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The Relationship Between Frequent Bullying and Subjective Well-Being in Indonesian Children

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to ascertain the relationship between bullying (at home and at school) and subjective well-being (SWB) across three age groups (8, 10, and 12 years old) in Indonesia. This was a cross-sectional study that used data from the third wave of the Children's Worlds Survey (N = 21,002; 49.4% boys, 50.6% girls), which was conducted in West Java Province, Indonesia. Bullying actions were measured by self-reported frequency of being a victim of each action by siblings and by other children during the last month. For the data analysis, a subsample was considered for each kind of bullying report (physical, verbal, and psychological) stating children were bullied more than three times and reports stating children were never bullied. SWB was measured using the Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-SWBS) and the Overall Life Satisfaction scale (OLS). Data were analysed using linear regression and explained using Cummins' theory of homeostasis. Being bullied demonstrates a significant negative contribution to the SWB of Indonesian children. Gender displays significant SWB differences, with girls showing higher scores than boys. Age also displays significant differences in SWB scores, with an increase from 8 to 10 years old and a decrease from 10 to 12. Bullied children seem to adapt to the bullying and maintain rather high levels of SWB, but in general their scores are significantly lower than non-bullied children, with the exception of children 8 years of age. Bullying is a serious problem which needs to be taken into account in order to help these children whose mental health might be at serious risk.

Keywords

Bullying, children, Indonesia, overall life satisfaction, school, siblings, subjective well-being