

Mental Health as a Function of Socio-Economic Status

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Abstract

This research project was designed to measure the influence of Socio-Economic Status on mental health of individuals. Mental health is level of psychological well-being or an absence of mental disorder. It is the 'Psychological State of Someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and Behavioural adjustment. From the perspective of positive psychology or Holism, mental health may include. Psychological resilience. Mental health includes adequate feeling of security, adequate self evaluation, adequate emotionality, effective contact with reality, adequate self knowledge, ability to learn from experience etc.

Keywords: Socio-Economic, Psychological Resilience, Mental Health Includes

I. INTRODUCTION

A brief review of literature on the subject revealed that in the psychological literature several studies were reported in the recent past on the socio-economic status (SES) and mental health.

A study focusing on lower class adolescents 1000 young, unemployed people (15-21 years age) in Scotland found that one third of the males and 20% of females were exhibiting evidence of psychological morbidity (Sweeting and West, 1995).

Sanvictors (1976) found the relationship of mental health with economic growth. He found that in the less developed countries people did have less frustration and better mental health as compared to developed countries. This may be because of the individuals needs were more and their social demands were enhanced. They might be more competitive which might induce frustration of various stages of life.

Wiggins et. al (2004) examined the link between common psychiatric symptoms and work. They found a relationship of social class to anxiety and depression linked to changing employment status. They examined there different ways of describing social position; Income, social advantages and life style and social class.

Residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported symptoms of depression because of the effects of socio-economic status. (Ross, 2000).

Neighbourhood income is significantly related to the prevalence of major mental health problems and substance abuse (Goldsmith Holzer and Mandershied, 1998).

HYPOTHESIS

Relating the independent variables with all the dimensions of dependent variables the following hypothesis were formulated:

There will be no difference among the people of High, Middle and Low Socio-Economic Status on Egocentrism dimension of mental health (Hypo-1).

The people of High Socio-Economic Status group will have also better mental health compared to the people of middle socio-economic status on alienation aspect of mental health (Hypo-2).

There will be significant difference in mental health of High and Low SES people on alienation aspect (Hypo-3).

There will be no difference among the people of middle and low SES on alienation aspect of mental health. (Hypo-4)

There will be no difference among the people of middle and low SES on alienation aspect of mental health (Hypo-5).

There will be no difference in the mental health of high, middle and low SES group on expression aspect of mental health (Hypo-6)

There will be no significant difference among the people of high, middle and low SES on emotional stability aspect of mental health (Hypo-7).

The people of High SES will have better mental health compared to the middle and low SES people on social conformity aspect of mental health (Hypo-8).

The people of high SES will have better mental health compared to the middle and low SES people on social conformity aspect of mental health (Hypo-9).

METHODS

The main objective of this study was to ascertain the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on four aspects- alienation, egocentrism, expression and social non-conformity of mental health.

Sample

A sample of 300 people were selected for the study. Out of 300 subjects 85, 120 and 95 belonged to High, middle and low SES respectively.

Instruments

For the measurement of mental health status adaptation of 'Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory' developed by Kumar and Thakur (1983) was used. The inventory had five assessment scales. These were, Egocentrism, Alienation Expression, Emotional instability and social nonconformity. The Egocentrism scale was designed to determine, whether the individual was oriented towards personal and selfish goals or and efforts for the needs of other people. Alienation scale contained items related to suspicious and over sensitivity, loss of control, perceived sensory distortions and anxiety. Expression scale contained items which could measure the extent of, how easily the individuals met and interacted with other people at social level. Emotional un-stability had items which could to locate whether the individual was fearful, depressed, emotionally liable, unhappy and nervous. Social non-conformity scale items were meant for locating disregard for law, liking for longer and aggressive excitement, impulsivity and resentments.

The socio-economic status of subjects was measured with the help of a socio-economic status schedule developed by Malivya and Thakur (1982). This scale had five areas: Income, Social class urbanization, education and occupation.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The impact of socio-economic status on mental health was measured with the help of analysis of variance. The SES had three groups viz. the High SES, Middle SES and Low SES groups. These groups were selected on the basis of the norms provided for the purpose in the manual and compared on their scores on Mithila Mental Health

Status Inventory. The Mental health had five areas viz. Egocentrism, Alienation, Expression, Emotional instability and Social non-conformity. Group comparisons were also made with the help of t-test of significance, if necessary.

Table-1
Analysis of Variance

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Between groups	2	20.46	10.23		
Within groups	297	5576.7	18.71	0.54	7.05

The above table reveals that the SES did not have significant impact on mental health. This indicated that the egocentrism and SES were unrelated. Thus Hypo-1 was confirmed

Tables-2
Mean comparison of High and Middle SES Groups on alienation

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High SES	85	21.82	4.69	3.52	203	<.01
Middle SES	120	23.22	3.17			

It would be evident from above table that the high SES and the middle SES groups did differ significantly on alienation aspect of mental health. If further reveals that high SES subjects had superior mental health status relating to Alienation as compared to middle SES. Thus, hyp-2 was conformed.

Table 3
Mean comparison of the High and Low SES groups on alienation

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High SES	85	20.56	4.56			
Low SES	95	21.96	4.32	2.25	178	<.05

The above table revealed that the High SES and low SES groups did differ significantly on mean values of alienation. It might be concluded that high SES subjects had better mental health compared to low SES so far as alienation dimension of mental health is concerned. Thus, Hypo. 3 was confirmed.

Table 4
Comparison of Mean Scores of Middle and the Low SES group on alienation

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Middle SES	120	23.9	3.35			
				1.29	213	>.05
Low SES	95	22.95	3.17			

The above table revealed that middle SES and low SES group did not differ significantly on alienation. Thus, hypo 5 was confirmed.

Table 5
Analysis of Variance Difference among High Middle and Low SES on Expression aspect of mental health

Sources of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Middle SES	2	15.18	7.59		
				0.36	>.05
Low SES	297	9487.89	20.94		

The table 5 revealed that SES did not have significant effect on expression aspect of mental health. The three SES groups high middle and low had almost similar level of expression. The result confirmed same level of in expression as the people of all there three groups mix freely with society. Thus, Hypo, 6 was confirmed.

Table 6
Analysis of Variance

Sources of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Between groups	2	49.2	24.6		
				.78	<.05
Within groups	297	14279.17	31.52		

The above table reflected that SES did not have significant effect on emotional insensibility. Thus Hypo. 7 was confirmed.

Table-7
Analysis of Variance

Sources of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Between groups	2	188.20	91.06		
				4.65	<.01
Within groups	297	8869.08	19.58		

It was clear from above table that the SES had significant effects on the social non-conformity aspect of mental health. Thus Hypo-8 was confirmed.

Table 8
Mean comparison of High and middle SES groups on social non-conformity

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High SES	85	24.82	4.32			
				2.56	203	<.05
Middle SES	120	26.14	4.42			

The above table revealed that high SES and the middle SES group did differ significantly on social non conformity scores. It might, therefore, be concluded that the high SES subjects had less social non-conformity compared to the middle SES subjects.

Table 9
Mean comparison of High and middle SES groups on social non-conformity

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High SES	85	24.82	4.32			
				.16	178	>.05
Low SES	95	25.00	4.28			

It would be evident from above table that High SES group and the low SES group did not differ significantly on mean source of on social non-conformity.

Table 10
Mean comparison of High and middle SES groups on social non-conformity

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Middle SES	120	26.14	4.42			
				2.55	213	<.05
Low SES	95	25	4.28			

The table revealed that the middle SES and the low SES groups did differ significantly on social non-conformity aspect of mental health. The table indicated that the middle SES persons were high on social non-conformity as compared to persons of low SES.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to measure the impact of socio-economic status on five dimensions of mental health i.e. Egocentrism, alienation, expression, social non-conformity and emotional instability. On the basis of the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

- i. The Socio-economic status was not a significant factor on egocentrism, emotional instability and expression.
- ii. The Socio-economic status was significant factor on alienation. High Socio-economic group had least alienation, the middle socio-economic status group had more alienation and the low socio-economic status groups' alienation fell in between two.
- iii. The socio-economic status was a significant factor in social non-conformity aspect of mental health. The high and the low socio-economic status group had the most conformist attitude in social situation and the middle socio-economic group had the least social conforming.

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