

Peril In Poverty – The Relationship Between Quality of Life and Income

Research Question

- Is family income associated with happiness and health?
- Does biological sex moderate the relationships between income and health and happiness?

Did you know?

- Poverty is one of the most prevalent problems our country is facing.
- The official poverty rate was 12.3 percent in 2017 (US Census Bureau).
- 39.7 million Americans lived in poverty in 2017 (Center for Poverty Research).
- Poverty undermines both physical and mental health (Rojas, 2011; Wagstaff, 2002).

Hypothesis

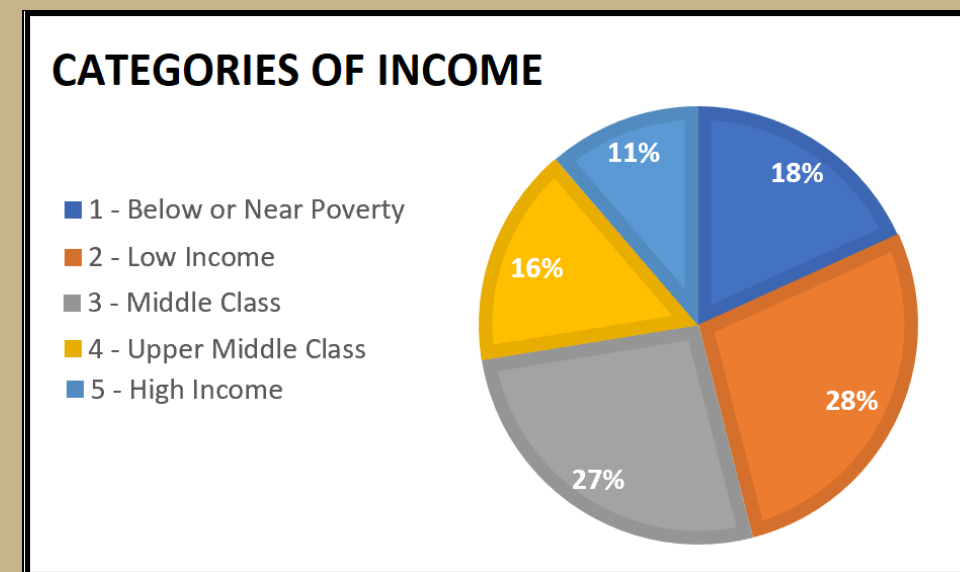
- Income will be positively associated with both health and happiness.
- Biological sex will have an impact on the relationships between income and health and happiness.
- Intersectional theory suggests females will be more unhappy and unhealthy at lower levels of income.

Data and Sample

- General Social Survey 2018.
- American adults 18 and older living in non-institutionalized households.

Independent Measure

- Income - "In which of these groups did your total family income, from all sources, fall last year (2018) before taxes?"



Dependent Measures

- Health – "Would you say your own health, in general, is excellent, good, fair, or poor?"
 - 5.4% Poor
 - 22.6% Fair
 - 49.1% Good
 - 22.9% Excellent
- Taken all together, how would you say things are these days--would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?
 - 22.9% Very Happy
 - 55.8% Pretty Happy
 - 14.3% Not Too Happy

Moderating Measure

- Biological sex
- 44.8% Male 55.2% Female

Results

Happiness by Income Level



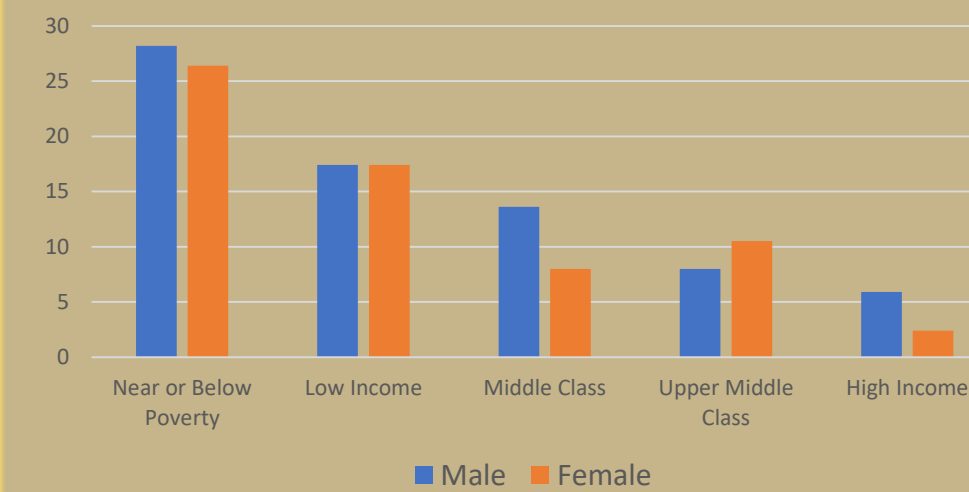
* Chi-square significant at $p < 0.001$.

Health by Income Level



* Chi-square significant at $p < 0.001$.

Not Happy by Income and Gender



* Chi-square significant at $p < 0.001$ for both men and women.

Poor Health by Income and Gender



* Chi-square significant at $p < 0.001$ for both men and women.

Summary and Conclusion

- Income has a profound impact on well-being, having a positive association with both happiness and health.
- The relationships between income and well-being were similar for both men and women. Biological sex did not moderate the relationship.

Limitations and the Future

- Possibility of reverse causality.
- Income is a snapshot and doesn't always reflect a family's real economic status or wealth.
- Income matters. In the future, trying to address inequalities will help alleviate depression and promote health.
- Housing developments, living wages, and universal Medicare might be real solutions to this growing problem.

References

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- "What is the current poverty rate in the United States?" (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/faq/what-current-poverty-rate-united-states>.