



Subjective well-being of children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia: two data collections

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Abstract

This paper examines the subjective well-being (SWB) of children and adolescents (10–18 years old) during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia for two periods (May to July 2020 and March to May 2021), using cross-sectional data from two distinct samples of $N = 1,011$ (M age = 14.61) and $N = 1,640$ (M age = 14.86), respectively. Its aims are twofold: (1) to examine the state of SWB among Indonesian children, including its cognitive component (measured using the CW-SWBS), positive affect (PA), and negative affect (NA), and the participants' satisfaction with their contact with friends and how they spend their time; and (2) to compare the evolution of these SWB-related aspects from the first to the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected using Google Forms and convenience and snowball sampling. Results showed that boys displayed significantly higher mean SWB scores than girls, while elementary students displayed significantly higher mean scores for the cognitive component than middle and high school students for both data collection periods. Boys also displayed significantly higher mean PA scores than girls. There were significant school grade differences on PA and NA, depending on the period of study. In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, children and adolescents displayed lower scores on satisfaction with their contact with friends than in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. These results suggest that children and adolescents adapted to the COVID-19 situation during the second year, and this adaptation protected their SWB from further decrease, as defended by the homeostasis theory.

Keywords Adolescents · Children · COVID-19 · Positive and negative affect · Subjective well-being

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) received reports of massive casualties in Wuhan, China, caused by pneumonia of an unknown origin (BBC, 2020a). Due to its rapid spread, on 30 January 2020, WHO declared an international public health emergency (BBC, 2020b; WHO, 2020b). WHO found that this disease was caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, a new type of coronavirus, and on 11 February 2020, WHO labeled the illness the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). On 11 March 2020, WHO declared this outbreak a pandemic (WHO, 2020b).

Several studies globally revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic affected not only people's physical health but also their mental health and well-being. A study in Canada on children 9–15 years old ($N = 932$) showed that 37.6% of participants were more bored and 31% of them were more worried than before the pandemic in 2020 (Mitra et al., 2021). Another study in Taiwan showed an extreme prevalence rate (40.9%) of non-suicidal self-injury among adolescents during COVID-19 (Tang et al., 2021; Mitra et al., 2021) also revealed that 49.4% of participants reported changes in emotional state that may contribute to lower subjective well-being (SWB).

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to “a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life as a whole” (Diener et al., 2002, p. 187). SWB has the following three characteristics: (1) it is grounded in an individual's perception and evaluation of his/her experiences, (2) it includes positive measures and not only the absence of negative ones, and (3) it includes overall life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2002). Children's SWB is an expansive conceptualization

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