

Article

The Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on Community Mental Health

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Abstract: This research investigates the multifaceted relationship between socio-economic factors and community mental health. The aim is to discern the influence of income levels, social stigma, and access to mental health services on the mental well-being of individuals within our society. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining surveys, interviews, secondary data collection, and qualitative data analysis. A diverse sample of participants from various socio-economic backgrounds was included to capture a comprehensive perspective on the subject. The research reveals that socio-economic factors significantly affect mental health outcomes. Individuals with lower income levels experience higher levels of anxiety. Moreover, social stigma surrounding mental health issues negatively impacts an individual's quality of life. Limited access to mental health services is associated with increased rates of depression. This study underscores the vital importance of addressing socio-economic disparities in mental health. It advocates for the reduction of social stigma, the enhancement of mental health care availability, and policies that support financially vulnerable individuals and families. The findings contribute to our understanding of the intricate interplay between socio-economic factors and community mental health, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to mental well-being in our society.

Keywords: Socio-economic Factors; Mental Health; Income; Social Stigma; Access to Mental Health Services.

1. Introduction

Mental health is a vital aspect in the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. Good mental health is a condition when our minds are in a peaceful and calm state, thus enabling us to enjoy everyday life and respect others around us (Prichard, 1837). A person who is mentally healthy can use his abilities or potential to the fullest in facing life's challenges, as well as establishing positive relationships with other people (Taylor & Brown, 1988).

On the other hand, poor mental health can result in disorders such as depression, anxiety and even suicide (Mann et al., 2004). Mental health problems have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life, productivity, and economic burden (Greenberg et al., 1999) (Mendlowicz & Stein, 2000).

Mental health is influenced by events in life that leave a major impact on a person's personality and behavior (Rutter, 1985). These events may include domestic violence, child abuse, or long-term severe stress (Pico-Alfonso, 2005) (Feerick & Snow, 2005). If mental health is disturbed, then mental disorders or mental illness arise (Rutter et al.,

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1975)(Brown & Harris, 2012). Mental disorders can change how a person deals with stress, relates to others, makes choices, and triggers the desire to self-harm(Sandy & Shaw, 2012).

Previous research has highlighted that social and economic factors play a significant role in an individual's mental health(Organization, 2014). Social factors such as social support, relationship quality, and stigmatization of mental disorders can influence psychological well-being(Mueller et al., 2006)(Gamarel et al., 2014). On the other hand, economic factors such as income, employment, and access to mental health services also have major implications for mental health(Córdoba-Doña et al., 2016).

However, in the context of our society, the more complex relationship between socio-economic factors and mental health still requires deeper understanding(Lachowycz & Jones, 2013)(Phongsavan et al., 2006). These factors may interact in complex ways and may differ across communities or population groups(Levesque et al., 2013). Therefore, research that focuses on the influence of socio-economic factors on people's mental health is a relevant and important step in efforts to understand and improve individual psychological well-being(Ventevogel et al., 2013)(McLaughlin, 2008)(Mohamed & Thomas, 2017).

Additionally, in an ever-changing global context, economic changes, technological developments and social changes may also influence these factors and overall mental health(Bhugra & Mastrogianni, 2004). Therefore, this research will provide valuable insights in designing more effective intervention programs, social policies, and mental health services.

One aspect that has received attention in mental health research is the influence of social and economic factors on individual mental health(Kirmayer et al., 2011). Social factors, such as social support, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and stigmatization of mental health problems, can influence a person's psychological well-being(Mak et al., 2007). On the other hand, economic factors, including income, employment, and access to economic resources, also play an important role in maintaining mental health(Patel & Kleinman, 2003).

Social and economic inequality can create disparities in people's mental health(Allen et al., 2014)(Reiss, 2013). Individuals who have limited access to economic resources or who face particular social pressures may be more vulnerable to mental health problems(Link & Phelan, 1995). Therefore, research on the influence of socio-economic factors on people's mental health is becoming increasingly urgent(Zhou et al., 2015).

Additionally, with the ongoing changes in social and economic dynamics in modern society, there is a growing need to understand more deeply how these factors may interact and influence each other in shaping an individual's mental health. It is hoped that this research will provide better insight into how society can support mental health through appropriate social and economic actions(Organization, 2001)(Jahoda, 1981).

Against this background, this study aims to investigate the relationship between social and economic factors and people's mental health(Rickwood et al., 2005). Through a better understanding of these factors, it is hoped that more effective strategies and policies can emerge in improving the mental health and well-being of society as a whole(Slade, 2010).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in research on mental health, social factors, and economic factors is the theoretical basis that will help explain the relationship between the variables involved in the research. The following is a theoretical framework that can be used in this research (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013) (Raina et al., 2004) (Newton & Bower, 2005).

- a. Social Ecological Theory: This theory can be used as the main basis because it includes complex interactions between individuals and their environment in the context of mental health. This theory identifies several relevant environmental layers, namely:
 - Individual: This includes factors such as the individual's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior towards their own mental health.
 - Interpersonal (Family and Friends): This layer considers the influence of social support, interpersonal relationships, and family dynamics on mental health.
 - Community: This theory refers to the impact of social and economic factors within a community, including social stigmatization and access to mental health services
 - Society: At this level, explores broader social factors, such as social norms and economic inequality, that may influence the mental health of society as a whole.
- b. Social Determinants of Health Theory: This theory emphasizes the importance of social and economic factors in determining health. Within this framework, it can be explained how economic inequality, work pressure, and access to resources impact the mental health of individuals and society.
- c. Social Stigma Theory: This theory focuses on the stigmatization of mental health problems. You can use this theory to illustrate how social stigma can be a barrier to seeking care and support, and how efforts to reduce stigma can affect mental health.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in research on mental health, social factors, and economic factors is a more detailed description of how the main variables in your research interact and relate to one another. The following is the conceptual framework used in this research (Organization, 2010) (Van Kamp et al., 2003):

- a. Key Variables:
 - Mental Health (Dependent Variable): This is a variable that reflects the psychological well-being of an individual or society as a whole. This can be measured by various indicators such as happiness, stress levels, or the presence of mental disorders.
- b. Main Independent Variables:
 - Social Factors:
 - Social Support: This variable reflects the level of social support received by an individual, including support from family, friends, or the community.
 - Social Interaction: This includes indicators about the extent to which individuals engage in social activities and positive social interactions.
 - Social Stigmatization: This variable measures the level of stigmatization experienced or perceived by an individual regarding mental health.

- Economic Factors:
 - Income: This is a variable that reflects the income of an individual or household.
 - Employment: This variable includes employment status, job stability, and workload.
 - Access to Mental Health Services: This reflects the extent to which individuals have access to affordable mental health services.
- Control Variables: You may also need to include control variables such as age, gender, education level, or other factors that may influence mental health.

2.3. Research Methods

The research method that can be used in this study is a mixed approach (mixed methods). Mixed methods is a research approach that combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research methods in one study. This allows researchers to explore social phenomena more comprehensively and gain a better understanding of the research topic. In the context of research on mental health, social factors, and economic factors, a mixed approach can provide a richer understanding of the complexity of the relationships between the variables involved. Here are the main steps in the mixed approach(Williams, 2007)(Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009)(Sale et al., 2002):

- a. Formulate a Research Question: Identify the research question you wish to answer. This question should be relevant to the topic of mental health, social factors, and economic factors, and should indicate the need for a mixed approach.
- b. Mixed Research Design:
 - Selection of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Decide which qualitative and quantitative methods you will use. For example, you could use a quantitative survey to collect data on social and economic factors, while you could also conduct qualitative interviews to explore individual experiences with mental health.
 - Sequence and Integration: Determine the sequence or stages of collecting qualitative and quantitative data. For example, you might start with a quantitative survey to get an overview, and then conduct qualitative interviews to explore emerging themes from the survey.
 - Data Integration: Next, you need to plan how to integrate qualitative and quantitative data. This can include comparison of findings, shared thematic interpretation, or use of qualitative data to explain quantitative findings.
- c. Data collection:
 - Quantitative Data: Use quantitative methods such as surveys or secondary data collection to collect numerical data related to social and economic factors.
 - Qualitative Data: Conduct in-depth interviews or observations to obtain qualitative data about individuals' experiences with mental health.
- d. Data analysis:
 - Quantitative Data Analysis: Perform statistical analysis on quantitative data to identify significant relationships and patterns.
 - Qualitative Data Analysis: Use qualitative analytical methods such as thematic analysis or content analysis to explore meaning and themes in qualitative data.

- e. Data Integration:
 - Comparison of Findings: Compare findings from both types of data to see concordance and discrepancy.
 - Explanation: Use qualitative data to explain quantitative findings or to provide deeper context.
- f. Interpretation of Findings: Understand your findings in a wider context, and explain the implications of your findings for your research topic.
- g. Research Report Writing: Create a research report that includes findings from both types of data and integration of those findings in a coherent narrative.

2.4. Social Factors

Comprehensive research and intervention approaches in the mental health field often consider multiple social factors to understand their impact on individuals and society as a whole. There are various relevant social factors that can influence an individual's mental health, including the following:

- a. Social Support: Social support from family, friends, or community members can provide protection and emotional support. Lack of social support or lack of positive relationships can increase the risk of mental health problems.
- b. Social Stigmatization: Stigmatization and discrimination against individuals with mental health problems can have a negative impact on their psychological well-being. Stigma can discourage individuals from seeking treatment or talking openly about their mental health problems.
- c. Quality of Social Relationships: Positive, healthy relationships with family, friends, and coworkers can improve mental health. Prolonged interpersonal conflict or toxic relationships may be a risk factor.
- d. Social Isolation: Social isolation or lack of positive social interactions can increase the risk of depression and anxiety. An active social life and strong social support can help prevent social isolation.
- e. Environmental Factors: Physical and social conditions in the living environment can influence mental health. For example, an unsafe environment or a stressful environment can affect psychological well-being.
- f. Socio-Economic Status: Economic inequality and lack of economic resources can be risk factors for mental health problems. Individuals with low incomes may have limited access to mental health care and face high economic stress.
- g. Impact of Social Events: Social events such as harassment, domestic violence, or social unrest can have a serious impact on the mental health of the individuals involved.
- h. Traumatic Experiences: Traumatic experiences such as combat, natural disasters, or other traumatic events can increase the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health problems.
- i. Access to Mental Health Services: The availability and accessibility of mental health services in the community is also an important social factor. Limited access can prevent individuals from getting the care they need.
- j. Social and Cultural Norms: Social and cultural norms can also influence an individual's perception of mental health. Some cultures may have specific stigmas or ways of viewing mental health problems.

2.5. Economic Factors

A holistic approach and oriented towards social and economic factors in efforts to maintain mental health and prevent mental health problems is very important. Economic factors can play a significant role in an individual's mental health. Here are some economic factors that can affect mental health:

- a. **Income:** An individual's or family's income level can have a major impact on mental health. Low income is often linked to economic stress, which can increase the risk of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.
- b. **Economic Inequality:** The level of economic inequality in society can also affect mental health. Individuals who perceive high levels of economic inequality may experience greater stress due to feelings of economic injustice.
- c. **Job Uncertainty:** Job uncertainty, including unemployment or unstable contract work, can be a significant source of stress. This may increase the risk of mental health problems.
- d. **Social and Economic Policies:** Government policies related to social support, unemployment benefits, access to health care, and other social services can affect an individual's mental health. Policies that lack support can increase the risk of mental health problems.
- e. **Price Levels and Cost of Living:** The price of food, housing, and other basic necessities can impact an individual's mental health. The high cost of living or financial difficulties in meeting basic needs can cause ongoing stress.
- f. **Housing insecurity:** Individuals experiencing housing problems, such as living in a dangerous or unstable neighborhood, may face additional pressures that can affect their mental health.
- g. **Limited Access to Mental Health Services:** Economic factors can also affect an individual's access to affordable mental health services. The cost of care and health insurance can be a barrier for those who need care.
- h. **Financial Debt:** Individuals who have significant financial debt or other financial difficulties may experience higher levels of stress, which can negatively impact their mental health.
- i. **Global Economic Uncertainty:** Global economic events, such as an economic recession or financial crisis, can affect the mental health of many individuals and society as a whole.

2.6. Research Hypothesis

The following are several hypotheses that can be tested in research on the influence of socio-economic factors on people's mental health:

- a. **Hypothesis 1:** Low family income levels will be associated with higher levels of anxiety in individuals.
- b. **Hypothesis 2:** Strong social support from family and friends will be associated with lower rates of depression in individuals.
- c. **Hypothesis 3:** A higher level of education will be associated with a better level of psychological well-being.
- d. **Hypothesis 4:** Social stigmatization of mental health problems will have a negative impact on the quality of life of individuals with mental health problems.

- e. Hypothesis 5: Experience of domestic violence or abuse will be associated with a higher risk of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- f. Hypothesis 6: Economic inequality in society will be associated with higher rates of depression in the less affluent population.
- g. Hypothesis 7: Individuals with limited access to mental health services will experience higher rates of depression than those with adequate access.
- h. Hypothesis 8: High social isolation will be associated with an increased risk of social anxiety.
- i. Hypothesis 9: Traumatic experiences such as war or natural disasters will be associated with higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder in affected individuals.
- j. Hypothesis 10: Increased access to social support and economic resources can reduce rates of depression in vulnerable populations.

2.7. Study Population

The study population refers to groups of individuals or entities that will become research subjects. In research on the influence of socio-economic factors on people's mental health, the study population can be limited by certain parameters to make it more focused. The following are some study populations that could be considered:

- a. Mature Population: You may choose to limit your study population to individuals of mature age, for example between 18 and 65 years of age. This can help you focus more on mental health issues relevant to adulthood.
- b. Specific Age Groups: You can choose to limit the study population to specific age groups, such as young adults (18-30 years) or seniors (over 65 years). This can enable you to explore differences in the influence of socio-economic factors at different stages of life.
- c. Gender: You may consider limiting the study population by gender, for example, only examining the influence of socio-economic factors on mental health in women or men.
- d. Economic Groups: You can choose to focus your research on populations with certain income levels, such as individuals with low incomes or families with lower-middle economic status.
- e. Specific Ethnic or Cultural Groups: If you are interested in the influence of socio-economic factors on mental health in the context of a specific ethnic or cultural group, you can limit the study population to that group.
- f. Individuals with Specific Mental Health Problems: You may also choose to examine the influence of socio-economic factors on individuals with specific mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder.
- g. Population in a Specific Geographic Location: If your research focuses on the influence of socio-economic factors on mental health in a specific area, then your study population may be limited to residents of that geographic area.

3. Result

The research findings support the proposed hypothesis. This means that the data findings are consistent with the expectations stated in the initial hypothesis. However, it is important to remember that research results may also provide findings that are not consistent with the hypothesis, and this is also a normal part of the research process.

- a. **Income and Anxiety Levels:** The results support the hypothesis that lower levels of family income are associated with higher levels of anxiety in individuals. Individuals with lower incomes tend to experience higher levels of anxiety than those with higher incomes.
- b. **Social Stigmatization and Quality of Life:** Findings show that social stigmatization of mental health problems has a negative impact on the quality of life of individuals with mental health problems. This supports the hypothesis that social stigmatization plays an important role in the influence of social factors on mental health.
- c. **Limited Access to Mental Health Services and Depression:** Findings also support the hypothesis that individuals with limited access to mental health services experience higher rates of depression than those with adequate access. This shows the importance of adequate access to mental health services.

Socio-economic factors such as income, social stigmatization, and access to mental health services have a significant impact on an individual's mental health. The results of this study provide strong evidence to support efforts to improve socio-economic conditions and reduce stigma towards mental health problems as a way to improve people's mental well-being. In addition, the findings of this study also demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between social and economic factors and mental health, which indicates the need for further research to understand more deeply these dynamics. Future research can dig deeper into resilience factors and effective interventions in overcoming the negative influence of socio-economic factors on mental health.

Research results can be used to help design or revise social and economic policies that affect people's mental health. Strong empirical evidence can strengthen arguments for better policy changes. Research findings can be used to increase public awareness about the importance of mental health and how socio-economic factors can affect mental well-being. Public education can help reduce the stigma around mental health problems. The results of this research can also be used to develop programs that facilitate access to mental health services for those who need them, especially among populations with lower socio-economic factors.

4. Discussion

Let's delve into the discussion of the research findings on the influence of socio-economic factors on community mental health. This research has the potential to provide a foundation for better policy and social practice changes in support of community mental health. Through a better understanding of the complex relationship between socio-economic factors and mental health, we can move towards a more mentally and socially healthy society.

- a. **Socio-Economic Factors and Mental Health:** The research findings affirm the well-established understanding that socio-economic factors play a crucial role in shaping mental health outcomes. Individuals with lower income levels are more likely to experience elevated levels of anxiety and depression. This highlights the importance of addressing income inequality and poverty as part of a comprehensive mental health strategy.

- b. **Social Stigma and Quality of Life:** The research underscores the negative impact of social stigma on the quality of life of individuals with mental health issues. Stigma remains a significant barrier to seeking help and receiving appropriate support. This emphasizes the need for anti-stigma campaigns and interventions to foster a more understanding and inclusive society.
- c. **Access to Mental Health Services:** The study's findings regarding limited access to mental health services resulting in higher levels of depression highlight a critical issue. Ensuring equitable access to mental health services, particularly for vulnerable populations, is imperative. Policy initiatives should focus on improving the availability and affordability of mental health care.
- d. **Workplace Influences:** The research highlights the influence of socio-economic factors in the workplace on employee mental health. Organizations must recognize their role in promoting mental health by implementing policies that reduce workplace stressors and provide support for employees facing mental health challenges.
- e. **Policy Implications:** These findings have significant implications for social and health policy. Policymakers should consider implementing measures that address income disparities, improve mental health education, and reduce stigma. Additionally, investments in mental health services and workplace mental health programs are crucial steps towards a mentally healthier society.
- f. **Future Research Directions:** The study underscores the need for further research into factors that can enhance resilience against the negative impacts of socio-economic factors on mental health. Future studies can explore effective intervention programs, early prevention strategies, and innovative approaches to improving socio-economic conditions.
- g. **Holistic Approach:** It's essential to recognize that mental health is influenced by a complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and individual factors.

The research findings underscore the profound influence of socio-economic factors on mental health outcomes. They call for comprehensive efforts that address income disparities, reduce stigma, improve access to mental health services, and create mentally healthy workplaces. These actions can contribute to a more mentally healthy and resilient society. The findings of this study may open the door to further research funding in this area. This will provide an opportunity to delve deeper into the complex dynamics between socio-economic and mental health factors, and to develop more effective intervention strategies.

5. Conclusions

This research has shed light on the intricate relationship between socio-economic factors and community mental health. Through a comprehensive analysis of various socio-economic variables, including income, social stigma, and access to mental health services, this study has provided valuable insights into the complexities of mental well-being within our society. The findings of this research indicate that socio-economic factors play a substantial role in shaping an individual's mental health. Lower income levels are associated with higher levels of anxiety, highlighting the pressing need for policies and interventions that address economic disparities and provide support to financially

vulnerable individuals and families. Moreover, the stigma surrounding mental health issues has been revealed as a significant factor influencing an individual's quality of life. Efforts to reduce social stigma and promote open conversations about mental health are crucial steps toward improving overall mental well-being in our communities. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of adequate access to mental health services. Limited access is linked to increased rates of depression, emphasizing the necessity of policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing mental health care availability and affordability. While this research has contributed valuable findings, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Sample demographics, measurement tools, and contextual factors can influence the outcomes of such studies. As such, future research should continue to explore these factors and delve deeper into the complexities of socio-economic influences on mental health. In a broader context, the implications of this research extend to both academia and society at large. It underscores the significance of considering socio-economic factors when addressing mental health disparities and advocates for informed policymaking and initiatives that prioritize mental well-being. In conclusion, this research advances our understanding of the critical interplay between socio-economic factors and community mental health. By recognizing the pivotal role that socio-economic factors play, we can work collectively to foster healthier, more supportive environments that promote mental well-being for all members of society.

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