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School and relationships: Contribution to the subjective well-being of migrant children

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Theme: Social support and education outcomes

Subtheme: Migration and refugees

Thematic importance: Immigrant children are often ignored in studies that investigate positive aspects of children's lives, tending to focus on aspects of inequality and disadvantages when compared to their non-immigrant peers. This study explores school's social relationships of immigrant children from 20 countries and the impact on their well-being.

Introduction and objectives: While immigration experiences are unique and may differ across cultures and contexts, attending school is a shared experience for most children. Interactions with other children and teachers may contribute to children's integration into their host communities. The objective of this study is to explore the contribution of relationships with friends and teachers to subjective well-being of immigrant children from different countries.

Method: This study is a part of the third wave of the "Children's worlds" study, which gathers substantial data on children's perception and evaluation of their lives, between 2016 and 2019. Participants are 6138 children from 20 countries, aged 9-13 years old (M = 11.16; SD = 1.10), who reported at least one of their parents or themselves were born in a foreign country. Children completed a culturally adapted survey that included demographic information and validated measures from the International Survey of Children's Well-Being project (ISCIWeB). Children subjective well-being was measured through the Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-SWBS). The Satisfaction with friends' dimension was assessed through 5 items (example If I have a problem, I have a friend who will support me) and Relationship with teachers' dimension was evaluated through 4 items (example My teachers care about me). Hypothesized model was examined via structural equation modeling (SEM). According to this model, immigrant children's' subjective well-being can be predicted by satisfaction with friends and relationship with teachers.

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Results: Our model presents a good fit ($\chi 2$ (74) = 173.623; p < 0.01; CFI = .99; RMSEA = 0.017; SRMR = 0.028) and accounted for 31% of the subjective well-being variances. The highest factorial load for satisfaction with teachers were teachers help and care. For satisfaction with friends were being nice and getting along well.

Conclusions and implications: Our results indicate the importance of school and social relations with peers as contexts to provide social support and contribute to immigrant children's subjective well-being. The existence of satisfactory relationships with teachers and peers may facilitate children's integration in their host countries.