



A Longitudinal Psychological Assessment of Socioeconomic Factors, Coping Strategies, and Mental Well-being Among Working Adults

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to assess the psychological conditions of working adults and provide actionable recommendations. It defines the scope of possible socioeconomic variables and their correlational effects on psychological outcomes. Financial difficulties correspond to chronic anxiety as well as depression. Poor finances lead to uncontrolled chronic stressors and eventual burnout. Adaptive coping mechanisms are used to enhance mental resiliency. Stress from work is diminished through the use of social aid as well as problem solving. Unproductive coping methods worsen anxiety and greatly limit output. Workers are more satisfied when their organizations have good support infrastructure. Reducing the stigma around mental health in the workplace is done through commitment from leadership. Psychological help is available through Employee Assistance Programs. Companies that implement mental health policies are able to achieve greater retention rates. These approaches will not completely solve the issue of socioeconomic disparity along with aid in the workplace. This study still proves that there is a critical need for holistic intervention techniques. There is a sustained pattern in mental health issues over time. Rational policies within the workplace will lessen the psychological burden.

Keywords:

- Mental health
- Socioeconomic
- Workplace
- Stress
- Coping
- Support
- Employees
- Well-being
- Anxiety

Depression

Background

Workers' mental well-being is significantly affected by their socioeconomic status. Their income, employment security, and balance between their personal life and work affect their psychological well-being. Financially stressed workers economically underperform thus, facing higher levels of stress. The working environment together with job requirements and responsibilities influences



coping abilities. Jobs with excessive anxiety-provoking features induce anxiety at an increasing level, but a stable job can help reduce it. Different strategies are used to help an individual cope with their stress levels and emotional issues. Problem-solving and giving social support which improves well-being is termed adaptive coping (Karaca *et al.* 2019). Maladaptive coping is known for substance use and social avoidance which causes deterioration of mental health. Psychological coping is one of the core features in dealing with stress that is caused in the workplace. With the change of time, longitudinal studies focus on the alteration of mental health issues. Understanding how the risk factors change helps design better interventions.

There is a socioeconomic gap among the employees that leads to varied levels of mental health. Having a low socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with having a higher level of anxiety and depression. Economic burdens, restraining employment opportunities, and a lack of adequate resources lead to distress. People from lower socioeconomic classes tend to spend less on healthcare compared to high-ranking SES individuals. Mental health does not only depend on external help that is achievable but also on company policies. Private companies play a part in creating mental stability in the work environment. Outcomes of the mental initiatives are enhanced by employee assistance programs (EAPs) (Attridge, 2019). So do government regulations through labour laws. The patterns and effects of this are what studying these phenomena across time reveals. Interventions for at-risk groups can be designed through longitudinal study data. It is essential to understand how people cope to develop strong mental health programs. The goal of this particular study is to understand the relationship between socioeconomic status and coping strategies and their impacts on mental health. The results will help devise policies that strengthen psychological resilience in the adult working population. The reality of examining workplace mental health from a data perspective ensures that interventions will be useful.

Problem statement

Working adults have dire mental health issues that stem from their socioeconomic conditions and coping methods. Financially unstable low-income workers carry greater Task Stress. Poor working conditions cause stress, anxiety, burnout and emotional fatigue. Moreover, withdrawal from available mental health resources deepens their psychological suffering, especially for individuals in the low socioeconomic class. Many people engage in maladaptive coping methods such as



denial and drug abuse that harm self-wellbeing. Employees House predominantly poor workplace support structures, leading to stress (Nielsen *et al.* 2018). Organizations are not proactive when designing mental health policies, which leads to chronic sickness, poor performance, and job dissatisfaction. Socioeconomic Inequality creates gaps in access to psychological services and stress alleviation tools. These factors' interrelationship in greater detail is the least studied phenomenon and will limit the effectiveness of interventions targeted nowadays. To comprehend how socioeconomic factors, coping styles, and work environment affect the mental well-being of employees, one must take a multi-tiered approach. Filling these gaps would lead to the creation of more effective interventions oriented towards the self-reported wellbeing and resilience levels of working adults.

Objectives

- To analyze the impact of socioeconomic factors on mental well-being among working adults over time.
- To examine the effectiveness of different coping strategies in managing workplace stress.
- To explore the role of workplace support systems in mitigating mental health challenges.
- To identify long-term psychological trends and develop targeted mental health interventions.

Methodology

This research employed a secondary collection method focusing on socioeconomic conditions, coping mechanisms, and mental well-being patterns of working adults. Previously existing longitudinal studies, governmental documents, and psychological evaluations had a valuable depth of information. By using secondary data, it became easier to obtain samples of greater scope and variety, which increased reliability and validity. It also reduced expenditure of time and resources while still obtaining data from accurate sources. Patterns and associations were discovered using statistical and thematic analysis. This method made it possible to understand the persistent mental health in issue trends more holistically. It also enabled cross-sectional research that assisted in formulating comprehensive strategies for enhancing mental health at work.



Results

Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Long-Term Mental Well-being

Long-term mental well-being is impacted profoundly socioeconomically. Lower-risk cognitive decline is noted among educated and wealthy individuals. A decade-long study conducted on 8000 adults from the UK showed that college-educated people were 43% less likely to suffer from mild cognitive impairment. The wealthiest third of these adults had a 26% reduced likelihood of progression to dementia. This indicates that mental toughness is enhanced with finances and education. On the other hand, poor sociodemographic relate to mental health issues. A combination of insufficient finances and a job role which is high in demand increases stress, anxiety and depression. Gen Z employees, who are early on in their careers with inadequate finances, report a decline in holistic health (Barhate and Dirani, 2022). A recent study showed increased levels of stress and depression resulting in a 6% drop in overall well-being for Gen Z workers. Burnout and self-isolation is the end hallmarks of the financial strain, rising living costs and chronic illness. Chronic stress brings physical consequences like digestive problems, hair loss, and increased vulnerability to diseases. Young workers suffering from such high-stress conditions are doubly likely to suffer from major depression. Not to mention, consequences of socioeconomic status can be seen regarding access and affordability to mental healthcare. Commonly, individuals suffering from lower income and education do not seek nor receive sufficient help and care.

Mental Health Issue	Number of Affected Employees	Percentage of Workforce
Work-related stress	828000	17%
Diagnosed mental health conditions	510000	10.5%
Languishing (unmotivated, burnt out, anxious)	1850000	38%

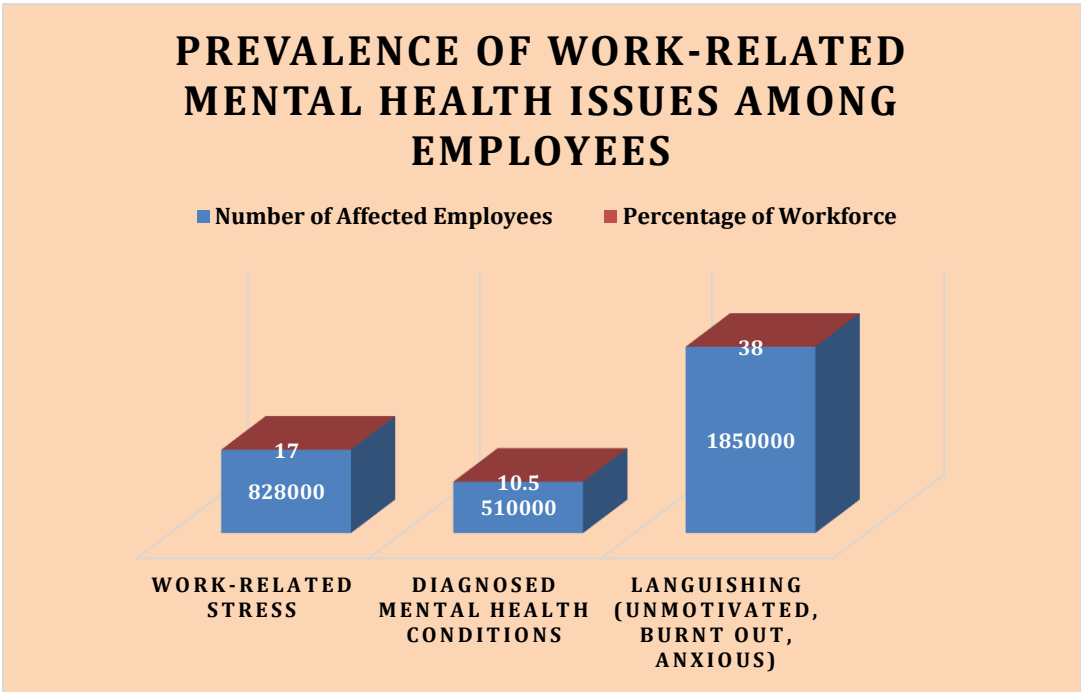


Table 1: Prevalence of Work-Related Mental Health Issues Among Employees

Meanwhile, people on the lower end of the social ladder suffer from untreated mental health conditions as cost and availability of services are barriers for them. These studies highlight the SES's cumulative effect on mental health. The combination of insufficient finances and a lack of social support over time increases stress and the likelihood of developing disorders (Anderson, 2018). To diminish these inequalities, there must be an intentional focus on providing financial literacy, affordable mental healthcare, and workplace policies that foster a healthy balance between work and personal life. Working adults can improve their mental health over the long term by seeking to lessen the negative impacts stemming from socioeconomic disadvantage.

Effectiveness of Coping Strategies in Managing Workplace Stress

The working adult population especially needs effective coping mechanisms to mitigate stress and improve mental health. Studies show that stress levels and job satisfaction were achieved through effective coping strategies like seeking social support or engaging in activities like problem-solving. For instance, a meta-analysis drawing on data from 4852 subjects found that adaptive strategies had significantly decreased work-related stress and increased well-being. Particularly, coping by working on problem-solving, getting social support, or relaxing were the most effective. On the other hand, avoidance and substance use, as maladaptive coping strategies, have been shown to increase anxiety and decrease work productivity. A study of nurses employed at tertiary



hospitals showed that negative coping strategies worsened the burden placed by the workload and time constraints on job performance (Guttormson *et al.* 2022). Some stress can also be managed with mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing which can be further elaborated upon later. Companies like Myosin Marketing have reported success with incorporating deep breathing at the beginning of meetings, notably during the first set of meetings. This simple technique reduced anxiety while boosting creativity among Myosin employees. A decrease in stress also comes with regular movement. A study published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine proved that moderate exercise reduced job burnout and emotional fatigue tenfold.

Socioeconomic Status	Mental Health Outcome	Risk Increase
Low SES	Mental health problems in children and adolescents	2-3 times more likely
Low SES	Exposure to multiple stressful life situations	Higher risk

Table 2: Correlation Between Socioeconomic Status and Mental Health Outcomes

Coping Strategy	Correlation with Work Stress	Correlation with Health-Related Quality of Life
Age	$r = -0.033$, $P = 0.497$	$r = 0.217$, $P = 0.00^*$
Years of Experience	$r = -0.04$, $P = 0.42$	$r = 0.182$, $P = 0.00^*$

Table 3: Impact of Coping Strategies on Work Stress and Health-Related Quality of Life

Walking briskly or practicing yoga are activities which improve one's mood and mental health. Additionally, improving communication within the workplace leads to an enabling environment where workers can articulate issues and seek help. Moreover, active listening and expressing needs appropriately can help eliminate misunderstandings and conflicts which, in turn, helps reduce stress. However, employers must also consider using practices which promote the culture of adaptive coping methods in the workplace. There must be tools like EAPs and workshops on stress management to properly prepare employees for challenges in the workplace (Attridge *et al.* 2018). Adopting coping strategies which include social support, mindfulness, and physical activity, greatly reduces stress levels. Individuals and organizations need to join forces in creating an environment which fosters mental health to promote productivity and enhance job satisfaction.

Role of Workplace Support Systems in Mental Health Improvement



Workplace support systems are essential to the improvement of an employee's mental health and well-being. A firm's attention to mental health needs contributes to a healthy atmosphere at work which results in higher satisfaction and productivity among employees. Support from the top is very important. When the leaders of a company give importance to mental health, it helps in building a culture which is more open and freer from stigma. This commitment can take form in policies, routine messages, and declarations of values of the firm as well. For example, companies that provide mental health literacy and skills training have higher employee productivity and lower absenteeism. Similarly, the World Health Organization has noted that good work, which is work done in favorable conditions and on a person's fundamental rights, greatly enhances mental health (WHO, 2020). These conditions do not just help avoid mental disorders related to work but also help rehabilitate and reintegrate persons suffering from any sort of mental disorders. The perception of support at work has a direct impact on mental health. Research has demonstrated that greater support yields reduced levels of anxiety or depression in employees. Perceptions of support can also be enhanced by programs such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), and counseling and peer support services. The organization further demonstrates its commitment to mental health through regular consultations and resource availability.

An American Psychology Association survey on work in America with a focus on 2023 showed that 77% of the respondents were happy with the employer's approach to their mental health support. This is associated with higher levels of loyalty and reduced attrition. Employers who try to solve mental health issues in an organization first create a state of trust and belonging which is crucial for talent retention. Additionally, the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being identifies the requirements for a supporting work environment (Søvold *et al.* 2021). This includes harm, protection, connection, community, work-life balance, and growth. These frameworks are important to ensure mental health is integrated into the organizational structure which sustains well-being initiatives in the long run. For example, mental health benefits are expected to be used in the health care industry, which faces high-stress conditions with the goal of improving well-being and burnout among health professionals. Accessible mental health care support and a positive attitude towards seeking help are essential in such settings. In summary, workplace assistance leads to improved mental health the professional's experiencing difficulties. Organizational leaders can enable this through strategic



policies, heightened commitment, reduced barriers, and increased resources that promote mental wellness and workplace satisfaction while enhancing productivity.

Longitudinal Trends in Psychological Well-being and Intervention Needs

Longitudinal studies show that an individual's socioeconomic standing affects his or her mental well-being. People belonging to lower socioeconomic levels often try to cope with inadequate finances, housing, and employment, which only serve to make chronic levels of psychological harder to manage. For example, long-term attachment to poorly housed environments, which includes insufficient is linked to growing depression and anxiety over time. On the other hand, higher SES individuals do not suffer as much as middle and lower-income individuals as they possess stable employment. In addition, Whitehall II, a population-based longitudinal study, found that there is a clear social gradient in mental well-being in lower-grade civil servants who are much more susceptible to mental disorders than their higher-grade counterparts (Araghi *et al.* 2020). It also shows the other direction of the occupational gradient in the UK which means that health worsens when moving to economically lower groups. Moreover, it has been shown that people suffering from depression and cognitive impairment also suffer from socioeconomic deprivation. Studies have also shown that people with lower income and less education have a high probability of facing mental disorders due to a lack of ready healthcare services and materials for coping.

Phase	Dates	Age Range	Participation	Response Rate (Alive)	Response Rate (Eligible)
1	1985-1988	35 to 55	10308	N/A	N/A
2	1989-1990	37 to 60	8132	79.3	79.3
3	1991-1994	39 to 64	8815	86.6	86.6
4	1995-1996	42 to 65	8628	86.6	92.4
5	1997-1999	45 to 69	7870	78.7	86.3
6	2001	48 to 71	7355	74.4	82.5
7	2002-2004	50 to 74	6967	71.6	82.2
8	2006	53 to 76	7173	75.2	87.2



9	2007-2009	55 to 80	6761	72.3	84.5
10	2011	57 to 82	277	N/A	N/A
11	2012-2013	58 to 83	6318	70.9	84.1
12	2015-2016	61 to 86	5632	66.6	80.2
13	2019-2023	64 to 89	4307	56.4	70.6

Table 4: Participation Rates in the Whitehall II Study Over Phases

On the flip side, higher SES individuals tend to have access to better protective factors like healthcare services, healthy lifestyles, and social support systems. This protection results in improved healthy coping mechanisms and lowers the likelihood of mental disorders. Moreover, there is a dual relationship between socioeconomic factors and mental health; while poverty provides adverse mental health complications, existing mental health problems can act as a barrier to improving one's socioeconomic status, resulting in a vicious cycle (Garcia-Sanchez *et al.* 2019). To effectively close the gap, there needs to be intervention policies that adequately improve the standards of living, provide an adequate range of mental health services, and instigate proactive measures at workplaces to enhance personnel security and welfare. This approach, focusing on the most relevant socioeconomic determinants, has the potential to lessen their negative impacts on mental health among adult workers in the long run.

Discussion

The results of the analysis synthesize the compelling nature of the socioeconomic environment, coping methods, and organizational support as determinants of mental health. Longitudinal studies have proven that low socioeconomic status over time worsens health outcomes. Worries about money, job loss, and insufficient medical care results in permanent stress. On the other hand, people of high income have more consistent and stronger mental health support. These differences create an emotional gap which negatively affects productivity and general well-being. Mental health issues arising from economic problems lead to unhealthy coping approaches, including



substance use and avoidance. These negative coping mechanisms lead to more stress, anxiety, and depression. Active coping mechanisms, including social support and problem-solving, increase mental health resilience (Knapp and Wong, 2020). Mindfulness and exercise among employees lower perceived stress and burnout. Increased employee productivity is attributed to the use of effective coping strategies. Systems supporting health in the organization are very important in improving mental health status. Businesses with effective measures seeking to protect the mental health of employees have lower rates of absenteeism and higher levels of job satisfaction. Supportive leaders improve communication around mental health and help to reduce stigma. Counselling and other materials for coping with stress, provided by Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), increase mental well-being within the workplace (Long and Cooke, 2023). Organizations that have a wider focusing on employee mental healthcare have a better retention rate and higher employee engagement.

Targeted strategies are essential in the workplace to prevent long-term psychological issues stemming from stress. Wellbeing aids need constant revision to keep up with strong longitudinal trends. Moreover, life and career shifts can have powerful effects on an individual's wellbeing. A strong case can be made for early mental health interventions as they can mitigate the worsening state of mental health in the future. Employers need to have regular assessments and flexible measures put in place for their support in the face of changing requirements (Fuller and Hirsh, 2019). The link between one's state of emotional wellbeing and productivity is clear from organizational studies. Improving focus, motivation and interpersonal relationships becomes easier with the implementation of stress-reduction measures. Having a lack of focus on the side of mental healthcare provision leads to poor motivation, absenteeism and inter-departmental conflicts. The need for a universal framework is very blunt when it comes to efficient care of high stress environments. Professions like healthcare put its workers in a position to suffer from burnout far quicker than most jobs. Creating barriers like these can greatly increase the quality of care through the adoption of predefined mental health initiatives. Policies of the government can have a large impact on the mental health of its citizens (Quinn *et al.* 2020). Removing socioeconomic barriers that restrict access to psychological care is one way to achieve this. There is a dire need for adequate policies on mental health that cover workplace wellness. By asking regular questions on wellbeing and gathering opinions from employees, employers are better positioned to give



support measures. Long-lasting success in mental healthcare in the workplace is likely to stem from an active leadership approach. Boosting employee morale in terms of improved job satisfaction can be done through an increase in a positive working atmosphere (Mallik *et al.* 2019). Financial investment on mental health will lead to better retention rate of employees and success of the organization. Efforts concerning mental health at work need to be given priority. Improvement of mental health can be achieved by adequately tackling socioeconomic challenges, developing coping approaches, and bolstering support at workplace.

Conclusion

The study reveals the importance of social economic status, coping mechanisms, and workplace support on mental wellbeing. People from a lower socioeconomic group are at a greater risk of experiencing negative mental health, while adaptive coping improves resilience. Support systems within an organization greatly increase workplace satisfaction, lower levels of stress, and increase productivity. Moving last is important as it always underline the importance of constant intervention on mental health. There needs to be a proactive approach for improvement of mental health among employees. Combating social economic gaps and employing more supportive policies within the workplace can create more health production worksites have long-term psychological provability can be assured for working adults. Taking this approach towards maintaining mental health will always enhance the employee's productivity within the professional environment.



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