Patterns of Gender Equality at Workplaces and Psychological Distress

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Psychology of Social Behavior   
March 3, 2017

Abstract

Associations Between Household Income, Health, and Stress

Group #5 researchers, Erin Galloway, Jerry Marino, Kayla Miller, and Jessica Trochez (2017) executed a survey research study in which a sample of respondents from a population were administered a questionnaire. The study specifically examined the correlation between different levels of household income and health as well as stress, which was strongly influenced by a pre-existing experiment, *Effects of Interpersonal Experiences Associated With Socioeconomic Position*, conducted by Jenny M. Cundiff, Timothy W. Smith, Carolynne E. Baron, and Bert N. Uchino, which focused on heart disease and lack of treatment as a result of one’s socioeconomic status. For data collection and analysis, the researchers referred to their unique Google Forms survey, which was distributed to several Santa Fe College students enrolled in a Psychology of Social Behavior class taught by psychology professor Ryan Keith, and Facebook users on Jessica Trochez’s friends list. Overall, the sample size was 171 participants—81 Santa Fe students and 90 Facebook users.   
 Prior to critique of the data collected, the researchers formulated four hypotheses: low-income households eat lower quality foods resulting in bad health; lower-income households are affected physically and mentally while higher-income households are affected emotionally and mentally; low-income households do not have access to high quality healthcare and are therefore more prone to psychopathology, obesity, and heart disease; lack of opportunities in community settings leads to lack of employment. Because stress is such a complex issue, the questionnaire attempted to measure several quantitative factors strongly associated with mental and physiological health.  
 The researchers derived their hypotheses from pre-existing studies that analyzed in-depth the numerous variables their survey measured. For example, in a multicultural study conducted by researchers Mendoza, Marina; Dmitrieva, Julia, Perreira, Krista, Hurwich-Reiss, Eliana, and Watamura, Sarah Enos. (2017) studied the effects of socioeconomics stressors on the well-being of children of Latino immigrants living in low-income households. Several variables that were examined in this study influenced the researchers variables of interests; they included household income and structure, level of education, occupation(s), and eating habits. Their intention was to analyze several variables that have the potential to affect a person’s access to services and resources. They also investigated how show exposure of different environments as a result of one’s household income and current socioeconomic status majorly influenced people’s overall mental and physical well-being and their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

*Questions asked: Are low-income households more unhealthy compared to others? Are low-income households more susceptible to stress? How does the different income levels affect each household? What is the average income in each social class?*

*Does the number of people (and age of each person) in the household contribute to overall stress? How does stress affect the family structure/dynamics in each household? Are there specific patterns in each social class? What is the risk percentage of developing pathology and other health issues across each social class?  
Articles to refer to? How to refer them in-text?*

Methods

To collect data, the researchers executed a survey research study in which a sample of respondents from a population were administered a questionnaire with a wide range of questions regarding their socioeconomic status. The purpose of the questionnaire was to describe, explore and explain how several stressors involved in different levels of household income affect a person’s welfare and lifestyle choices.   
 The researchers’ first step was determining who the specific subjects were going to be, which turned out to be 81 social psychology college students enrolled in psychology professor Ryan Keith’s class at Santa Fe College and 90 active Facebook users from one of the researchers’ (Jessica Trochez) friends list, which equaled to 171 participants. However, these two clusters completed the survey with different intentions—whereas the college students were promised extra credit for their social psychology class, the Facebook users simply provided their feedback with no expectation of a reward or benefit. Despite this, anonymity was preserved, as the participants were not followed up with their questionnaires. To eliminate outliers which risk skewing the data, those who did not answer all mandatory questions were removed from the sample size, which still left a sample size of 170 people.   
 The materials utilized to conduct the study was a Google Forms survey created by the researchers, which attempted to measure and quantify certain socioeconomic conditions and possible stressors of each participant. 21 questions, divided by 3 significant dimensions of the study—demographics, socioeconomic status, and health. Variables of interest included household income or the amount of money the participants’ household earns which ranged from low class, (less than $50,000), middle class ($50,000 to $100,000), and upper class ($100,000); family dynamics which asked for the location of the household, number of children living in the household if any, contributors of income, and whether or not the participant identified as financially independent or dependent; level of education was taken into consideration as community college classes are diverse especially in terms of the expected age range and because Facebook users were involved and not all participants are enrolled in college or above; occupation(s) and whether or not their job is physically/emotionally demanding; eating habits were also asked as the amount of times a week people have takeout, eat out, or eat pre-made meals may contribute to poor health and diet.

Discussion

Gender equity is a continuous global and ethical issue as reflected by multiple studies published from different regions of the world. This experiment, which was executed in Sweden, likewise verified how when there is a major difference of power in the workplace, an environment that permits discrimination between women and men can easily be produced. The results not only intended to alarm societies of existing gender disparities, they also emphasized how prejudice tends to occur more towards women—another issue other studies have tackled.   
 By analyzing several socioeconomic factors critical to both women and men’s health, workplaces are able to modify, maintain the protection of, and develop the enforcement needed to preserve fundamental basic human rights. Another strength of the study was the researchers’ method of collecting data which was a longitudinal, cluster cohort method. Participants since the age of 16—the minimum legal working age in Sweden—were observed over a period of time. This allowed monitoring of individual level of change in a broad spectrum rather than a specific population. Additionally, the researchers strongly noted how because this study had a high response rate and a competent longitudinal design of the Northern Swedish Cohort, this made it possible to update health information.   
 Although this study had several strengths, it also had its limitations. Foremost, this study was conducted in a Swedish setting and such specific conditions limit the results to other settings. Additionally, each cluster had a small number of participants which risks skewing the data which is a possible explanation as to why there were no significant results for men. The studies should have also broadened its choices of which aspects of gender equality to investigate such as part-time/full-time employment, sexual harassment, and racism.

References

Bolin, M., Elwér S., Hammarström A., & Harryson L. (2013). Patterns of Gender Equality at Workplaces and Psychological Distress. *PLoS ONE*, *8*(1), 1-10.