi realizada nos Estados Unidos e centrou-se no bem-estar subjetivo dos participantes. Os resultados evidenciaram a importância de distinguir os métodos de identificação de altas habilidades/superdotação, destacando que programas avançados podem impactar positivamente o bem-estar subjetivo ao atender às necessidades educacionais específicas desses indivíduos.

Palavras-chave: superdotados, bem-estar subjetivo, qualidade de vida

Bienestar Subjetivo en Altas Capacidades/Dotados: Una Revisión del Alcance

Resumen: El ámbito de la superdotación es compleja, con múltiples teorías y enfoques, y frecuentemente se ve perjudicada por mitos que afectan los procesos de identificación y apoyo. Las personas con superdotación se enfrentan a retos únicos. Esta revisión del alcance pretendía examinar la calidad de vida y el bienestar subjetivo de las personas con superdotación. Se incluyeron artículos empíricos sobre la autopercepción de personas con altas capacidades/superdotación de su calidad de vida y bienestar subjetivo, publicados entre 2012 y 2021. Se seleccionaron catorce artículos, totalizando una muestra de 5.256 individuos con altas capacidades/superdotación, predominantemente adolescentes. La mayoría de los estudios se realizaron en Estados Unidos y se centraron en el bienestar subjetivo de los participantes. Los resultados evidenciaron la importancia de distinguir los métodos de identificación de superdotación, destacando que los programas avanzados pueden impactar positivamente en el bienestar subjetivo al atender las necesidades educativas específicas de estos individuos.

Palabras clave: superdotados, bienestar subjetivo, calidad de vida

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Giftedness is a complex field with various concepts and terminologies, and the effectiveness of identifying and meeting the specific educational needs of gifted individuals is hindered by the subject's invisibilization and the perpetuation of myths. There is variability among studies, with some indicating lower or higher levels of subjective well-being, as well as the presence or absence of socio-emotional issues among gifted individuals (Bergold et al., 2015; Casino-García et al., 2019; França-Freitas et al., 2017). However, evidence suggests that, particularly in supportive contexts, these individuals tend to exhibit healthy psychological development (Plominiski & Burns, 2018).

The identification process is complex and influenced by various theoretical perspectives. In Brazil, the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and the Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (Renzulli, 1986) are widely used. In contrast, other countries have also adopted more recent models, such as the Mega Model of Talent (Subotnik et al., 2011). These models raise different terminologies and concepts that imply variations in the identification and characterization methods of gifted people. Despite the lack of consensus, most theoretical frameworks agree that gifted individuals represent aspects that differ from traditional thinking, such as being more questioning and creative, and showing above-average abilities in some areas, but some operational definitions of above-average abilities vary depending on the chosen model (Walker & Shore, 2011).

The literature identifies several characteristics of gifted individuals, including large involvement with tasks, hypersensitivity compared to the average population (Vötter & Schnell, 2019), concerns about justice (Casino-García et al., 2019), death, loneliness, and empathy, greater speed in processing information and distinction of interpersonal feelings (Virgolim, 2018). These characteristics result in differences in the way gifted people function compared to their age peers and when added to other aspects — such as perspectives, self-concepts, achievements, and socioemotional abilities — they can also generate differences in their perceptions of quality of life and well-being (Virgolim, 2018).

Quality of life, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is “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” (The WHOQOL Group, 1995, p. 1405). It covers various aspects, including physical and psychological issues, mobility, personal relationships, safety, financial resources, and leisure options (Eren et al., 2018). However, quality of life has numerous definitions and assessment criteria (Fleck et al., 2000).

Well-being can be approached from two main perspectives: hedonic and eudaimonic. The hedonic perspective involves subjective well-being, reflected by cognitive components (life satisfaction) and affective components (presence of positive effects and absence of negative affects). The eudaimonic perspective, on the other hand, is relative to psychological well-being and involves achieving personal growth, purpose

in life, autonomy, and self-acceptance (Bernstein et al., 2021; Vötter & Schnell, 2019).

Subjective well-being, sometimes used as a synonym for happiness, can be defined as the different evaluations people make about their lives, the events that happen to them, their bodies, their minds, and the circumstances they live in (Diener et al., 1999; Sayler et al., 2015).

This study examines both constructs, considering their definitions and conceptual boundaries. Given the conceptual overlap and terminological variability in the literature — particularly in studies involving gifted individuals — this review maps how quality of life and subjective well-being are defined, measured, and related in the context of giftedness. Although related, the constructs are not synonymous. Quality of life encompasses broader, more objective domains, such as health and safety (Fleck et al., 2020), while subjective well-being refers specifically to individuals’ psychological and emotional evaluations of their lives (Diener et al., 1999).

Studies diverge on the levels of well-being in gifted individuals compared to non-gifted individuals, possibly due to the combination of different factors, such as gifted type, educational adjustments, and personal characteristics (Bergold et al., 2015; Casino-García et al., 2019). The lack of studies in the area (Pollet & Schnell, 2017) and the multiplicity of concepts such as happiness (Sayler et al., 2015), well-being, life satisfaction, and quality of life (Fang et al., 2022) also contribute to this heterogeneity (Bergold et al., 2015). Some of the issues that cause divergence in studies on quality of life and well-being are imprecise variables in the definitions of the constructs and factors associated with them, as well as the difference in their conceptions and in the theoretical models that support different types of giftedness (Lang et al., 2019).

The discrepancies in well-being and quality of life between gifted and non-gifted individuals highlight the need for deeper investigation, given the scarcity of comprehensive studies. Understanding gifted individuals’ subjective experiences helps identify vulnerabilities and foster their emotional, psychological, and cognitive growth. Additionally, this research could contribute to refining constructs, identifying knowledge gaps, and potentially expanding understanding beyond intellectual performance, assisting educators, families, and policymakers in developing strategies aimed at nurturing both talent and emotional well-being.

This scoping review sought to examine the quality of life and subjective well-being of gifted individuals, following the questions: (a) What are the quality of life and subjective well-being of gifted people reported by the studies? (b) How are the concepts of subjective well-being and quality of life characterized and utilized in the field? (c) What factors are related to the quality of life and subjective well-being of gifted people in such studies?

Method

This study followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping

Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) protocol for the review methods. Therefore, to specify the research problem, we used the strategy known as “PECO” — Population (P), Exposure (E), Comparison (C, when relevant), and Outcomes (O). Perceptions of life quality and subjective well-being (E) in the gifted population (P) were investigated in comparison (C) to a control or a normative sample in order to identify the measured differences between each group (O). Once the scope of the review was defined, a search for systematic reviews that had already been carried out on the Virtual Health Library (VHL) website and the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) was performed; however, the search retrieved no results.

Search Strategies for the Identification of Studies

To search articles that were relevant to the research scope, keywords that synthesise the main investigated concepts and variables, and that composed titles and abstracts of articles on the topic that the authors already knew were listed. In VHL Psychology, the words *Gifted*, *Well-being*, and *Quality of Life* were found, but there were also several constructs referring to the same phenomenon. An initial search was conducted to confirm the presence or the absence of results with each of the keywords. The words that had results were kept. The final search used the terms: (“gifted” OR “high iq” OR “high ability” OR “high intellectual ability” OR “giftedness”) AND (“wellbeing” OR “well-being” OR “quality of life” OR “life satisfaction” OR “satisfaction with life”).

Eligibility Criteria

Two authors conducted the searches in the Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science, SciELO databases, and in reference lists of eligible studies, which traditionally index research in the health, psychology, and education fields. The search took place from April 21, 2021, to April 27, 2021, and included only empirical articles on the standardised instruments for measuring quality of life or subjective well-being in gifted individuals that were published in English, Portuguese, or Spanish in a ten-year period: between 2012 and 2021. The remaining studies were manually searched in the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) Theses Catalogue and in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD).

The citations, titles, and abstracts were stored in Rayyan abstract management software for the eligibility assessment process. The software indicated the duplicate studies, which were manually checked and excluded. After the exclusion of the duplicates, the remaining studies continued to the screening stage carried out independently by two judges under blind conditions, who analysed the titles and abstracts of the articles stored in Rayyan. Articles that did not report the identification method used for gifted, whose samples contained more than one diagnosis, or double exceptionality were excluded from the search.

Then, the abstracts were independently read by the two judges. Accepted abstracts should respond affirmatively

to the following questions: (a) Is it an empirical article?; (b) Does it make use of quality of life, subjective well-being, or life satisfaction instruments as a method of evaluation?; (c) Did data collection take place with gifted people, high IQ, or talented people?; (d) Is it either in English, Spanish, or Portuguese? In case of uncertainties about the aforementioned criteria, the judges accepted the abstract with restrictions. Only the studies classified as accepted or accepted with restrictions by both judges composed the sample. In the case of one judge assessing an abstract as accepted and the other as accepted with restrictions, the article was included for the next stage. In case of disagreement between judges, they reached a consensus and did not need a third judge to assess the inclusion or exclusion of such studies. At this stage, the *kappa* coefficient was calculated using the Jamovi statistical program (version 1.2.27), which indicated almost perfect agreement among the judges regarding the inclusion of articles in the eligibility study ($k = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$; agreement = 96%) (Landis & Koch, 1977).

All articles selected in the previous stage were retrieved to be fully read. At this stage, the confirmation of eligibility was performed by one of the authors as shown in the flowchart of selection and primary reason for exclusion in Figure 1. A previously prepared eligibility assessment form was used considering the established eligibility criteria (inclusion and exclusion). Then, the total number of eligible studies that composed the scoping review was obtained.

Data Extraction Process

The articles for this review were entirely reread. Data extraction was guided by a standardised form on an Excel spreadsheet. The form enabled data collection on all the variables relevant for the results’ interpretation, calculation, and applicability. The information was collected by one of the authors of the present study based on the following topics: (a) type and year of the study; (b) criteria for defining and identifying gifted, quality of life, and subjective well-being; (c) related variables or confounding factors; (d) study objectives; (e) sample characteristics; (f) employed instruments and definitions; (g) statistical treatment and main findings; and (h) criteria for defining the relevant outcome.

Assessment of Risk of Bias

To reduce the risk of bias, an extensive search was conducted using external sources, and two authors performed their selection. In addition, the Downs and Black (1998) checklist was used to evaluate the methodological quality of randomised observational studies. The Cochrane Collaboration suggests that the instrument should be adapted for different contexts, as some questions are not applied to observational studies. The checklist consists of 27 questions, divided into reporting, external validity, internal validity and outcome bias, confounding factors, and power. Items regarding research that involved

interventions were not scored (items 4, 8, 13 -15, 19, 21-24). Item 27 was changed to score 0 or 1, and the maximum allowable score remained at 28 points (Downs & Black, 1998). At this stage, two independent judges evaluated the studies. The *kappa* coefficient indicated moderate agreement between the judges regarding the assessment of the methodological quality of the studies ($k = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$; agreement = 82%).

Heterogeneity Assessment

Given the nature of the studies, we expected heterogeneity and, therefore, explored it according to: (a) eligibility criteria; (b) methods to determine and quantify exposure factors; (c) confounding factors; and (d) methods to identify or define the outcomes. Confounding factors limit the interpretation of results since the variables associated with quality of life and well-being may impact the participants' self-perception. To define the confounding factors, the associated factors that could contribute to variations in reported measures of quality of life and well-being were identified, as well as variations

in the baseline characteristics of the sample that could be a source of inconsistency between findings.

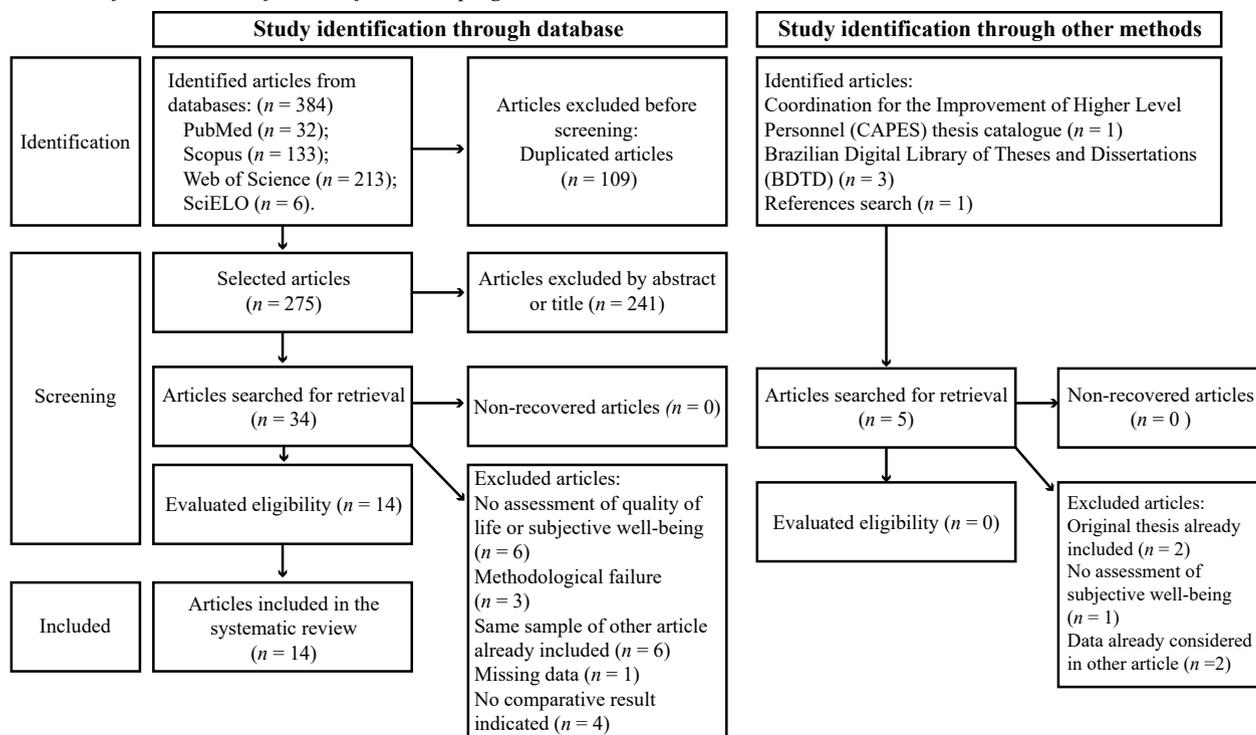
Before carrying out this review, a protocol was developed to guide the article selection process, inclusion and exclusion criteria, analysis methods and quality assessment of the included studies.

Results

The selection of the analysed articles was performed as shown in Figure 1. In total, 384 articles were found using keywords in the databases of the research platforms. After removing duplicate papers, 275 remained for evaluation according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to their abstracts and titles. Were excluded from the research articles that did not answer the "PECO" strategy or used the same sample of another study already included. A total of 39 articles, including those found manually in reference lists, were retrieved and read in their entirety; 14 of them were included in the final corpus of study.

Figure 1

Flowchart of the selection of articles for the scoping review



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

This systematic review's 14 articles presented samples of gifted people from ten different countries. The studies were predominantly published between 2017 and 2020, three of them with data collected in the USA. In all samples, 7,954 participants were observed, 5,256 had some type of gifted, and 47.29% of the participants were male. In terms of gifted identification criteria, four of the 14 studies were

based only on intelligence measures, four used multiple criteria, and four used admissions into advanced programs. Additionally, two studies employed combined identification criteria: one utilized both intelligence measures and admission into advanced programs, while the other integrated multiple criteria with admission into an advanced educational program. Advanced programs refer to educational provisions designed

to address the learning needs of students demonstrating high intellectual or academic performance. These programs typically offer accelerated curricula, enrichment activities, or selective admission based on performance indicators. Six studies had samples composed only of adolescents aged between 12 and 18 years, four were composed of children and adolescents, and four of only adults. Regarding the instruments used, nine studies assessed subjective well-being, three studies investigated only life satisfaction, and two used quality of life assessments.

Table 1 summarises the studies by year publication, country of research, analysed sample, gifted identification method,

instrument *Cronbach's alpha* coefficient, and outcome/evidence of gifted-related individuals. Additionally, it shows the Downs and Black (1998) checklist assessment of methodological quality for the studies, which ranged from 08 to 26 out of 28 total points (mean 12.94, SD 4.25). The criteria with the lowest scores were: (a) population sample representativeness; (b) description of confounding factors; and (c) information about the environment, moment of identification, and care that each sample received. Bergold et al. (2015) and Plominski and Burns (2018) had the greatest scores (26 and 18 points), while Eren et al. (2018) and França-Freitas et al. (2017) received the lowest values (8 points each).

Table 1

Description of studies included in the scoping review

Study	Country of study	Gifted Identification	Gifted Sample	Control sample	Instrument (α)	Gifted Result	Downs and Black checklist
Fang et al. (2022)	China	<i>Intellectual giftedness</i> (advanced programmes)	676 adolescents <i>M</i> 13.50(2.1) (52% male)	702 adolescents <i>M</i> 13.61(0.54) (46,6% male)	BMSLSS ($\alpha = 0.88$).	+ life satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) ^{CG}	15
Bergold et al. (2020)	Germany	<i>Intellectual giftedness</i> (IQ measures)	27 adolescents <i>M</i> 15.31(0.74)	27 adolescents <i>M</i> 15.31(0.74)	HSWBS ($\alpha = 0.89$)	= life satisfaction ^{CG}	15
Lee et al. (2020)	USA and Korea	<i>Academically Gifted</i> (advanced programmes + IQ measures and/or performance tests)	1,676 adolescents, 13-17 years old (Koreans = 1,062 + Americans = 493) ^a	614 adolescents ^a	Life Satisfaction Scale ($\alpha = 0.83$)	+ life satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) ^{CG} + life satisfaction of Americans than Koreans ($p < 0.001$) ^{gifted}	12
Vötter and Schnell (2019)	Austria	<i>Highly intellectually gifted adults</i> (IQ measures)	100 adults <i>M</i> 43(9) (45% male)	-	WHO-5 ($\alpha = 0.84$)	- SWB ^{CND}	11
Casino-García et al. (2019)	Spain	<i>Gifted students</i> (IQ measures and/or performance tests)	132 children and adolescents <i>M</i> 10.54(2.38) (72.7% male)	141 children and adolescents <i>M</i> 10.79(2.40) (67.4% male)	SPANE (G1 $\alpha = 0.88$; G2 $\alpha = 0.83$)	- SWB: positive experiences ($p < 0.05$) ^{CG} + sadness dimension in mood state ($p < 0.05$) ^{CG}	15
González-Cabrera et al. (2019)	Spain	<i>Intellectually Gifted</i> (IQ measures and/or performance tests)	255 children and adolescents <i>M</i> 11.88(2.28) (60.8% male)	-	KIDSCREEN ($\alpha = 0.80$)	= perceived quality of life ^{CND}	12
Chen et al. (2018)	China	<i>Academically gifted students</i> (advanced programs)	351 adolescents <i>M</i> 16.15 (35.89% male)	-	SWLS; PANAS	= life satisfaction ^{CND} + girls ($p < 0.05$; $d = 0.28$) than boys in life satisfaction; + boys in AP	16
Eren et al. (2018)	Turkey	<i>Gifted children</i> (IQ measures)	49 children and adolescents <i>M</i> 11(1.4) (55% male)	56 children and adolescents <i>M</i> 10.98(1.39) (55% male)	PedsQL: physical, emotional, social, and scholar health	- physical health ($p < 0.05$) ^{GC}	8
Plominski and Burns (2018)	USA	<i>Gifted</i> (advanced programs)	641 young adults <i>M</i> 20.7 (23.5% male)	386 young adults <i>M</i> 21.3 (31% male)	ESWLS (G1 $\alpha = 0.89$, G2 $\alpha = 0.91$)	+ life satisfaction ($p < 0.01$) ^{CG} - dysthymic affect ($p < 0.05$) ^{GC}	18

Continued...

Table 1. Continuation

Study	Country of study	Gifted Identification	Gifted Sample	Control sample	Instrument (α)	Gifted Result	Downs and Black checklist
França-Freitas et al. (2017)	Brazil	<i>Gifted and talented</i> (multiple criteria, advanced programs)	269 children and adolescents M 11(0.91) (46.8% male)	125 children and adolescents M 11(0.54) (37% male)	EMSVC, AP and AN Scale	+ SWB ($p < 0.05$) + Global satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) = AP - AN ($p < 0.05$)	8
Pollet and Schnell (2017)	Austria	<i>Intellectual giftedness + Academically High Achievement</i> (IQ + HAA)	198 adults HIQ M 40(10) + 141 HAA M 53(14) (57% male)	136 adults M 47(16) (57% male)	WHO-5	- SWB in HIQ ^{CG} and HAA ($p < 0.05$) = SWB in HAA ^{CG} ($p < 0.05$)	16
Bergold et al. (2015)	Germany	<i>Intellectual giftedness</i> (IQ measures)	74 adolescents M 16.64(0.69) (74.32% male)	74 adolescents M 16.61(0.72)	<i>General Life Satisfaction Scale</i> ($\alpha = 0.93$)	= life satisfaction ^{CG} - life satisfaction in female than male ($p < 0.002, d = 0.24$)	26
Sayler et al. (2015)	USA	<i>High-ability</i> (advanced programs)	533 adolescents and youth [118 M 17.92(0.39) (39% male); 415 ($n = 239$ M 15.90(0.48) (54% male), and 176 M 19.36(1.55) (46% male)]	-	PWI ($\alpha = 0.81$)	= SWB ^{CND}	12
Zettergren and Bergman (2014)	Sweden	<i>Gifted</i> (IQ measures > 119)	696 participants (43 years old female and 47 years old male) with and without gifted ^a	-	<i>Global life satisfaction</i> ($\alpha = 0.83$), PANAS ($\alpha = 0.85$, AF = 0.87, NA = 0.87)	- global life satisfaction [$p < 0.01$] ^{GC} = AP and AN ^{GC}	9

Notes. α = Cronbach's alpha; M (SD) = mean age(standard deviation); ^a = study does not indicate percentage of male and mean age; ^{CG} = control group; ^{CND} = comparative with normative data; "+" = better performance than ^{CG} or ^{CND}; "-" = worse performance than ^{CG} or ^{CND}; "=" = equal performance or with no statistically significant differences compared to CG or CND; SWB = subjective well-being; PWB = psychological well-being; HIQ = Intellectually Gifted; HAA = High Academic Achievers; %male = male percentage in the sample; BMLSS = Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale; HSWBS = Scale of Habitual Subjective Well-Being; WHO-5 = WHO-5 Well-being Index; SPANE = The Scale of Positive and Negative Experience; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; PANAS = Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale; PedsQL = Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory; ESWLS = General Life and Self subscales of the Extended Satisfaction With Life Scale; EMSVC = Multidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale for Children [acronym in Portuguese]; PWI = Personal Well-being Index for Adults.

Identification Methods for Gifted Individuals

In the 14 studies, the method applied to identify gifted individuals varied considerably. For the classification criteria of such identification methods, we used the Carman (2013) system.

Five studies categorised gifted considering intelligence measures as the core indicator of giftedness: (a) four considered general intelligence scores $IQ > 129$ (Bergold et al., 2015, 2020; Eren et al., 2018; Vötter & Schnell, 2019); and (b) one study considers $IQ > 119$ (Zettergren & Bergman, 2014). Five studies considered intelligence measures and performances in tests: (a) two classified gifted according to prior diagnosis, involving $IQ > 129$ or greater performance on differential aptitude tests (Casino-García et al., 2019; González-Cabrera et al., 2019); (b) two studies had samples from advanced programs, used different criteria: one considered very superior

intelligence, specific academic aptitudes, and teacher referral (França-Freitas et al., 2017); and the other considered two samples, either by having an $IQ > 129$ and greater performance in aptitude tests, or by meeting admission criteria to specialised schools (Lee et al., 2020); and (c) one study identified two groups of gifted, one with very superior intelligence, and one with academically High Achievers (HAA) (Pollet & Schnell, 2017). The remaining four studies brought specific enrollment criteria of advanced programs or schools for people with higher academic performance (Chen et al., 2018; Fang et al., 2022; Plominski & Burns, 2018; Sayler et al., 2015).

Conceptions and Indices of Quality of Life and Well-being

Regarding the analysed concepts, only two included articles directly addressed the issues over quality of life in

gifted people. The instruments included the participant's physical and mental health, level of independence, social relationships, environmental factors, and personal beliefs (Eren et al., 2018; González-Cabrera et al., 2019).

The concept of subjective well-being was mainly evaluated in the studies from the hedonic perspective (Bergold et al., 2020; Casino-García et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2018; França-Freitas et al., 2017; Plominski & Burns, 2018; Pollet & Schnell, 2017; Vötter & Schnell, 2019; Zettergren & Bergman, 2014). One study defined well-being as a cognitive and subjective assessment of quality of life comprised of socio-affective components, general and specific dimensions of life satisfaction (Sayler et al., 2015). Three studies focused exclusively on the aspect of life satisfaction, of which two considered the individual's overall assessment of their life (Bergold et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2020), and one considered the overall perception of quality of life (Fang et al., 2022). Regarding the two studies that considered quality of life measures, one indicated a lower score in the physical health domain in gifted individuals when compared to the control group (Eren et al., 2018), while the other found not significant differences in quality of life when compared with normative samples (González-Cabrera et al., 2019). Eren et al. (2018) selected their samples of children and adolescents from a specific arts and science centre in Turkey, gifted identified through IQ measures. The sample of the study conducted by González-Cabrera et al. (2019) with students in Spain was obtained through 22 associations of gifted students.

The five studies with results related to general subjective well-being showed mixed results: two show lower indices of subjective well-being in gifted samples (Casino-García et al., 2019; Vötter & Schnell, 2019); one indicates variation in the results according to the gifted identification method (Pollet & Schnell, 2017); and one shows a higher level of subjective well-being (França-Freitas et al., 2017); while another found no significant differences in subjective well-being between the gifted and comparative samples (Sayler et al., 2015).

Of the two studies that found significant differences with lower indices of subjective well-being in gifted individuals, one was conducted in Austria (Vötter & Schnell, 2019) with an adult sample ($n = 100$) of Mensa members (people with $IQ \geq 130$) using intelligence measures as an identification method for gifted; and the other was conducted in Spain (Casino-García et al., 2019) with children and adolescents ($n = 132$) from the general population of Valencia using intelligence or performance tests as identification methods. The latter indicated significantly lower subjective well-being in the gifted sample, as well as lower indices of positive affects and a higher dimension of sadness in humour states compared to the control sample ($n = 141$).

The study that indicated variation in subjective well-being according to the identification method was conducted with adults in Austria (Pollet & Schnell, 2017). Its sample was divided into three groups: (a) those with very superior intelligence scores (HIQ) ($n = 198$); (b) academically High Achievers (HAA) ($n = 141$); and (c) a control group ($n = 136$). The HIQ group had significantly lower levels of subjective

well-being than the HAA, which attained a level of subjective well-being equivalent to the control group.

On the other hand, a Brazilian study found that children and adolescents identified as gifted or talented ($n = 269$) coming from centres for talent development showed higher levels of subjective well-being, such as higher life satisfaction and lower negative effects, when compared to the control sample (França-Freitas et al., 2017). The study that found no significant difference in subjective well-being was conducted in the USA and covered a sample of adolescents and young adults ($n = 948$) identified by two advanced educational programs; the results were compared with normative samples (Sayler et al., 2015).

Finally, seven studies examined life satisfaction or positive and negative effects: three studies indicated that the gifted sample had higher life satisfaction (Fang et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2020; Plominski & Burns, 2018); three studies found no significant differences (Bergold et al., 2015, 2020; Chen et al., 2018); and one study indicated that gifted individuals had lower life satisfaction (Zettergren & Bergman, 2014).

In comparison to a control group, the three studies that found greater life satisfaction in the gifted sample used advanced program criteria to identify gifted. Two of these studies had adolescent samples, one was conducted in China (Fang et al., 2022) ($n = 676$) and the others in the USA and Korea (Lee et al., 2020) ($n = 1.676$), which found higher levels of life satisfaction among Americans compared to Koreans within the gifted samples. The third study conducted in the USA with young adults (Plominski & Burns, 2018) ($n = 641$) found significant differences between the groups, indicating a lower dysthymic affect in the gifted population.

The three studies that found no significant difference between samples were conducted with adolescents; two of them with a matched sample from Germany, identified through intelligence measures ($n = 27$ and $n = 74$) (Bergold et al., 2015, 2020), while the other one was conducted in China using advanced programs as an identification method ($n = 351$) and made its comparisons with normative samples (Chen et al., 2018). Finally, a study conducted in Sweden with adults identified with $IQ > 119$, showed lower life satisfaction in the gifted sample when compared with the control sample. However, it found no significant differences in positive and negative effects (Zettergren & Bergman, 2014).

Discussion

Through the comparison and integration of data from the analysed studies, this scoping review sought to shed light on the subjective well-being and quality of life of gifted people.

One of the main conclusions was the importance of distinguishing different methods of identification of gifted individuals for the understanding of quality of life and subjective well-being in this population. The studies indicated that samples identified through advanced programs might differ in their reported outcomes compared to those

identified by other methods. However, these differences may not result directly from the identification itself, but rather from the longitudinal follow-up and ongoing support provided through such programs, potentially stimulating each individual's developmental potential. Of the six studies, using advanced program criteria, four reported higher life satisfaction in gifted people compared to control samples; and two studies without control samples indicated results comparable to normative data: one on life satisfaction; and one on subjective well-being.

In this regard, Plominski and Burns (2018) question why Honours Program students (a Midwestern university program in the United States aimed at academic high achievers) report greater well-being than their peers. According to the authors, the students' psychosocial characteristics, their tendency to better manage the stressors of university education, and the support and encouragement structure of the program may be contributing factors to the findings.

The Honours Program model balances academic support and challenges; students are encouraged to play a more active role, increasing their chances of achieving an internal locus of control. Lee et al. (2020) indicate that academically gifted adolescents are very sensitive to school performance and that, as long as their academic abilities are respected in the educational and social context, they have a greater chance of achieving life satisfaction. In this sense, having access to quality teaching at an appropriate pace can increase positive emotions. Gifted students respond to these nurturing environments and challenges with positive emotions and increased well-being (Sayler et al., 2015).

The other eight studies identified gifted participants by intelligence tests and/or multiple performance tests, with samples that did not come from advanced programs. Five out of eight studies showed lower well-being, life satisfaction or quality of life in the gifted population. In this regard, three studies indicated lower subjective well-being, one lower life satisfaction and one lower score in the physical health domain in gifted individuals when compared to control samples (3) or normative data (2). The remaining three articles indicated no differences. Two of these studies compared life satisfaction to control samples, while the other compared quality of life to normative data.

In a study involving 55 countries, Diener et al. (1995) identified characteristics related to subjective well-being: high income, individualism, human rights, and social equality. Age, gender, family structure, life events, self-concept, self-sufficiency, effectiveness, school, and neighborhood are all factors that impact subjective well-being (Fang et al., 2022).

Subjective well-being is negatively related by negative affect, alienation from peers, depression, anxiety (Chen et al., 2018), lack of challenge in academic subjects, negative experiences, health problems, a lack of resources, or emotional relationships (Sayler et al., 2015). On the other hand, greater levels of subjective well-being can be obtained through the influence of factors like: positive affect, agency hope, parental confidence, general health, and social functioning (Chen et al., 2018); challenging activities,

positive life events, friendships with significant persons, hopeful and optimistic about the future (Chen et al., 2018; Sayler et al., 2015).

Given the characteristics of this public, when a gifted individual is in an environment that provides intellectual and psychosocial challenges suited to the needs of the gifted, it may result in greater life satisfaction (Plominski & Burns, 2018). This is due to: (a) the way of understanding events; (b) above-average ease of learning; (c) being in an environment that allows in-depth analysis; (d) allowing and encouraging rapid reasoning; (e) ease of assimilating new subjects; (f) unexpected connections; (g) different paths to problem-solving; (h) development of ideas and solutions; (i) being in environments where other colleagues also follow their reasoning.

Satisfaction with school by gifted students has been related to overall life satisfaction (Bergold et al., 2015). Wirthwein and Rost (2011) highlight that school and work have a greater impact on gifted people due to their potential to be more successful in these domains. However, this can go further, as gifted individuals can show who they are, display their full potential, and be appropriately stimulated/challenged in these environments.

In this sense, satisfaction at the academic level occurs when the task's challenge is appropriate for the individual's ability; tasks that are too easy might lead to boredom, while tasks that are too tough can lead to anxiety. Positive emotions are related with the student's interest in the activity, whereas well-being is related with intrinsic motivation and perceived global control over levels of progress. Furthermore, in order to reduce stress for the gifted individuals and help in psychological adjustment, academic commitment and relationships with people who have similar abilities and motivations should be supported (Vötter & Schnell, 2019).

In this regard, we emphasise the variability of sampling methodologies used in the studies, which need more data to assess how much the context impacts these results. An important point would be the need for a standard definition for terminology and the identification methods in the field. Yet, we see the relevance of programs that enhance the development of gifted individuals by taking into consideration their particularities and acting as a protective factor for them. The identification points to a profile with distinct specificities, difficulties, and facilities, and what these advanced programs do is promote the subjective well-being of this population. Thus, it is evident that it is not enough to identify gifted correctly, without confounding variables, but also that specific actions must be taken following such identification. However, although these programs can provide cognitive stimulation and valuable challenges, they should not be seen as the only way to meet the needs of this public, which is quite heterogeneous and is surrounded by other contextual factors, such as family and support networks.

The methods to identify gifted showed considerable heterogeneity among the studies, which varied between



intelligence measures, mixed measures, and specific enrollment criteria of advanced programs and schools. There was also variation in the methods of assessing quality of life and subjective well-being. This heterogeneity results in essential differences in the characterization of gifted samples. Study limitations: We highlight the cautious interpretation of the use of self-report assessments. Some of the studies used convenience samples, while some did not include a control sample and only performed the comparisons with normative data of the instruments. Also, our search strategy might have missed some studies, excluding articles in languages other than those we included. In addition, the temporal scope of our review was limited to studies published until 2021. While this cut-off was defined for methodological and feasibility reasons at the time of data collection, we acknowledge that more recent publications could provide valuable insights, especially in light of recent social and educational changes.

Taking this into account, we ensured the assessment of methodological quality by the Downs and Black (1998) Checklist and *Cronbach's alpha* coefficients related to the instruments mentioned in the studies. As for the research designs, the studies mostly adopted a cross-sectional quasi-experimental design. Only one of the included studies adopted longitudinal research designs using subjective well-being measures. Longitudinal research is of utmost importance as it could elucidate the consequences and relationships between other variables.

The importance of this review is both theoretical and practical. On the theoretical aspect, we explored a subject not yet satisfactorily answered. In concluding this review, we have more consistent and substantial arguments about the impact of advanced programs on the subjective well-being of gifted individuals. We concluded that advanced programs could meet specific educational needs to enhance individuals' abilities through stimulation, challenge, and interrelationships. The knowledge of quality of life and subjective well-being can guide decisions related to the gifted population, and such results can impact their lives. In this sense, it is essential to carry out further research on the subject. In order to: (a) act more assertively; (b) promote more efficient prevention; (c) support networks; (d) provide consistent bases for the creation of public policies aimed at the full development of the capabilities of gifted individuals.

Gifted individuals have unique personal characteristics that differentiate them from the average population. They have abilities to learn new information quickly, make new connections, and understand complex ideas. However, they also experience numerous challenges, such as isolation, perfectionism, and excessive self-demand. In this sense, it is essential to have studies on the quality of life and subjective well-being of these individuals.

This review showed mixed results strongly related to the method used to identify gifted and indicated that gifted individuals identified by advanced programs showed higher subjective well-being and life satisfaction. This result shows that the difference between the studies is not in the identification

method, but in the gifted individuals' experiences. Advanced programs can be characterised as a way of addressing the specific educational needs of this population — as base support — enhancing the students' capacity. Furthermore, the existence of these programs also promotes interaction between peers who share similar interests, as well as the welcoming of society, promoting the mental health of the participants. The implications of these findings in the practical realm include improving attention to meeting the needs of gifted individuals, especially concerning their mental health. In this sense, programs aimed at this population would serve as support networks to ensure and enable these individuals to develop their full potential and achieve the best subjective well-being and quality of life they can.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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