

The Emotional Student Well-Being Among Low-income Families in Indonesian Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the emotional well-being of students, which is an essential aspect of education that influences not only academic achievement but also children's personal and social development. This study aims (1) to describe the influence on the emotional well-being of elementary school students from low-income families in Malaysia and Indonesia; and (2) to analyse the factors that influence the emotional well-being of elementary school students from low-income families in Malaysia and Indonesia. This research is qualitative. The researcher's presence is the primary or essential instrument in this research. This research was conducted in two countries, namely Malaysia and Indonesia. The data sources for this research are elementary school teachers and students in the two countries. The data collection methods used were observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis methods are acquisition, condensing, presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity testing is done through internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. The research results show that (1) family conditions influence students' emotional well-being because they include self-awareness, self-regulation, feelings of empathy, motivation, and social skills; and (2) factors that influence students' emotional well-being include individual, environmental (home, school and community), socioeconomic and cultural factors.

Keywords: *emotion, well-being, low income, elementary school*

Introduction

Students' emotional well-being is an essential aspect of education that influences academic achievement and children's personal and social development (Anggreni & Immanuel, 2020). In the context of students from low family backgrounds, emotional well-being often faces more complex challenges. Students from low-income families are frequently exposed to stressful living conditions, such as limited access to basic needs, lack of social support, and a less conducive environment. This can hurt his emotional well-being.

In Malaysia and Indonesia, the phenomenon of students from low-income families is a significant issue, considering the high levels of poverty and economic inequality in both countries. Data shows that children from low-income families tend to face a variety of challenges that can impact their emotional well-being, including stress due to financial instability, lack of access to mental health services, and social stigma.

Students' emotional well-being plays a crucial role in the learning process. Students who have good emotional well-being tend to have: (1) high learning motivation (more motivated to learn and participate actively in school activities); (2) healthy social relationships (able to establish positive relationships with peers and teachers, which supports a conducive learning environment; and (3) ability to manage stress (better able to face academic and social challenges and pressure in a healthy way) (Parhiala et al., 2018). In

contrast, students who experience emotional well-being problems often show decreased academic performance, behavioural issues, and a higher risk of dropping out of school.

Various factors can influence the emotional well-being of students from low-income families, including (a) social and emotional support (the availability of support from family, friends, and teachers is critical in helping students overcome stress and emotional pressure; (b) the school environment (school that providing an inclusive, safe and supportive learning environment can help improve students' emotional well-being and (c) access to mental health services (access to counseling and psychological services can provide necessary help for students experiencing emotional problems) (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that students' emotional well-being is paramount because it concerns aspects of their inner psychology (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Emotional well-being positively correlates with various aspects of life, including academic achievement, physical health, and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). On the other hand, low emotional well-being can cause various problems, including depression, anxiety, and interpersonal conflict (Depression, 2017). Family economic conditions have a significant impact on students' emotional wellbeing. Financial stress in low-income families often leads to stress and emotional instability in children. This research found that children who grow up in families with high economic pressure tend to experience greater emotional and behavioral problems (Conger & Donnellan, 2010). Social support from family, friends, and the school environment can reduce the negative impact of poverty on students' emotional well-being. This support is a buffer against stress and helps children develop better coping mechanisms (Benner et al., 2016).

This research is expected to contribute to (a) a deeper understanding of the emotional well-being of students from low-income families in two countries with different socio-economic contexts; (b) educational policy development (providing input for policymakers to develop programs and interventions that support students' emotional well-being); and (c) improving school practices (helping schools design environments and services that better support students' emotional well-being).

This research is focused on examining the emotional well-being of students from low-income families in Indonesian elementary schools, with the focus of the study on (1) identifying the level of the emotional well-being of students from low-income families, and (2) analysing the factors that influence the students' emotional well-being. Therefore, it is necessary and exciting to examine the emotional well-being of students from low-income families in Malaysian and Indonesian schools.

Methods

This research is qualitative. This research uses humans as subjects (Pahleviannur et al., 2022; Rukin, 2019). This means that elementary school students are the research subjects to be studied here. In this research, the emotional well-being of students in elementary schools is analyzed to determine the behavior and social changes they make because they are bound by various aspects and elements that cause changes or improvements in attitudes and behavior. Therefore, students here are seen from low-income family backgrounds.

In qualitative research, the researcher is critical in finding data related to the emotional well-being of students from low-income families in Malaysian and Indonesian elementary schools. To be more explicit, in general research that uses a qualitative approach is characterised by (1) being carried out in a natural setting, (2) the researcher as the main instrument, (3) descriptive, (4) paying more attention to the process than the results; (5) data analysis was carried out inductively; (6) the design is temporary; and (7) meaning is the elementary concern (Miles, M. B. Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, 2014).

Three data collection methods were used, namely: (1) interviews, (2) observation, and (3) documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this research, the interviews were conducted

in semi-structured interviews to seek information about the emotional well-being of students from low-income families in Malaysian and Indonesian elementary schools. So that the results of the interview are recorded well, the researcher will use tools such as notebooks,

The data analysis method this research uses is (1) acquisition (data acquisition). The first step in data analysis is data acquisition. In this case, data collection is carried out from various sources, such as interviews, observations, or documents, by the stated research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018); (2) condensing (data compression). After the data is collected, the next step is data compression. In this case, the process of sorting the data, organizing it, and sorting it into relevant categories or themes is carried out. Data compression helps identify emerging patterns and prepare data for further analysis (Miles, M. B. Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, 2014); (3) presentation (presentation of data). Data presentation involves processing and presenting data visually or narratively. This could be a table, graph, a direct quote from a participant, or a summary of key findings. The presentation of data helps in understanding and interpreting analysis results more efficiently, and (4) drawing/verifying conclusions. The final step in qualitative data analysis is drawing conclusions or verification. This involves interpreting the findings, relating them to the research questions, and drawing conclusions supported by the data. This process can also include verifying the analysis results through

Discussion

Emotional Well-Being in Indonesian Elementary School

The foundation of quality education is equality and equity (Jiang et al., 2023). Equality is characterised by the potential to reduce disparities in obtaining educational access and facilities. This equality of opportunity is also demonstrated by the absence of differences in legal-formal treatment by the government or schools as education providers (Lazenby, 2016). Each person has opportunities not limited by race, gender, religion, social status, and so on, which are considered normal for each person to be different (Mammadov, 2018; Napoletano, 2024). Generally, quality education is sustainable education that meets society's expectations and applies quality principles in its implementation (Parscale et al., 2022; Pepin & Duncan, 2024).

In Indonesia and Malaysia, Muslim countries, quality education is achieved by optimizing students' cognitive abilities, attitudes, and skills (Thoha et al., 2023). In the achievement process, the school strives to realize its vision and mission, focuses on the teaching and learning management process and is committed to creating favourable learning conditions or environments while empowering all school members in an open and friendly manner (Rizkita & Supriyanto, 2020). However, there are various reasons for providing quality education, including poverty, social status, and mental health (Muhammad Asif et al., 2021; Sittisom, 2020; van der Berg et al., 2017).

Poverty affects the quality of education (Spaull, 2015). Children from low-income families usually lack essential resources, inadequate living needs and an unsupportive learning environment, which impacts cognitive abilities (Dr. Ranju Malik, 2023; EHSAN et al., 2021; Sule et al., 2022). Directly or indirectly, family conditions influence students' emotions, including those related to self-awareness, (2) self-regulation, (3) motivation, (4) empathy (empathy), and (5) social skills.

The results of research in Indonesian elementary schools describe comprehensive emotional conditions regarding how self-awareness and self-regulation are experienced and faced by low-income children. The forms of awareness and self-regulation of children in Malaysia are pretty well recognized. This is supported by the child's desire to lighten the burden on his parents by contributing to preparing some of his personal needs at school. With this introduction, students do not try to act hedonistically, are sensitive to needs, and advocate independently. Through strengthening awareness and self-regulation, students can make decisions, design alternative problem solutions and organize social interactions well.

Through the process of introducing children's self-awareness, it will have an impact on mature development stimuli (Lesmi & Nuriah, 2022; Siti Anisah et al., 2021), and good motivation (Ibrohim MF, 2023).

What is no less important in supporting the emotional well-being of children in Indonesia is motivation and feelings of empathy (Seligman, 2011). Elementary student motivation then comes from internal and external sources. Internally, motivation is based on students' desire to be happy today and in the future. Internal motivation also arises from the child's desire to achieve their dreams, including becoming a teacher, pilot, tourist, etc. This is realized by increasing perseverance and tenacity in carrying out tasks. External motivation includes receiving gifts, praise, and good relationships with friends. Internal and external motivation tends to encourage students to have a positive and optimistic attitude towards the future and prepare for it optimally (Lee, 2009; Zhang et al., 2021).

The three components of emotional well-being that appear above describe students' ability to recognise and regulate themselves and find the motivation that supports their emotions. Next is about empathy and students' social skills. Feelings of empathy in Indonesian and Malaysian elementary school students are described by their ability to understand and feel emotions and interact positively with each other. This is demonstrated by respect and appreciation for economic, social and cultural differences. Students at Malaysian elementary schools show their kindness to other students by sharing food supplies with other students, namely by giving some of the side dishes they bring. Likewise, children from good economic backgrounds also try to enjoy food from low-income children, such as mushrooms made from palm oil pulp, which is rarely found in cities. However, there are still interactions between students who bully each other, but at a level that does not require serious attention (dangerous). Positive relationships between students can reduce potential conflicts.

Reflecting on the description above, emotional well-being is vital to students' mental and physical health. Emotionally prosperous students are happier in carrying out their daily activities, healthier, more energetic, and more productive (Graciyal & Viswam, 2021; Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019; Stieger et al., 2021; Yang & Ma, 2020). They can also deal with pressure, both from within and outside themselves, have good personal relationships and a high quality of life (T. Cohen & Legg, 2019; Karimi et al., 2014). Emotionally developed children tend to have better academic achievement and fewer behavioural problems (Diener et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Based on the description of the discussion above, it can be concluded as follows: (1) poverty is not an obstacle to obtaining quality education because every student has equal opportunities. Family conditions directly influence students' emotional well-being, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. This form of awareness and self-regulation is demonstrated by students' willingness to contribute to their education costs. Meanwhile, feelings of empathy and motivation are shown by a happy spirit in every activity and responsibility at school and building positive interactions with friends; and (2) factors influencing students' emotional well-being include individual, environmental (home, school, and community), socioeconomic, and cultural factors. The child's resilience and toughness show personal factors in carrying out everyday life simply. Family environmental factors are considered significant dominance in internalizing moral messages implemented in schools and communities. The next factor is socioeconomic. Social status provides an open space for accessing various psychologically pleasing services. Apart from these three factors, classroom climate also contributes to students' emotional well-being.

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