

Study of Anemia, Hemoglobin Level, and Subjective Well-being among Women of Reproductive Age in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Anemia is a burden for women of reproductive age (15 – 49 years old) which in Indonesia takes 22.3% of prevalence based on Basic Health Survey data in 2018. Women of reproductive health have different points of view according to their subjective well-being. This study aimed to examine the correlation between anemia status and hemoglobin level related to subjective well-being among women of reproductive age. This cross-sectional study used the Indonesia Family Life Survey (IFLS) wave 5 in 2014/15 with a total study sample were 12,818. Subjective well-being is self-reported data with categories satisfied, somewhat satisfied, and not satisfied. Hemoglobin level is measured by blood test and if the Hb level is less than 12, it will be categorized as anemia. This study tested the analysis of univariate, bivariate (Chi-square and ANOVA), and multivariate (multinomial logistic regression) using STATA version 17. The findings revealed that anemia and hemoglobin levels did not have a correlation with subjective well-being. However, some other covariates were found significantly associated with having satisfied subjective well-being including being married, pregnant, having poor SES, more than adequate of family life satisfaction, and adequate and more than adequate standard of life, with RRR 1.21, 1.21, 0.63, 1.77, 1.19, and 1.74, respectively. It is concluded that subjective well-being is associated with not only health aspects but also social and economic. Intervention in the level of community is needed to improve the quality of life to achieve satisfied well-being. For example by joining the social group at the village level. Future study can include other health-based predictors at individual level that potentially predict subjective well-being.

Keywords: Anemia, Hemoglobin Level, Indonesia Family Life Survey, Women of Reproductive Age, Subjective Well-Being

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INTRODUCTION

Anemia is a medical condition characterized by a deficiency of red blood cells or hemoglobin in the blood. It can have various impacts on an individual's well-being, including subjective well-being. Subjective well-being refers to an individual's self-perceived happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect¹. Research has shown that anemia can have a negative impact on subjective well-being. A study conducted on pregnant women found that the severity of anemia had a significant effect

on their quality of life, which encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being². Another study on elderly patients found that chronic anemia was highly associated with fatigue, which is a subjective sensation of weakness, lack of energy, and tiredness³. Furthermore, socioeconomic status (SES) has been found to be linked to subjective well-being. Lower SES is often associated with reduced access to material and social resources, as well as higher levels of stress-inducing conditions. These factors can negatively impact child well-being and overall subjective well-

being⁴.

Anemia is a medical condition characterized by a decrease in the number of red blood cells or a decrease in the amount of hemoglobin in the blood. It can have significant effects on an individual's health and well-being. One study conducted on pregnant women in Yogyakarta found that the severity of anemia had a significant effect on their quality of life, including their physical, mental, and social well-being². This suggests that anemia can have a negative impact on subjective well-being. Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to an individual's evaluation of their own well-being and life satisfaction¹. It encompasses both hedonic well-being, which refers to how people feel emotionally in their everyday lives, and evaluative well-being, which refers to how people evaluate their overall current and future lives⁵. Research on SWB has made extensive advancements in the past few decades, and it has become the most widely used index of well-being⁶.

In addition to anemia and SES, other factors such as health status can also influence subjective well-being. A study conducted in Russia found that characteristics such as poor health had a significant negative impact on subjective well-being⁷. Moreover, the impacts of flooding and flood preparedness were found to severely impact human subjective well-being⁸. Overall, anemia can have a negative impact on subjective well-being, as evidenced by studies on pregnant women and elderly patients. Additionally, socioeconomic status, health status, and environmental factors such as flooding can also influence subjective well-being. Understanding these relationships can help healthcare professionals and policymakers develop interventions and strategies to improve subjective well-being in individuals affected by anemia and other related factors.

In the global context, anemia is still a burden for women of reproductive age. In low-middle-income countries, the prevalence of anemia is still high⁹⁻¹⁵. In the Indonesian context, anemia is a burden for women of reproductive age. In Indonesia, there are some studies that found the factors associated with anemia among women¹⁶. Moreover, sociocultural determinants were found as the drivers of anemia based on a previous study in Indonesia¹⁷. According to the Basic Health Survey in 2018, the prevalence of anemia was 22.3%¹⁸. According to the correlation between

anemia and subjective well-being, there is some mediators including physical disability that might influenced^{19,20}. This study aimed to examine the correlation between anemia and hemoglobin status to subjective well-being among women of reproductive age in Indonesia using IFLS wave 5 data.

METHOD

This study was an analytical observation study with a cross-sectional design using Indonesia Family Life Survey (IFLS) wave 5 data (2014-2015), to analyze the relationship between anemia and subjective well-being. The study population was all women in Indonesia who were selected as respondents to the IFLS 5 study, namely women aged 15-49 years. The study sample was an IFLS 5 study respondent, who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria: women of reproductive aged 15-49 years and completed the Hemoglobin test. Exclusion criteria: Women whose data were not completed. The IFLS 5 survey was held from the end of 2014 until the beginning of 2015 using the same respondents as IFLS 4, namely 16,204 households, 50,148 individuals, and 2,662 individuals who died since IFLS 4²¹. The only extensive longitudinal survey that is currently available for Indonesia is IFLS. IFLS provides a means to comprehend behavior dynamics at the individual, household, family, and community levels since data are available for the same persons at different times. From the IFLS 5 data, there were 18,825 female respondents who answered questionnaires. Then, from this data, it was re-selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. There were 12,818 study samples that were obtained according to inclusion and exclusion criteria. The dependent variable in this study is subjective well-being (*satisfied/somewhat satisfied/not satisfied*). The main independent variable is anemia and hemoglobin level. Hb level in this study was measured by blood test. Those who are categorized as having anemia if Hb level is less than 12 mg/dL. There are some other independent variables including age, marital status, pregnancy, menstruation, breastfeeding, SES, family life satisfaction, standard of life, and food consumption.

The analysis is divided into 3 parts, namely, univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis. Univariate analysis can be presented

in the form of frequency distribution, which in this study describes the characteristics of anemia and subjective well-being among women of reproductive age. Bivariate analysis in this study was performed on two tests including Chi-Square for categorical independent variables and ANOVA for continuous independent variables. A 95% Confidence interval was used as cut off for significant levels. Multivariate analysis was done using multinomial logistic regression. Subjective well-being in this study was categorized into satisfied/somewhat/not satisfied, so in the multivariate analysis, the baseline or reference group is somewhat. It is because the authors want to explore the factors associated with satisfied and not-satisfied well-being. All the tests have been done using STATA version 17. The procedures in the IFLS were previously tested and approved by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) in the United States (RAND Corporation) since IFLS 1. All data processed in this study came from IFLS 5 data which was conducted by Survey Meter and RAND Corporation. The original survey IFLS 5 has been approved by IRBs (Institutional Review Boards) in the United States (at RAND) and in Indonesia at the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM) ²². This current study using secondary data has been approved by the Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak Ethical Committee with number 013/KEPK-FIKES/UMPONTIANAK/2023.

RESULTS

Table 1 below describes the general characteristics of the samples. Hb level in this study has a minimum 4 g/dL, maximum 18.8 g/dL and mean 14.5 g/dL. About the age, minimum age is 15, maximum is 49, and mean 31 years old. Among all respondents in this study, around half of them reported satisfied according to their subjective well-being (47%). About the anemia level, more than one-fourth of them were anemia (32%). More than three fourth of them were married (77%), not pregnant (95%), not in menstruation (86%), not in breastfeeding (86%), poor SES (67%), adequate family life satisfaction (59%), adequate standard of life (54%), and adequate food consumption (55%).

Table 1. General characteristics of respondents

Variables (n = 12,818)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subjective wellbeing	6,023	46.99
Satisfied	5,369	41.89
Somewhat satisfied	1,426	11.12
Not satisfied		
Anemia		
No	8,754	68.29
Yes	4,064	31.71
Age	Mean (Min-Max) = 31 (15 – 49)	
Hb level	Mean (Min-Max) = 14.5 (4 – 18.8)	
Marital status		
Married	9,803	76.48
Not married	3,015	23.52
Pregnant status		
No	12,188	95.09
Yes	630	4.91
Menstruation status	10,976	85.63
No	1,842	14.37
Yes		
Breastfeeding status	11,014	85.93
No	1,804	14.07
Yes		
Socioeconomic status	4,205	32.81
Rich	8,613	67.19
Poor		
Family life satisfaction	2,033	15.86
Less adequate	7,597	59.27
Adequate	3,188	24.87
More than adequate		
Standard of life		
Less adequate	2,228	17.38
Adequate	6,876	53.64
More than adequate	3,714	28.97
Food consumption	1,392	10.86
Less adequate	7,003	54.63
Adequate	4,423	34.51
More than adequate		

The results of bivariate using Chi-Square are reported in Table 2 below. In this table, there are some variables that have a correlation with subjective well-being, including age, pregnancy, SES, family life satisfaction, standard of life, and food consumption. However, the variables of anemia, Hb level, marital status, menstruation, and breastfeeding.

Table 2. Bivariate result between each independent variable and subjective wellbeing

Variables	Subjective wellbeing			Total	p-value
	Satisfied	Some-what	No		
Anemia					0.888
No	4,126	3,658	970	8,754	
Yes	1,897	1,711	456	4,064	
Age***					0.0000
Hb level					0.7894
Marital status					0.328
Married	4,631	1,267	356	3,015	
Not married	1,392	4,102	1,070	9,803	
Pregnant*					0.032
No	5,695	5,132	1,361	12,188	
Yes	328	237	65	630	
Menstruation					
No	5,160	4,589	1,227	10,976	0.854
Yes	863	780	199	1,842	
Breastfeeding					
No	5,150	4,626	1,238	11,014	0.357
Yes	873	743	188	1,804	
SES***					0.000
Rich	2,534	1,440	231	4,205	
Poor	3,489	3,929	1,195	8,613	
Family life satisfaction***					0.000
Less	560	795	678	2,033	
Adequate	3,323	3,642	632	7,597	
More	2,140	932	116	3,188	
Standard of life***					0.000
Less	620	903	705	2,228	
Adequate	2,968	3,327	581	6,876	
More	2,435	1,139	140	3,714	
Food consumption***					0.000
Less	439	530	423	1,392	
Adequate	2,884	3,369	750	7,003	
More	2,700	1,470	253	4,423	

*p-value <0.05, **p-value <0.01, and ***p-value <0.001

Table 3 below describes the multivariate analysis using multinomial logistic regression. This variable included two: satisfied subjective well-being and not satisfied subjective well-being. There are some variables found to have a correlation with those reported satisfied subjective well-being including those who are married, pregnant, poor, more than adequate family life satisfaction, more than adequate standard of life. However, the variables of anemia, Hb level, age, menstruation, breastfeeding, and food consumption did not have any correlation with satisfied subjective well-being. In detail, married women were 1.21 times more likely to be satisfied according to their well-being compared to single ones. Pregnant women were

1.21 times more likely to have satisfied well-being compared to non-pregnant women. Compared to rich ones, poor ones had a 37% probability of having satisfied well-being. According to those who have more than adequate family life satisfaction, an adequate standard of life, and more than adequate standard of life, they were 1.77 times, 1.19 times, and 1.74 times more likely to have satisfied well-being compared to those who have less adequate.

According to those reported not satisfied subjective well-being, it was revealed that some variables have correlation including married, poor, adequate family life satisfaction, more than adequate family life satisfaction, adequate and more than the adequate standard of life, adequate and more than adequate food consumption. In detail, married ones have a 26% probability to report not satisfied well-being compared to those not married. Poor women are 1.29 times more likely to have not-satisfied well-being compared to rich ones. Those who have adequate and more than adequate family life satisfaction, adequate and more than adequate standard of life, and adequate and more than adequate food consumption have the probability to have not-satisfied well-being 61%, 66%, 54%, 64%, 34%, and 25%, respectively.

Table 3. The multivariate results of the correlation between anemia and other covariates with subjective wellbeing

Variable	RRR	p-value (95% CI lower – upper)
Subjective well-being: satisfied		
Anemia (ref: No)		
Yes	0.99	0.972 (0.88 – 1.14)
Age	0.99	0.085 (0.99 – 1.00)
Hb level	1.02	0.369 (0.98 – 1.06)
Marital status (ref: No)		
Married	1.21**	0.001 (1.08 – 1.35)
Pregnant (ref: No)		
Yes	1.21*	0.042 (1.00 – 1.46)
Menstruation (ref: No)		
Yes	0.96	0.501 (0.86 – 1.07)
Breastfeeding (ref: No)		
Yes	1.04	0.502 (0.93 – 1.17)
SES (ref: Rich)		
Poor	0.63***	0.000 (0.58 – 0.69)
Family life satisfaction (Ref: Less adequate)		
Adequate	1.08	0.490 (0.93 – 1.24)
More than adequate	1.77***	0.000 (1.50 – 2.09)
Standard of life (ref: Less adequate)		
Adequate	1.19*	0.032 (1.03 – 1.36)
More than adequate	1.74***	0.000 (1.48 – 2.04)

Food consumption		
(ref: Less adequate)		
Adequate	0.88	0.056 (0.76 – 1.03)
More than adequate	1.13	0.920 (0.95 – 1.34)
Subjective well-being: not satisfied		
Anemia (ref: No)		
Yes	1.04	0.746 (0.84 – 1.28)
Age	1.01**	0.001 (1.00 – 1.02)
Hb level	1.02	0.517 (0.98 – 1.06)
Marital status (ref: No)		
Married	0.74**	0.001 (0.63 – 0.88)
Pregnant (ref: No)		
Yes	1.26	0.156 (0.92 – 1.72)
Menstruation (ref: No)		
Yes	1.02	0.846 (0.85 – 1.22)
Breastfeeding (ref: No)		
Yes	1.04	0.663 (0.87 – 1.27)
SES (ref: Rich)		
Poor	1.29**	0.002 (1.10 – 1.53)
Family life satisfaction		
(Ref: Less adequate)		
Adequate	0.39***	0.000 (0.33 – 0.47)
More than adequate	0.34***	0.000 (0.26 – 0.44)
Standard of life		
(ref: Less adequate)		
Adequate	0.46***	0.000 (0.39 – 0.55)
More than adequate	0.36***	0.000 (0.28 – 0.47)
Food consumption		
(ref: Less adequate)		
Adequate	0.66***	0.000 (0.55 – 0.78)
More than adequate	0.75*	0.051 (0.60 – 0.94)

p*-value <0.05, *p*-value <0.01, and ****p*-value <0.00

DISCUSSION

According to the findings in this study, there is no correlation between anemia and subjective well-being. However, other covariates have a significant correlation to either satisfied well-being or not satisfied well-being. Apart from anemia as the main predictor, there are other studies that found covariates have more tendency to be correlated with subjective well-being.

The opposite result found there is a significant positive relationship between subjective well-being and marital satisfaction²³. Studies have shown that higher levels of subjective well-being are associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction among married women. This suggests that subjective well-being can have a positive impact on the quality of marital relationships. Furthermore, subjective well-being is influenced by various factors, including economic status²⁴. A meta-analysis found that individuals in developing countries with higher economic status tend to have higher levels of subjective well-being. This suggests that economic factors play a role in shaping an individual's subjective well-being.

In summary, anemia can have a negative impact on subjective well-being, as evidenced by the study on pregnant women². Subjective well-being is a multidimensional construct that encompasses both hedonic and evaluative well-being⁵. It is influenced by various factors, including economic status²⁴. Additionally, subjective well-being is positively related to marital satisfaction among married women²³. Understanding the relationship between anemia and subjective well-being can help inform interventions and support for individuals with anemia to improve their overall well-being. The study in Indonesia found sociocultural variables had more influence on anemia¹⁶.

Several studies about subjective well-being have been done before. The result of this study is supported by the study about food insecurity and subjective well-being in more-developed and less-developed countries²⁵. One study found that job uncertainty on fertility intentions was channeled by subjective well-being^{26,27}. In terms of the child, another study found that infertility was correlated with women's well-being²⁸. Parenthood on subjective well-being was also discussed in the study in Hungary²⁹. Another study about subjective well-being found that disaster is highly correlated with satisfied well-being^{7,8}. Among the students, there is a role and interaction of social support, resilience, and subjective well-being³⁰.

Even though anemia was not significantly associated with subjective well-being, other core variables were found associated with subjective well-being. Health behavior was found to correlate with subjective well-being by a longitudinal study³¹. Among the elderly, iron deficiency, fatigue, and muscle strength have correlated with daily life activity that also impacts satisfied well-being³². This study has limitations in that anemia and Hb level are not predictors of subjective well-being, but there are other strong variables that predict, there any some potential biases, and data management challenges.

CONCLUSION

Regarding to results of this study, there is no correlation between anemia and hemoglobin level with subjective well-being. However, there are some other covariates that have a correlation to satisfied and not-satisfied well-being including marital status, pregnancy, SES, family life satisfaction, the standard of

life, and food consumption. It is concluded that subjective well-being is associated with not only health aspects but also social and economic. Intervention in the level of community is needed to improve the quality of life to achieve satisfied well-being. Joining the community and social group at the village level may increase subjective well-being. Government and stakeholders might establish community and social groups at the smallest level.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All authors declared there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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