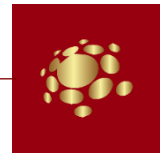


Child labor in Indonesia: Do these children happy?

Sophia Amanda Ayu Kinasih

Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia



Collabryzk



How to cite (APA)

Kinasih, S. A. A. (2023). Child labor in Indonesia: Do these children happy?. *Collabryzk Journal for Scientific Studies*, 2(1), 35-40.

Corresponding Author

Sophia A.A. Kinasih
Prodi Antropologi, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Gadjah Mada
Email:
sophiaamanda626@gmail.com

Abstract

In Indonesia, child labor is a serious issue, with more than 8 million children under the age of 18 employed in hazardous or exploitative circumstances. The paper examines how child labor impacts Indonesian children's happiness. The paper begins by defining child labor and explaining its prevalence in Indonesia. In the following sections, it discusses the different reasons for children to work in Indonesia, including poverty, family need, and cultural norms. The paper then reviews the studies on the impact of child labor on children's happiness in Indonesia. From previous studies, it can be concluded that children's happiness is mixed when it comes to child labor. Some studies suggest that child labor can negatively impact children's happiness, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and depression. However, the results of other studies indicated that child labor can increase children's self-esteem, a sense of responsibility, and financial independence. Moreover, child labor may improve children's happiness as a result. The paper ends with a discussion of policy and practice implications.

Keywords: child labor; child happiness; Indonesia

Abstrak

Di Indonesia, pekerja anak merupakan masalah serius, dengan lebih dari 8 juta anak di bawah usia 18 tahun dipekerjakan dalam keadaan berbahaya atau eksploitatif. Makalah ini mengkaji bagaimana pekerja anak berdampak pada kebahagiaan anak-anak Indonesia. Makalah ini dimulai dengan mendefinisikan pekerja anak dan menjelaskan prevalensinya di Indonesia. Bagian berikut membahas berbagai alasan anak bekerja di Indonesia, termasuk kemiskinan, kebutuhan keluarga, dan norma budaya. Tulisan ini mengulas studi tentang dampak pekerja anak terhadap kebahagiaan anak di Indonesia. Dari penelitian sebelumnya, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kebahagiaan anak-anak beragam pengertiannya bagi pekerja anak. Beberapa penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pekerja anak dapat berdampak negatif terhadap kebahagiaan anak, yang mengarah pada peningkatan stres, kecemasan, dan depresi. Namun, hasil penelitian lain menunjukkan bahwa pekerja anak dapat meningkatkan harga diri anak, rasa tanggung jawab, dan kemandirian finansial. Selain itu, pekerja anak dapat meningkatkan kebahagiaan dirinya sebagai hasil bekerjanya. Tulisan ini ditutup dengan diskusi tentang implikasi kebijakan dan praktik.

Kata kunci: pekerja anak; kebahagiaan anak; Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Child labor is a serious problem in Indonesia. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), an estimated 8.5 million children under the age of 18 are working in hazardous or exploitative conditions in Indonesia. This number has remained relatively stable in recent years. There are many reasons why children work in Indonesia. Poverty is a major factor. Many families in Indonesia live below the poverty line and cannot afford to send their children to school. As a result, children are forced to work to help support their families. Family need is another reason why children work in Indonesia. Many children work to help support their families when their parents are sick or unable to work. Cultural norms also play a role in child labor in Indonesia. In some cultures, it is seen as normal for children to work. This is especially true in rural areas, where children may help their families with farm work or other chores.

The impact of child labor on children's happiness is a complex issue. Some studies have found that child labor can lead to negative outcomes for children's happiness, such as increased stress, anxiety, and depression. Other studies have found that child labor can have positive outcomes for children's happiness, such as increased self-esteem, a sense of responsibility, and financial independence.

The findings of the research on the impact of child labor on children's happiness in Indonesia are mixed. Some studies have found that child labor can lead to negative outcomes for children's happiness. For example, a study by the ILO found that child laborers in Indonesia were more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and depression than children who did not work. The study also found that child laborers were more likely to have lower self-esteem and to have problems in school.

Other studies have found that child labor can have positive outcomes for children's happiness. For example, a study by the University of Indonesia found that child laborers in Indonesia were more likely to have a sense of responsibility and to be financially independent than children who did not work. The study also found that child laborers were more likely to have positive relationships with their families.

The reasons for the mixed findings on the impact of child labor on children's happiness are complex. It is likely that the impact of child labor on children's happiness depends on a number of factors, such as the type of work the child is doing, the hours the child is working, and the child's relationship with their family.

There is a growing body of research on the impact of child labor on children's happiness. Some of the key findings of this research include:

- Child labor can lead to negative outcomes for children's happiness, such as increased stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Child labor can have positive outcomes for children's happiness, such as increased self-esteem, a sense of responsibility, and financial independence.
- The impact of child labor on children's happiness depends on a number of factors, such as the type of work the child is doing, the hours the child is working, and the child's relationship with their family.

This article review five studies on child labor and happiness in Indonesian context and summarize the findings. The recommendation for Indonesian government are discussed referring to the evidence presented below.

FINDINGS

Utama & Handayani (2020) explained that the origin of child labor is influenced by the existence of small micro industries and poverty issues. In terms of economic theory, this is due to the low per capita expenditure of the family, which requires additional labor to meet the consumption needs of a family. The recruitment of child laborers also goes through various considerations, one of them is the assumption that the energy possessed by children is much greater, more agile, easy to manage, and the company does not have to pay too much for them. In their research, Utama & Handayani (2020) said that the presence of biological mothers in the household has a significant role in the formation of children. In most cases, a child who is still accompanied by their biological mother tends to choose to continue their education rather than being employed. In addition to this, the education pursued by the head of the family is also one of the important factors for children choosing to work or continue their education. The less educated the head of the family, the more chances that the child will be employed.

Djone & Suryani (2019) also shared their perspectives on child labor and inclusive education that can be offered as an alternative approach. Their research was conducted in East Nusa Tenggara. The case highlighted by Djone & Suryani (2019) is the lack of readiness of schools and teachers to bridge the needs of child laborers and the

lack of teacher involvement in developing education policies. The majority of child laborers who attend school have difficulties in balancing work and education responsibilities, difficulty in concentrating, and easily get fatigued. Some of the child laborers also experience barriers to accessing education. Inclusive education is considered a potential solution that can help the unique characteristics and needs of students, especially in improving their social skills.

Yeni (2018) in her research on wages and their functions in child labor based on data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) 2014 stated that the economic conditions of a family and the mother's work also affect the possibility of children becoming workers. She found that children who have mothers who are employed in the agricultural sector tend not to receive any wages. This is probably due to the characteristics of the child's parents' work. Unlike children who go to school, they will be paid a fairly low wage. This is supported by the fact that children who go to school will choose to work on a part-time job, so the wages they receive are not large enough and not worth with the effort they put in.

In the fourth case studied by Baryshnikova, Cheng, and Jayawardana (2020), it shows the existence of unhappiness in child laborers, especially children who work with an orientation to earn wages or income. This unhappiness is evidenced by the high rate of depression suffered by child laborers with a CES-D score of around 5.9 points. However, this is not the case for children working in family-owned companies. The condition of poor mental health suffered by child laborers is caused by their work environment, which tends to work in industrial sectors such as the footwear, gold, palm oil, rubber, tin, and tobacco industries. These environments cause stress and trauma to child workers and also affect their physical health due to exposure to chemicals.

In Aceh as found in the research conducted by Rosana, Chauve, and Law (2019), child labor is actually illegal. Unfortunately, there is no legal enforcement or strict regulations from the government to prevent this issue. The number of child laborers has increased to an alarming level. In a study that focused on the socio-cultural aspect, they found that there were children whose families were not too poor but also worked. However, this has an impact on the mindset that work is a form of education, where children learn how to be responsible, live independently, and foster self-esteem or pride in children. This perspective influences the government's performance, making it difficult to take further action because it is

considered that there are good values that can be obtained by children while they are working.

DISCUSSION

In Indonesia, child labor is a complex issue with both positive and negative impacts on children's happiness. Children who work in supportive and safe environments may experience positive consequences for their happiness, such as a sense of responsibility and increased self-esteem. However, children who work in hazardous or exploitative conditions are more likely to experience negative consequences for their happiness, such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

One study by a professor of Oxford University found that the working child will be happier if they find their peers who are also employed. Even though the job they are doing is quite hard, if there is some entertainment in it, they can smile. Also, when a customer comes in happy, they will be happy too. (Woodhead, 1999).

However, another study by the International Labour Organization found that children who worked in the formal sector, such as in factories, were more likely to experience negative consequences for their happiness, such as depression, anxiety, and stress. The study found that these children often worked long hours in hazardous conditions, and they were not able to attend school or participate in other activities that would have made them happy.

The government of Indonesia should take steps to reduce the prevalence of child labor in the country in order to maximize the chances that children will experience happiness and well-being. These steps could include:

- Increasing access to education for all children, regardless of their family's income.
- Providing financial assistance to families who cannot afford to send their children to school.
- Creating programs to help children who have been working in hazardous or exploitative conditions to reintegrate into school.
- Working with businesses to ensure that they are not employing child labor.
- Working with communities to raise awareness about the dangers of child labor.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the research on child labor in Indonesia suggests that it is a complex issue with a number of negative consequences for children. Child labor can have a negative impact on children's education, social capital, mental health, and happiness. The government of Indonesia should take steps to reduce the prevalence of child labor in the country and to provide support to children who have been working in hazardous or exploitative conditions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

REFERENCE

Baryshnikova, N. V., Cheng, T. C., & Jayawardana, D. G. (2020). The Long Shadow of Child Labour on Adolescent Mental Health. *Child Wellbeing and Economic Development: Evidence from Indonesia*, 90-129.

Djone, R. R., & Suryani, A. (2019). Child Workers and Inclusive Education in Indonesia. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 18(1), 48-65.

Rosana, Y., Chauvel, R., & Law, S. F. (2019). Socio-Cultural Influences on Child Labour Issue in Aceh Province Indonesia. *Professional: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Administrasi Publik*, 6(2), 43-58.

Utama, R. S., & Handayani, D. (2020). Pekerja Anak di Indonesia: Peran Penawaran dan Permintaan Ketenagakerjaan. *Jurnal Ekonomi Kuantitatif Terapan*, 13(1), 145-157.

Woodhead, M. (1999). Combatting Child Labour: Listen to What the Children Say. *Childhood*, 6(1), 27-49.

Yeni, I. (2018). The Child Labor In Indonesia: Working or Not, Working For A Wage or Not, and Child Labor Wages Function. *Economac: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ekonomi*, 2(2), 39-46.

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2021/Indonesia_Indonesian.pdf

<https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/media/4391/file>