

School Well-Being Among Children and Adolescents: Assessing Strategies for Bullying Prevention in Madrasahs

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ABSTRACT. Students' sense of comfort at school is the foundation for achieving well-being within the school environment. This well-being encompasses various aspects of students' lives, including physical, emotional, social, and personal dimensions. When a school fails to foster such well-being, it can increase the risk of bullying behaviors among students. Therefore, this study aims to analyze school well-being among children and adolescents, as well as to assessing strategies for bullying preventing bullying in Madrasahs. This research employed a qualitative method with an indigenous psychology approach. Data were collected in two stages: survey with open ended questionnaire and interviews. The survey involved 100 elementary-level (MI) students and 61 junior high-level (MTs) students. Interviews were conducted with school principals and counseling teachers. The results revealed that school well-being among both children and adolescents consists of four main aspects: having, loving, being, and health. However, differences emerged in the relational emphasis: for children, well-being strongly related to interactions with peers, teachers, and parents, while for adolescents, peer relationships were the dominant factor. The bullying prevention strategy implemented by the madrasah involves innovative programs for self-development, including the provision of guidance and counseling services, the establishment of routine school-wide activities, and the adequate provision of facilities. These three components constitute aspects of school well-being and play an effective role in regulating students' behavior.

Keywords: School well-being, bullying, children, adolescents.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is the key to the quality of human life in general. However, even if a person possesses good psychological well-being, they still have the potential to feel uncomfortable and stressed when in a school environment (Konu & Rimpela, 2002). Therefore, a specific study of school well-being among children and adolescents undergoing the educational process is necessary.

The well-being of madrasah members is an important key to the continuity of a quality educational process. Members of a madrasah who possess personal well-being and school well-being can lead to better learning processes and are free from negative behaviors (Kamila & Ramadhani, 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2014). s with bullying behaviors that are increasingly prevalent in madrasahs at various educational levels, including RA, MI, MTs, and others. According to Coloroso (Coloroso, 2007) behavior is categorized as bullying if it meets three elements: first, an imbalance of power; second, an intention to harm; and third, a threat of aggressive action carried out repeatedly. The situation is key to the occurrence of violence, so what can be done to prevent

violence is to control the situation so as not to provide opportunities for such violence to occur (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

Bullying must be prevented from an early age because the impact of bullying behavior affects not only the perpetrator and victim but also individuals who witness it (Shidiqui & Suprapti, 2013). Bullying becomes an urgent problem because it can not only hinder students' social development but also their emotional and cognitive development, both academically and non-academically. In this era, the role of good parents, one of which is often demonstrated through efforts to provide the best educational facilities to their children by enrolling them in favorite madrasahs. In addition to conferring good social status, they also expect good learning outcomes.

Given these various educational phenomena, school well-being becomes important to understand its dynamics related to relationships with teachers, peers, and self-esteem (Alwi et al., 2020; Etemi et al., 2024; Sukiri et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2025) serta school connectedness (Rahma et al., 2020). School well being is a subjective assessment by madrasah members of their school. The more students enjoy attending school, the more it indicates the achievement of school well-being, and vice versa. According to Konu & Rimpela (2002) here are 4 aspects of school well-being: 1) Having - which includes the physical state and environment of the madrasah. The quality of the environment built in the madrasah determines the school well-being of madrasah members. 2) Loving - which relates to students' relationships with their social environment, such as with peers, teachers, and others involved in the learning process at the madrasah (Fathoni et al., 2024; Pusvitasari & Zarkasyi, 2024; Utama & Salim, 2024). Creating harmonious and healthy relationships with fellow madrasah members is important in this aspect. 3) Being - which relates to students' opportunities to learn according to their interests and potential so that they can recognize and develop themselves. This can make students confident. 4) Health - which relates to the health students possess and is connected to the learning process. The more there is no indication of negative impacts from the learning process and madrasah activities on health, the easier it is to achieve school well-being.

The cognitive development of children at the MI level (7-12 years) is limited to the concrete operational stage of thinking, so the learning process that tends to occur is through imitation. Whereas in adolescence, students at the MTs level (12 years and above), cognitively reach the formal operational stage and are therefore able to develop a broader perspective (Boeree, 2008). The social-emotional development is also different; children are still in the process of adapting to their environment, while adolescents have developed in building relationships with others (Hurlock, 1994). This shows that between children and adolescents, there are different developmental stages. Not only between school types, such as regular and full-day schools (Istiqomah & Rahmawati, 2020), between MTs (Junior Islamic School) and MA (Senior Islamic School) students (Saadah, 2020).

This study aims to analyze school well-being among children and adolescents and to evaluate bullying prevention strategies in madrasahs. Understanding students' achievement in school well-being among children and adolescents is important for evaluating bullying prevention strategies according to conditions in the madrasah, which is the novelty of this research design. Thus, school well-being is not only able to prevent negative actions such as bullying (Nidianti & Desiningrum, 2015), but also able to improve learning outcomes more optimally (Azhari & Situmorang, 2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method using an indigenous psychology approach, based on the assumption that humans are agents of action through their culture and are both subjects and objects in research. Every human behavior is influenced by culture, environment, and individual experience. Therefore, this approach is appropriate for obtaining information from primary sources (Kim et al., 2010).

The research was conducted at MI Plus Darul Falah Jombang and MTs Plus Darul Falah Jombang, which are part of the same foundation and located in the same environment, and both

implement a full-day school system. Both schools are relatively favorite schools in their area. Therefore, they are suitable to be used as the site for conducting research for different age levels within one environment.

Data collection was conducted in two stages. First, to obtain school well-being data from children and adolescents, a survey with open-ended questions was given to all sixth-grade students from MI (100 students) and students from grades 8-9 from MTs (61 students). Second, interviews were conducted with the principals of MI and MTs and one guidance and counseling teacher from each level to obtain data on the madrasah's strategies to prevent bullying.

Data analysis in each stage of this study used coding techniques to identify themes related to the research topic. The stages included data organization, reading, describing into codes and themes, classifying data into codes and themes, interpreting data, and the final step of presenting and visualizing data (Creswell, 2015). Data validity in the study was ensured through data triangulation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

School Well-Being Among Children

The first data was obtained from 100 sixth-grade students from MI. Based on the research results, the level of comfort among children is as follows:

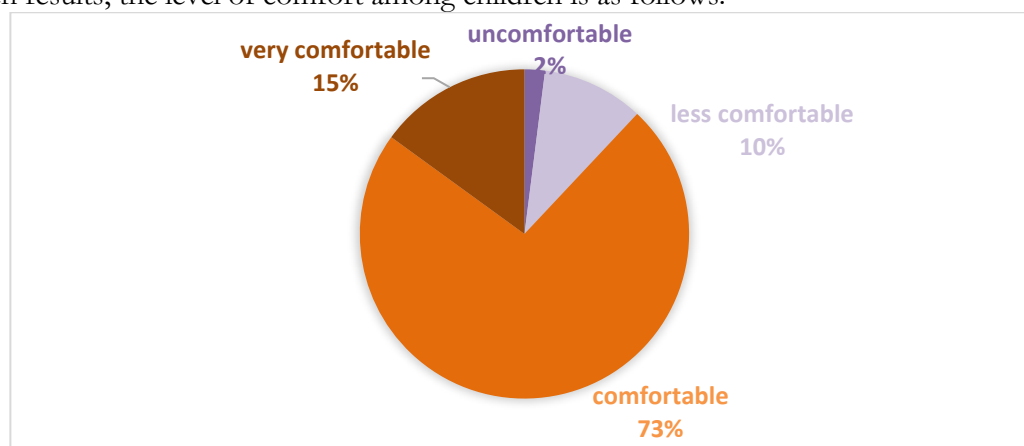


Figure 1. Children's comfort level at the madrasah

The figure shows that 73% of children feel comfortable and 15% feel very comfortable, so it can be concluded that 88% of children feel comfortable at the madrasah. Meanwhile, 12% of children feel somewhat uncomfortable at the madrasah.

Factors making children feel comfortable at the madrasah include relationships with peers (58%), facilities available at the madrasah (17%), activities at the madrasah (16%), and relationships with teachers (8%). Factors making children feel uncomfortable at the madrasah include peers (61%), facilities (18%), lessons (10%), teachers (9%), and activities (2%). More specifically, the indicators described by children can be linked to aspects of school well-being as follows:

Having refers to the physical state and environment of the madrasah. This madrasah has adequate classroom spaces, a mosque, CCTV, a security office, anti-bullying posters, a counseling room, and smart TVs in each classroom. This is reflected through the 18% of children who mentioned facilities as a source of comfort at the madrasah.

Loving relates to social relationships full of affection, acceptance, and support at the madrasah. This aspect is reflected through peer relationships and teacher-child relationships. The survey data shows that 98% of students reported having close friends at school, while 2% reported not having close friends. Children's closeness to peers is explained by friends' good character, friends who often help, friends they always play with, friends who like to share stories, and friends who understand their feelings.

Children's relationships with teachers are described through teachers liked by children. 99% of children have teachers they like because teachers make their teaching non-monotonous and incorporate play. Teachers also often help and listen to children's concerns. Only 1% of children feel they do not have special teachers; all teachers are just ordinary.

Being is an aspect that shows children's opportunity to be themselves at the madrasah. Survey data on children's perceptions of support for their potential shows that 93% of children believe they can develop themselves according to their interests through various extracurricular activities organized by the madrasah. However, 3% of children feel they cannot develop their potential because they are already tired from full-day school activities.

From the perspective of Health, the full-day school system with more learning hours than regular schools (activities from 06:45-15:00 WIB) causes 50% of children to feel tired, while 50% feel accustomed and not tired. Of the 50% who feel tired, they report not getting sick but having limited playtime and not getting afternoon naps. However, children can still enjoy learning because other aspects (discussed in the previous paragraph) make them feel comfortable at the madrasah. According to the guidance teacher, to ensure both physical and mental health, the madrasah cooperates with the local health center for physical health support and provides counseling services for mental health support.

School Well-Being Among Adolescents

Data from adolescent subjects, consisting of 61 MT's students in grades 8-9, showed that 72% of adolescents feel quite comfortable at the madrasah, 13% feel very comfortable, 15% feel less comfortable, and 0% feel uncomfortable. This shows that the majority of students feel comfortable, with a total of 85% of adolescents feeling comfortable at the madrasah and 15% feeling less comfortable.

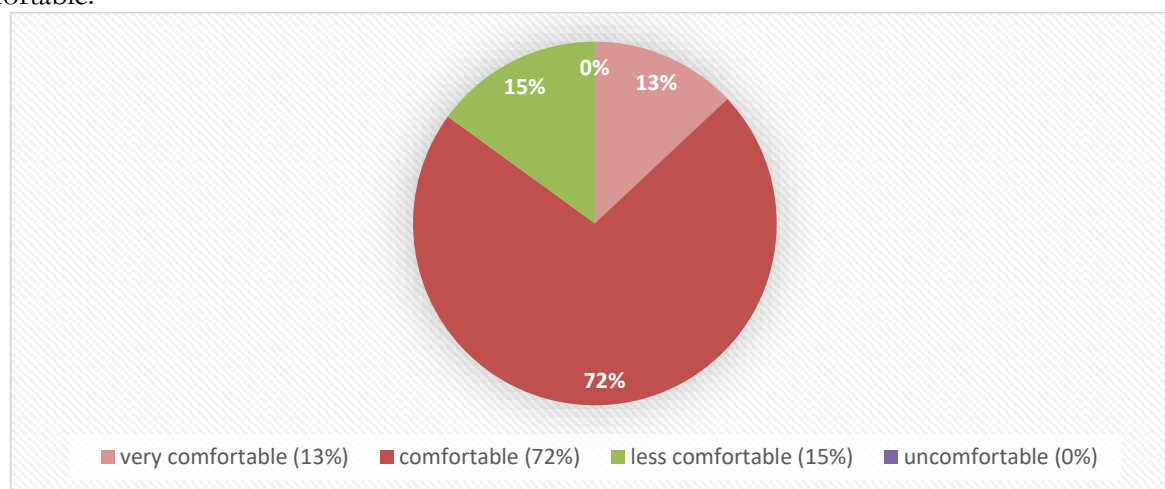


Figure 2. Adolescents's comfort level at the madrasah

Factors causing adolescents to feel comfortable at school include: first, peers (63%), such as having close friends, being able to play and joke with friends, making adolescents feel comfortable at the madrasah. Second, facilities (19%), such as computer laboratories and spacious classrooms with two fans in each class. Third, learning (14%), such as the existence of special class programs in Quranic memorization, Islamic book reading, and computer science, which make adolescents feel enthusiastic and motivated to learn at the madrasah, and teachers (5%), who have good character and provide enjoyable lessons. Sources of comfort from peers and teachers represent fulfillment of the loving aspect of school well-being, while facilities represent the having aspect.

Factors making adolescents feel uncomfortable at the madrasah include peers (38%), such as unpleasant friends who like to bother them; rules (22%), as school rules regulating adolescent behavior sometimes make them feel restricted and confined; nothing (17%), meaning some adolescents feel there is nothing that makes them uncomfortable at the madrasah; facilities (14%),

such as poorly maintained bathrooms with odor problems; learning (7%), such as when the teacher is unreliable, uses uninteresting methods, or provides unclear explanations; and teachers (2%), when teachers lack pleasant character.

Data on adolescents' opportunities to develop their potential illustrates the Being aspect of school well-being. Data shows that 83% of adolescents feel they get opportunities to develop their potential through madrasah activities, while 17% report they cannot because there are no activities matching their interests.

Regarding Health, 68% of adolescents feel easily tired as full-day school students because they have no opportunity for afternoon naps and limited playtime. However, 32% of adolescents do not feel tired because they are accustomed to it, the learning is enjoyable, they have fun friends, and they have pleasant teachers.

Bullying Prevention Strategies Implemented by the Madrasah

First, the principals of both MI and MTs explained that the madrasah has programs different from other madrasahs, including a self-development team, one of whose duties is to serve as a guidance and counseling teacher. The purpose is to address all student problems and develop student potential. Both madrasahs have the same program emphasizing counseling services because both are under the same foundation.

The MI guidance team has 2 teachers: 1 with a background in psychology and 1 with a background in guidance and counseling. Generally, elementary schools (SD/MI) do not have guidance teachers, but this madrasah with 827 students is facilitated by 2 guidance teachers. Thus, the madrasah has a special team that monitors children's behavior in addition to classroom teachers. At the MTs level with 130 students, there is 1 guidance teacher with a background in guidance and counseling.

The difference in counseling services between MI and MTs lies in the problems identified by each guidance teacher. At MI, problems are dominated by complaints about friends' mischief during play together, which are then reported or where injuries are discovered by parents, so the counseling process involves both the child and parents. At MTs, counseling problems are often discovered due to violations of school rules, such as absences of 3 days without explanation or poor class participation. Additionally, problems involve peer relationships, such as conflicts and romantic relationships.

Guidance and counseling services are implemented through programs including anti-bullying posters, conducting anti-bullying education sessions for teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, the madrasah offers many extracurricular options for children and always organizes competitions that all students can participate in, whether in Islamic holidays (PHBI) or national holidays (PHBN), as efforts to keep children occupied and provide more opportunities to develop their talents.

Featured programs at MTs include diverse extracurricular activities and special classes in Quranic memorization, Islamic book reading, and computer science. These special classes attract adolescents to develop their potential according to their interests, making learning more engaging and enjoyable. Of course, guidance and counseling services are also among the featured programs, implementing regular counseling, providing education to teachers, students, and parents, not only about bullying prevention but also about preventing juvenile delinquency.

Second, school habituation programs. Habituation consists of activities done routinely daily. The habituation program includes 2 categories: behavioral habituation and spiritual habituation. Behavioral habituation includes etiquette toward others, such as greeting teachers and parents using both hands and kissing their hands, bowing when passing by, and speaking using polite language. Behavior toward peers must emphasize mutual care and help; if a peer behaves inappropriately, it must be reported to teachers. Every day, students are able and brave to do this. Spiritual habituation includes morning prayers and noon prayers in congregation, reciting God's beautiful names, reciting prayers, and seeking God's forgiveness together as one madrasah. Class-level spiritual practices

include reading Islamic texts (Quran commentaries, books on Islamic jurisprudence, and Arabic grammar) and important chapters of the Quran. Through these habituation programs, it is hoped that children and adolescents' behavior will be shaped positively.

Third, provision of adequate madrasah facilities. MI Plus Darul Falah and MTs Plus Darul Falah share the same principle. As a service to parents, both madrasahs have installed and maintain CCTV in every room and area of the madrasah. This is used to facilitate the regulation of student behavior and to discover the chronology of events if a problem occurs, allowing for appropriate problem resolution. Additionally, adequate classroom spaces that meet standards are also a focus. MTs classrooms are larger than MI classrooms according to the standards set by the madrasah and considering the physical development of both children and adolescents. The presence of smart TVs in each class is also a featured facility of both madrasahs. Smart TVs are used as learning media, educational media, behavior guidance and socialization media, and entertainment media during certain activities such as cleanup duties or rest time.

Discussion

School well-being is welfare at the madrasah that has a holistic condition encompassing the aspects of having, loving, being, and health (Konu & Rimpela, 2002). s students and adolescents, children can also provide assessments of their madrasah. Children and adolescents' expressions of comfort in the studied madrasah are part of the school well-being indicator (Pulkkinen et al., 2012; Pusvitasari & Zarkasyi, 2024; Solehuddin et al., 2024; Wahib, 2025). Almost all children and adolescents at the madrasah demonstrated good school well-being, which is characterized by three dominant factors: peers, teachers, and madrasah facilities.

For children, the role of teachers and parents is very important both in the learning process and in other activities at the madrasah. Cooperation between teachers and parents can help children better recognize their potential and engage in activities according to the child's interests (Santrock, 2011). For adolescents, the relationship that most determines comfort at the madrasah is the relationship with peers, although they still need closeness with teachers (Azzahra et al., 2025; Jauhari et al., 2025; Srinio et al., 2025). This aligns with the description of social-emotional development in adolescence, which tends toward developing deep relationships with peers (Hurlock, 1994).

The aspect of health, both physical and mental, is part of achieving school well-being. Therefore, cooperation with relevant parties such as local health centers and counseling services provided by the madrasah is necessary. Although the full-day school system tends to reduce playtime and afternoon naps, this is not a significant obstacle. As found by Istiqomah & Rahmawati (2020) students will prepare themselves to adapt and remain happy if comfort is adequately met.

Children and adolescents' assessments of their madrasah may differ because, in terms of cognitive development, children and adolescents have different developmental stages (Apologia et al., 2024; Rahmatullah et al., 2024; Ru'iya et al., 2023). Children are at a stage of incomplete development in the concrete operational stage, while adolescents are at the formal operational stage with the ability to think abstractly. Thus, in making decisions and considering actions, adolescents increasingly base their judgments on personal understanding (Piaget, 1977).

As students in educational institutions, children and adolescents have different developments in physical, cognitive, emotional, and social aspects. Therefore, even though they are in one environment and a full-day school program, children and adolescents have different dynamics of school well-being. (Piaget, 1977) states that "*the adolescent begins to think in terms of what is possible, not just what is real,*" which explains why the dynamics of their roles and needs at the madrasah also differ. Below is a comparison of school well-being among children and adolescents:

Table 1. Comparison of school well-being among children and adolescents

| Aspect | Children | Adolescents |
|--------|---|---|
| Having | Adequate facilities are a source of student comfort. | Adequate facilities are a source of student comfort. |
| Loving | Relationships with peers and relationships with teachers are equally dominant. | Relationships with peers are more dominant in determining a sense of safety than relationships with teachers. |
| Being | The role of teachers and parents is very important in achieving this aspect because children are still in the concrete operational cognitive stage. Diverse extracurricular activities and activities at the madrasah serve as meaningful stimuli for developing children's potential. | Adolescents are in the formal operational cognitive development stage, showing the ability for abstract thinking. Therefore, providing varied activities and choices serves as a good stimulus for achieving this aspect, such as special class options. |
| Health | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical health is met through cooperation with local health centers, such as dental health, immunizations, and environmental hygiene. 2. Mental health is met through counseling services. Peer problems more often involve conflicts. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical health is met through cooperation with local health centers, such as reproductive health education and similar services. 2. Mental health is met through counseling services. Peer problems more often involve romantic relationships. |

School well-being is students' welfare during their time at the madrasah, encompassing physical, social-emotional, and personal aspects (Konu & Rimpela, 2002). When students have good school well-being, they tend to have a lower potential for bullying (Zullig et al., 2010). School well-being is also closely related to students' sense of comfort, which is dominated by peer relationships. Therefore, increasing students' school well-being is equivalent to preventing bullying. According to Nidianti & Desiningrum (2015) and Azhari & Situmorang (2019) the higher the school well-being, the lower the level of aggressiveness in the madrasah.

Achieving school well-being certainly cannot be accomplished through ordinary teaching processes alone; it requires more intensive guidance and control (Anggreni & Immanuel, 2020; Rokim, 2024; Yakin et al., 2024) such as through guidance and counseling services as implemented in the studied madrasah. Good teacher relationships providing deeper guidance can result in comfort and increased learning motivation (Wentzel, 1988).

Shaping behavior requires habituation. As with the efforts undertaken by both madrasahs in providing behavioral habits containing elements of spiritual practice, this can serve as a foundation for children and adolescents' behavior to improve and be far removed from aggressive actions.

CONCLUSION

School well-being among children and adolescents can be characterized through the aspects of having, loving, being, and health. In the having and health aspects, there are no significant differences. Having is demonstrated through maximum facility provision such as CCTV and smart TVs. Health is shown through cooperation of the self-development team with health centers. In the loving and being aspects, there are differences between children and adolescents: for children, there is emphasis on the roles of peers, teachers, and parents. Meanwhile, school well-being among adolescents is characterized through the dominant role of peers. The bullying prevention strategies implemented by the madrasah are quite effective and receive positive responses from students. These include innovations through self-development programs, particularly the provision of guidance and counseling services, school habituation programs, and adequate facility provision for both children and adolescents.

The limitation of this study is that it was conducted at a specific institution. For future researchers, studies can be conducted at several institutions with more subjects to obtain more comprehensive data and develop bullying prevention strategies through school well-being that can be implemented in various madrasahs.

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