



Bullying Victimization and Children's Subjective Well-being: A Comparative Study in Seven Asian Countries

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Abstract

The aims of this study are twofold. The first goal is to investigate the relationship between children's experiences of being bullied (physically, verbally, and emotionally) and their subjective well-being (SWB) in seven low-industrialised Asian countries. The second aim is to ascertain how the relation between bullying victimisation and SWB differs across these countries. This study used data from the third wave of the Children's Worlds survey across two age groups (10- and 12-year-olds) within seven Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam). The sample consists of 11,483 children, based on representative sampling in each country (49.4% boys and 50.6% girls; Mean age=11.21). Data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) and multigroup SEM in order to check for metric and scalar invariance among countries. The results show an excellent fit for the models using the pooled sample for 10- and 12-year-olds. The multigroup models also displayed an excellent fit and found a significant negative contribution of bullying victimisation to SWB of children in all seven countries, depending on the type of bullying incidents (except for being left out by other children in the 10-year-old group in Nepal, which had a significant positive contribution). Being left out by other children made the strongest contribution to SWB of children in the Asian countries studied, except for India (both age groups), Nepal (10-year-old group), and Sri Lanka (12-year-old group). Being called unkind names was the most frequent bullying incident, more frequently among boys and 12-year-olds than among girls and 10-year-olds. Even though bullying victimisation negatively contributed to SWB, relatively high scores were observed for SWB in six countries according to Cummins' theory of homeostasis (except Vietnam that displayed SWB mean scores below the expected set-point ranging from 60 to 90). The results were explained using Cummins' SWB homeostasis theory, suggesting that children's buffers were efficiently activated to adapt to the adverse situation of being physically, verbally, or emotionally bullied, in order to protect their SWB.

Extended author information available on the last page of the article