Male Students Are More Stressed than Female

Due to Social Class Differences in Peshawar (Pakistan)

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Abstract

This article comprises of questionnaire / interview survey of 212 students to study the association between the socio economic status of the students and their standard of living. The social classes are divided into three main groups Upper, Middle and Working social classes on the basis of education, occupation, income, and place of residence. On the self assessment basis majority of the students put themselves in the middle socioeconomic class. Test was carried out for the association between gender of the respondents and the satisfaction with the standard of living, mental stress and social status, gender and social status causes mental stress, social classes and sufficient education facilities are available for poor people. Analysis showed that the gender of the respondent and all the two factor interaction were insignificant but profession and monthly income of the respondent play a vital role in discriminating the people in different social classes. This discrimination causes a mental stress. Work also revealed that in Peshawar region the mental stress phenomenon is more common in male than females in various fields of life. This may be due to the fact that males have more responsibilities. In most cases they have to earn to support their families. Hard government policies are also considered as the major factor which causes mental stress among the students.

Keywords: Socioeconomic class, Students, Gender, Peshawar, Profession, Income, Mental stress, Discrimination

1. INTRODUCTION

Every society is made of human being having different characteristics, interacting with each other in their daily life. This makes the society being a heterogeneous population. This population of individuals can be divided into several stratums possessing some common characteristics. It means that the societies of this world is made up of hierarchical stratification of individuals on the basis of some common characteristics among them such as geography, demography, behavior and psychographic. Taking into account the basis of psychographic discrimination, individuals are divided into different groups on the basis of social class, life style and personality. People having different psychographic characteristics may be placed in the same demographic group (Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong, 2004).

Some people are considered superior and some are considered inferior. Different factors such as prestige, education, money, standard of living, religion and culture can be considered as basic reasons for the social classes. But income of the household and property are the major causes of this socio-economic discrimination. Group of people in the society having some common characteristics regarding their life style and interest is called social class.

The society of Pakistan is discriminated in various social classes, a homogeneous group of people, on the basis of education, occupation, income and place of resident. Among those several classes, three classes are considered more popular among the people. The classes are Upper Social Class, Middle Social Class and Working Social Class.

The Upper Social Class generally has high level of income and belongs to be high paying profession and they live in cleanest place. Money will be no problem for them. Their size is 2% of the total society and they have 60% to 65% of money of the country. They are actually high status leadership, big business man and top management of the company. The Upper Social Class and Middle Social Class education are different like Upper Social Class study in foreign country and Middle Social Class study in local schools/universities of the country. Income size differs greatly. They don't have huge houses and can not even think for a big house. Their population is 28% of the total. They are actually small to medium size business man, middle management and low ranking government officer. Working Social Class is not much more educated and is not in very attractive profession. Their income is low and have very small house. Their size is 70% of total population of Pakistan. They are actually very small size shop owners, low grade government staff (peons, driver) and poor formers (http://wiki.answer.com, 03/04/10).

Several cross sectional studies have been carried out to analyze the association between socioeconomic status and mental stress. All these studies suggest a strong association between the mental stress and the socioeconomic classes. This socioeconomic discrimination causes a mental disorder in the individuals and creates several mental diseases. These studies have shown that the mental stress is very common in the people living in the lower class (Holzer et al, 1986; Bijl et al, 1998; Davey Smith, et al, 1998; Lewis et al, 1998; Muntaner et al, 1998; Weich & Lewis, 1998 1998a). There is also an association between the gender and the socioeconomic status but the strength of association is not very strong. Both the mortality and morbidity are associated with the difference in gender (WHO, 2001). But extend of such association that in which gender, health is highly associated with the social classes are not examined sufficiently (Ostlin P, 2002). However some studies shown that this association between the health and social class is some how more stronger in the men as compare to the women. In the First National Health and Nutrition survey (1971-1993) an association between coronary artery disease and social class is examined but the sample was not a good representative of the true population (Thurston R.C, et al., 2005).

The violent effort for the financial stability affects the health of individuals and causes physical disability and continuous mental stress. Some authors also show an association between the mortality and economic conditions of the individuals but this association is largely affected by the income. Any kind of support may weekend this relation (Szanton S. L., et al, 2008). Nowadays it has become a primary goal for the researchers to understand the relationship between the socioeconomic status and the health of peoples belonging to different races and become a challenging goal for the National Institutes of Health to control such health differences. And many researchers have shown that the socioeconomic status is highly correlated with the mortality rate i.e. the mortality rate is very high in the lower socioeconomic class (Hahn et al,1995; Howard et al, 2000; Hummer et al, 2004; Steenland, et al., 2004; Thom, 2004; Lantz 2005;Feinglass et al, 2007)

The above studies showed that stress and socioeconomic factors are very much associated even in European countries. According to Dr. Peter Millet, "Typically you would expect people to leave home between the ages of 18-22," (http://findarticles.com, 1999). Due to this fact youth, especially students, work for their living and to meet their expenses. Whereas in the third world country like Pakistan, city like Peshawar, capital of province Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa, the children are very much dependent on their parents. They totally rely on their parents in terms of studies, money and even deciding their profession. Comparing the two societies, European and Asian, we see that the socioeconomic and political conditions are very much different among the two societies. In European countries they don't have the concept of joint family system, which means that children in Europe live independently and they don't have any restriction. In Asia, people believe in joint family system in which male members takes the entire burden of their families, which may include students as well. The students of poor families do private / part time jobs to support themselves and their family which means that they don't have proper jobs but still had to add to the income of their family. Keeping in view these conditions, the factors that causes mental stress may be different in two societies. Before this no such study has been conducted regarding students. For this reason, a study is needed to be conducted to check which socioeconomic factors are responsible that causes mental stress among the students and to find out the key factors that discriminate the students in various socioeconomic groups.

2. METHODS AND ANALYSIS

The data is collected through a survey questionnaire from the students of the University of Peshawar. A total of 212 participants responded to the survey in which, 127 were male and 85 were females. In this study we used the sequential sampling in which the sample size is not known in advance and we stop the process at a point where we think that the sample size is enough and we can obtain our objectives. The respondents self assessed themselves and place themselves in three different socioeconomic classes according to their education, income and family background. A question about the profession of the students was asked, where profession was divided into four categories. The first category was unemployed which include the students who do not have any sorts of job and they were full time students. The main source of their income was their pocket money given by their guardians. The second and third categories contain the students who work as a government or private employees respectively. They were not the full time students but rather study in the evening shift. The fourth category comprises the students who were doing their personal business and were self-employed.

Graphical procedures are used to show the age and sex wise classification of the respondents, for the professions of the respondents, and the status of the respondent. The chi square test of association is carried out for testing the association between gender of the respondent and the satisfaction with the standard of life, mental stress and social status, gender and social status cause mental stress, social classes and sufficient education facilities are available for poor people.

The logistic regression model is fitted where the dependent variable is stress caused by the socio economic status and the independent variables are social class, and profession of the respondents. A multinomial logistic regression is fitted where social class of the respondent is considered as dependent variable and gender, profession and income of the respondents are considered explanatory variables. All these analysis were conducted by using SPSS 10 version package. The level of significance was kept at 1%.

3. RESULTS

The cluster bar chart (figure 1) suggests that most of the respondents belong to the age group 20-30 and the proportion of female respondents is high only at a age group less than 20. as we are considering the students so we gets the less no of students having age greater than 30 i.e. M.Phil / Ph.D students and the proportion of females is very small in higher studies. From the pie chart (figure 2) it is observed that 56.6% of the total respondents are unemployed and 25.5% are government employees remaining 18% are private employee or businessman. The bar graph (figure 3) show that on the self assessment basis 26(12%) people place themselves in upper socioeconomic class, 170(80%) place themselves in the middle class and 16(8%) people place themselves in the lower class which suggest that most of the residents of Peshawar region belong to the middle socioeconomic class. In response to the question that "In which class do you prefer to place your self", 23% of the respondents prefer the upper class, 74% middle class, and only 3% prefer the lower socioeconomic class. The question about government policies revealed that 80% of the respondents believe that this discrimination in due to government poor strategies.

In table 1 the question that whether socioeconomic status causes mental stress is significantly associated with the gender of the respondent with a chi square value of 10.24 and a p value of (.0014<0.01) at 1% level of significance the odds ratio indicates that 1.70 times males faces mental stress due to their status as compare to the females. This phenomenon is due to the fact that males have to support their families. Also a significant association between the gender of the respondent and the satisfaction from the standard of life is found with a chi square value of 8.919 and p value of (0.003<0.01). The odds ratio of 0.341 suggests that most of the females are satisfied from their standard of life as compare to the males. This may be due to the fact that their culture does not allow them to work outside. But no significant association is observed between the status of the respondent and their psyche about whether status causes mental stress, the chi square value is 1.32 with p value (0.516>0.01). These results indicate that in Peshawar region the male's faces mental stress due to the discrimination in various fields of life. The question that whether sufficient education facilities are available for lower class is significantly associated with the social status of the respondent with a chi square value of 11.25 and p value (0.004<0.01).

The gender profession and income (table 2) were considered that basic factors that discriminate the individuals in the society, also their interactions terms were analyzed. The gender of the respondent and all the two factors interactions were insignificant but profession and the monthly income of the respondents play a vital role in discriminating the people in different socioeconomic groups.

From the logistic regression model for the mental stress (table 3), the only significant term is the interaction effect of lower class and private employee and the odds of stress in the lower class and private employee is

20.446. Which means the people living in the lower socioeconomic group and working at any private firm suffers from a mental disorder because the private sector do not offer a handsome package as well as they feel very insecure about their jobs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study is conducted to check the effects of the social class differences on the students, where social class is the group of people having some common characteristics. The study concluded that most of the students residing in the Peshawar city belong to the middle socioeconomic class, and most of them prefer to be in the middle class. 56% are full time students and they are jobless they are mainly depends upon their guardians while 44% of the total students are doing their jobs and studying in the evening shift. Profession and monthly income are the key factors which discriminate people in various social classes and cause a mental disorder in the society. The phenomena mental stress is related with the gender differences and the male students of Peshawar suffer a mental stress due to socioeconomic position and they are not very much satisfied from their standard of living as compare to the females. Almost 64% of the males suffer the mental stress due to their socioeconomic class while 52% of the females have this problem. As the males are responsible to sustain the economic conditions of their family, they have to earn the livelihood and the rest of their family members depend upon him. The results show us that 87% of the females are satisfied from the standard of their living because they do not feel the burden to contribute in their family income rather they depends on their parents. Moreover most of the people consider that the government policies are responsible for this discrimination in the society because the government policies about their monthly salaries are not very effective**.** Males of the lower socioeconomic status and not having any government job or work as a private employee face a mental stress because the private sector do not offer an attractive salary.

It is suggested that government should take some steps and revise their policies in order to reduce the class differences, to overcome the problem of mental stress in the society.

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Table 1. Chi-Square Tests for testing associations.

	Chi-Square	df	p-value
Gender * Status causes stress	3.461	1	.063
Gender * Satisfied with standard of life	8.919	1	.003
Status * Status causes stress	1.323	2	.516
Status * sufficient education facilities for poor.	11.246	2	.004

Table 2. Deviances and Chi-Square Tests for stress

	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
GENDER	76.291	3.359	1	.187
PROFE	105.668	32.736	3	.000
INCOM	88.399	15.466	3	.017
GENDER * PROFE	54.310	6.419	3	.378
GENDER * INCOM	53.121	5.230	3	.515
PROFE * INCOM	61.088	13.197	9	.658

Table 3. Logistic Regression analysis for social classes

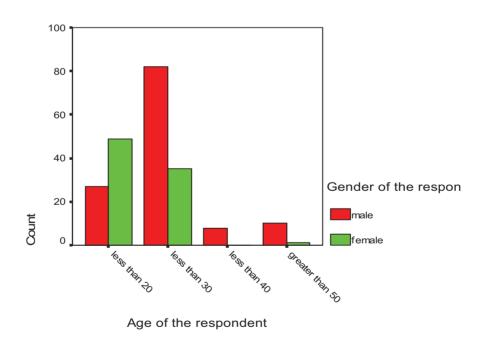|	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
PROFE			1.801	3	.615	
PROFE(1)	-7.225	15.779	.210	1	.647	.001
PROFE(2)	-1.431	1.448	.976	1	.323	.239
PROFE(3)	-1.025	.825	1.544	1	.214	.359
CLASS			3.440	2	.179	
CLASS(1)	-2.325	1.451	2.567	1	.109	.098
CLASS(2)	-1.253	1.282	.955	1	.328	.286
CLASS * PROFE			4.022	5	.546	
CLASS(1) by PROFE(1)	7.831	15.816	.245	1	.621	2517.936
CLASS(1) by PROFE(2)	2.037	2.005	1.032	1	.310	7.667
CLASS(1) by PROFE(3)	3.018	1.614	3.496	1	.062	20.446
CLASS(2) by PROFE(1)	7.740	15.787	.240	1	.624	2298.774
CLASS(2) by PROFE(2)	1.108	1.471	.567	1	.451	3.029
Constant	1.025	1.297	.625	1	.429	2.788

Figure 1. Cluster bar chart showing age and sex wise distribution of students

Figure 2. Pie chart showing the professions of the students
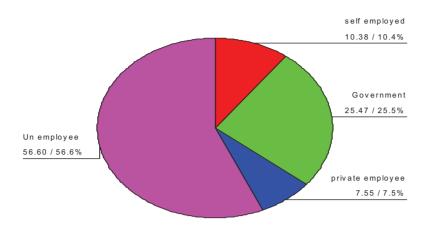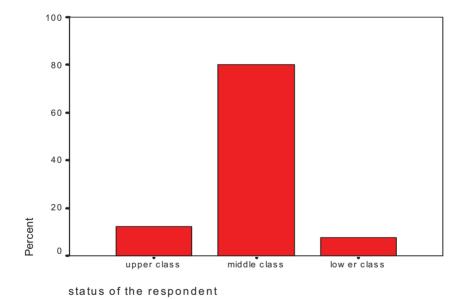

status of the respondent

Figure 3. Bar graph showing socioeconomic classes