

DIFFERENCES IN SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING CONSIDERING RACE/COLOR OF CHILDREN FROM A SOUTHERN BRAZILIAN CAPITAL CITY

Theme

- Child-focused indicators of social trends, policies, and child well-being.

Subtheme

- Subjective well-being.

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Abstract: Subjective well-being is related to better health, relationships, and longevity but can be influenced by cultural and societal contexts. In Brazilian society, racism is remarkably present and reveals unequal experiences lived by the black population compared to the white. In the last decade, the disparity between Blacks and Whites has been growing in Brazil. Black people suffer more violence and homicides than white people and undergo negative consequences to physical and mental health due to racism. Specifically, Black children can experience worse self-concept, more feelings of hopelessness, less motivation to study, and more violence than White ones. Considering the Brazilian scenario, the present work aims to evaluate whether differences in children's subjective well-being can be found based on race/color/ethnicity in a sample of children from a city in southern Brazil. It is important to note that race in Brazil is self-reported and is socioculturally categorized based more on aspects such as skin color and face characteristics, considered phenotypes. The study's design is quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive, and comparative. We used data from a sample of 335 children from Porto

Alegre who responded to the International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeB) about their race/color/ethnicity and the subjective well-being scales CW-SWBS, CW-DBSWBS, and OLS. The participants filled the questionnaire in the classroom where they studied (public schools = 65%; private schools = 35%), and 61.7% self-reported being White, while 38.2% were Black or Pardo (i.e., mixed-race, in a free translation, it would be "Brown"). This form of racial declaration is in accordance with nationwide surveys made by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics and is the standard used in Brazil. The ages varied from 10 to 12 years old ($M = 11.48$; $SD = 1.24$), and the sample was composed of 53.6% girls and 46.4% boys. We analyzed the difference between the subjective well-being items using the t-test and the effect size of variance by Cohen's d . The analysis points to a significant difference regarding the item about life doing well, with lower means for Black and Pardo children, presenting moderate effect sizes ($d = 0.30$). We also found a small effect size, but with significant and lower means for this population in the items about being happy with one's life ($d = 0.28$) and having an excellent life ($d = 0.29$). In the other items, even though Black and Pardo presented lower well-being means when compared to the White, the difference was not significant. These results show that children experience life in unequal forms. It supports past research that reported how race is a factor that is an essential part of health outcomes in the black population and that children are affected by it even though they are young. These findings reveal that race should be widely considered in interventions with children to promote anti-racist awareness and attitudes. As future work, additional studies addressing race with children need to be carried out, along with research aiming to understand the differences within the Brazilian States.