The Dual-factor model of mental health: findings from a south Brazilian sample

Aline Riboli Marasca
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul
aline.marasca@gmail.com

Mauricio Scopel Hoffmann
Federal University of Santa Maria
mauricio.hoffmann@ufsm.br

Anelise Reis Gaya
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul
anelise.gaya@ufrgs.br

Denise Ruschel Bandeira
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul
bandeira@ufrgs.br

Thematic importance: The main topic of this submission refers to children's subjective well-being. It contributes to research on subjective well-being as a protective factor against mental disorders, which is a public health concern. It is relevant to investigate empirically the child indicators theoretical work and how it might manifest in different locations. The present study also gives new information about mental health measures for children. **Introduction and objectives:** Subjective well-being is considered a protective psychological resource that might buffer the impact of psychopathology symptoms or prevent its occurrence. The dual-factor model of mental health proposes a group division based on symptoms and subjective well-being levels, which concerns that mental health is not only determined by the absence of a mental disorder. This study is an empirical investigation of the dual-factor model of mental health. It examines how this model may work in a Brazilian children sample. **Method:** Two hundred seventy-three children (6-11 years of age; M = 8.36, SD = 1.38; 51.6% male) were recruited from a state-funded south Brazilian elementary school. Subjective well-being was accessed by investigating its component, life satisfaction, in a self-report measure designed for children (Multidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale for Children – Brief Version). Parents completed a screening measure to track children's symptoms of psychopathology (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire). Latent class analyses and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were statistical strategies applied to investigate the existence of mental health profiles. **Results:** Results indicated the existence of four mental health profiles based on different levels of psychopathology symptoms and subjective well-being indicators. These profiles partially matched the theoretical model. Differences from the original group division might occur for cultural issues, in which Brazilian children tend to report higher levels of subjective well-being compared with other nations. Findings reveal that few children reported a low level of subjective well-being, which might indicate that reaching a moderate level may not be a protective factor for mental health in this context. **Conclusions and implications:** Present results provide an empirical investigation of a mental health model in a Brazilian sample of children. It also contributes to establishing risk and protection indicators for child development. Findings might improve methodological discussions about mental health and subjective well-being assessments.