

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Socioeconomic and Psychological Wellbeing as Correlates of Somatic Symptoms among Public Servants in Enugu Urban

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated socioeconomic and psychological wellbeing on somatic symptoms among public servants in Enugu. Civil servants are the front liners in carrying out government duties and for efficient and effective delegating of these duties; they may be exposed to somatic symptoms. Participants in this study were one hundred and sixty (160) public servants selected through convenient sampling technique in two primary schools: the Command Children School and the Police Children School, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital and Nigeria Civil Defense Corps, which are aged between 18 and 60 years. The participants were assessed with three instruments namely: the Ryff psychological wellbeing, interviewer rated multivariate assessment of socioeconomic-wellbeing and clinical symptom inventory; the results were analyzed using Pearson Product's Moment correlation analysis at 0.05. The distribution of questionnaires lasted for two months. The study concluded that workers with inappropriate socioeconomic and psychological wellbeing could predispose somatic symptoms among workers.. The researcher therefore recommends that workers should be exposed to important life skills like ability self tolerance and stress inoculation exercise; apart from that, motivation of workers and payment of their benefits on time are advocated for public servants in Enugu Urban.

**Keywords:** Socioeconomic, Psychological Wellbeing, Somatic Symptoms, Public Servants.

## INTRODUCTION

As one of the most distressing psychopathological diseases in the world, somatic symptoms Somatic symptoms can be a major issue in the civil service, especially in Nigeria, where many employees have complained about inadequate services, inadequacies, and deprivations such as low wages, lack of promotion, and long delays in promotion. One of the psychopathological conditions which could prevent a worker from functioning very well in the work environment is somatic symptoms. Laissez-faire attitude towards the government 'to their workers , (like , low wages, non promotion and delayed promotion) could be the contributory factors to somatic symptoms Also, different work challenges such as poor motivation, weak governance structure, low professional standard could also lead to somatic symptoms. Recently the researcher noticed similar complaints among out patients in the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) Enugu during her internship program me like: headaches, stomachache, nausea, chest pain and undefined sensations in a consecutive five professorial ward rounds. The bio data revealed that 75% of these out patients were public servants. All these expose workers to adverse effect; such effect may include emotional distress, poor productivity, trauma, poor health and somatic symptoms.

Somatiform symptoms can impact a person's actions, emotions, and outlook (Diagnostic Statistical Manual- V, 2013). Workers frequently suffer from physical ailments that impair their ability to work. Worker productivity is one of the main reasons individuals go to work. Customer service or productivity will always suffer when this happens. The mentally ill can seek help to reclaim their identity. A loss of

socioeconomic or psychological well-being, for example, might cause physical complaints. Years ago, the question of whether socioeconomic and psychological well-being are the same was addressed. Socioeconomic well-being captures the social and economic idea of health. In response to the perceived inadequacy of socioeconomic wellbeing to capture many humanistic ideas of well-being connected to identity, purpose, and relatedness, psychological wellbeing was developed (McGregor & Little, 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Ryff is another comprehensive metric that combines various wellbeing aspects. As a result of this, he suggested a six-dimensional scale of psychological wellbeing (PWB) based on self-acceptance and autonomy. Using Ryff's six dimensional scale of psychological wellness, only environmental mastery might explain some of socioeconomic wellbeing. Eudaemonism, on the other hand, emphasises being happy, while hedonism emphasises being significant. Only the last scale is relevant to socioeconomic wellbeing. So, while socioeconomic well-being is a psychological characteristic, it is not the same. And both can negatively or favourably impact people's lives, especially civil employees' lives.

The civil service over the years has been plagued by numerous problems, and these can affect their socio-economic and psychological wellbeing and the consequence may expose them to somatic symptoms. And as a result of these problems, civil servant services may remain inefficient and suffers from obsolescence, lethargy, and a lack of enthusiasm in carrying out government policies. Aside the risk of poor productivity in work environment and general poor motivation in carrying out government policies, somatic symptoms exposes a worker

to poor quality of life in the work environment. The increased risk of poor attendance to work, absenteeism to work, acting out and frequent visits to hospital are all effects of somatic symptoms on the workers. Consequently, for efficient and effective work to be done by public servants, their socioeconomic and psychological wellbeing should be addressed.

A person or a group can achieve socioeconomic welfare by virtue of their social and economic abilities, merits, or wherewithal, according to Obi Nwosu, Balageul & Nwafor (2018). A person's or group's level of contentment is determined by the relative number of benefits available to them. (Obi Nwosu et al., 2018) Socioeconomic status is commonly used in psychological research (SES).

Bad socioeconomic wellbeing is defined as bad personal health, lack of something positive, and poor working performance (Renshaw, Long & Cook, 2015). Unlike their counterparts who may be uneducated, working in low-paying jobs, and receiving low income, causing undesirable somatic symptoms and affecting their jobs. Public officials' socioeconomic difficulties must be addressed.

Personal growth, meaningful connections, a sense of purpose in life, and self-acceptance all contribute to a public servant's psychological well-being. It refers to a worker's happiness at work. A combination of these emotions characterises effective group and individual work. Psychological well-being involves enjoying one's life. Acknowledging and accepting one's own good and bad qualities, as well as positive past and present events is self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). A public worker who is unhappy with himself, his past, or some aspects of his personality may aspire to be someone else.

Positive interactions with people are pleasant, gratifying, and trusting. Poor performance in this area can lead to boredom, disinterest in life, inability to acquire new attitudes or behaviours, and personal stagnation. A public servant's psychological well-being is enhanced by all of the positive sentiments stated above, including contentment and satisfaction with life. Ryff (1998) points out that pleasant emotions have varying effects on workers' outcomes. For example, a public servant with good relationships may develop warm, rewarding, and trusting relationships with others; cares about others' well-being; and has high empathy, affection, and closeness potential. These workers have a more positive attitude on life and a drive to help others, which may explain their willingness to give back to their communities. Those with low positive relational functioning have few deep trusting relationships, find it difficult to be warm, open, and caring about others, and are unwilling to make compromises to maintain essential relationships. This makes it difficult for them to serve effectively in various government posts. Their work has not compensated them and they find it difficult to deliver effective services and sacrifices to those they can help. They don't always accomplish their jobs cheerfully and often show negative emotions, which may add to bad physical problems. From another perspective, many duties put on workers by family members and coworkers may interfere with work operations.

As a result, the researcher now working on this project plans to interview civil officials, specifically those working in

Enugu City Hall. Somatic symptoms among public servants in Enugu Urban will be examined in this study to see if there is any correlation between socioeconomic and psychological well-being.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

**Participants:** One hundred seventy-one public servants from the Command Children School (CCS), the Police Children School (PCS), the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), and the Nigeria Civil Defense Corp Enugu participated in the survey (NCD). The listed businesses are located in Enugu Urban. Everyone who accepted to engage in the study and volunteered to take part in the simple sampling technique was included in the research. Those between the ages of 18 and 30 were separated into two age groups: 30-60. The results were unmistakable based on the ages of those who took part in the study. In this study, researchers looked at the six areas of psychological well-being together.

**Instruments:** The Ryff Scale of Psychological Wellbeing, the Clinical Symptoms Inventory, and the interviewer-rated multivariate assessment of socioeconomic well-being were all used in the study. Designed by Ryff (1989), the Ryff Scale of Personal Wellbeing includes a total of 42 items. 30 teachers at New Haven Secondary School in Enugu State were surveyed using the following scales: Interviewer-Rated Multivariate Assessment of Socio-Economic Wellbeing (IRMASW): 0.85 points; Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWBS): 0.77 points; Clinician Symptoms Inventory (CSI): 0.96 points)

**Procedure:** As stated in an official letter from the Department of Psychology at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka, the researcher is a post-graduate student in the department. It stated the study's objectives and requested that the researcher be allowed to use the workers in his or her study.

Two Enugu Urban schools (the Command Children's School and the Police Children's School) as well as the chairman of ethics board and state commandant all provided their approval to the study at the University Teaching Hospital Enugu.

### Inclusion criteria for the study

- 1) In order to participate, you must be a member of the Enugu Urban Municipality government
- 2) From the ages of 18 to 60, the individuals were eligible to participate.
- 3) To engage in the study, the worker must be willing to do so.

**Exclusion criteria for the study:** (1) Participants who are not employed in Enugu Urban and are under the age of 17 were not included in the study.

In no way, shape, or form should participants be compelled to take part in the research.

Before the researcher presented the instrument for this study, good rapport had been formed with the participants, and they had been correctly educated on how to answer the questions honestly. Only 40 of the 50 questionnaires distributed to Command Children's School Enugu were completed and accepted. At the Police Children's School, fifty (50) pupils were given a questionnaire to fill out and accept. NSCDC Enugu got 50 well-written questionnaires, with 30 of them being accepted

for further consideration. At the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital in Enugu, forty-odd copies of the survey were distributed (UNTH). The researcher got a total of 160 completed questionnaires, which he used for scoring and analysis reasons.. This inquiry necessitated two months of data collection.

**Statistics:** The study used a co-relational design and 0.05 significant levels of Pearson Product's Moment correlation for data analysis.

## RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of correlation between socioeconomic wellbeing and somatic symptoms

|                        |                     | SOS   | SEW   |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Somatic Symptoms       | Pearson Correlation | 1     | -.208 |
|                        | Sig (2-tailed)      |       | .008  |
|                        | N                   | 160   | 160   |
| SocioeconomicWellbeing | Pearson Correlation | -.208 | 1     |
|                        | Sig (2- tailed)     | .008  |       |
|                        | N                   | 160   | 160   |

In table 1, the Pearson's Product Moment Statistics was run to test whether socioeconomic wellbeing correlates with somatic symptoms among public servants in Enugu Urban. The test was significant,  $r = -.208^{**}$ ,  $n = 160$ ,  $p < .05$ . This implies that the hypothesis stated above was accepted.

Table 1: Summary of correlation between Psychological wellbeing and somatic symptoms

|                        |                     | SOS   | PWB   |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Somatic Symptoms       | Pearson Correlation | 1     | -.227 |
|                        | Sig (2-tailed)      |       | .004  |
|                        | N                   | 160   | 160   |
| PsychologicalWellbeing | Pearson Correlation | -.227 | 1     |
|                        | Sig (2- tailed)     | .004  |       |
|                        | N                   | 160   | 160   |

In table 2, the Pearson's Product Moment Statistics was run to test whether psychological wellbeing correlates with somatic symptoms among public servants in Enugu Urban. The test was significant,  $r = -.227^{**}$ ,  $n = 160$ ,  $p < .05$ . This implies that the hypothesis stated above was accepted.

### Summary of Findings:

1. The first hypothesis which states that socio-economic well-being will significantly and negatively correlate with somatic symptoms was accepted; the result indicated that socioeconomic wellbeing significantly and negatively correlated with somatic symptoms among public servants in Enugu Urban ( $r = -.208^{**}$ ,  $p < .05$ ).
2. The second hypothesis which states that psychological wellbeing will significantly and negatively correlate with somatic symptoms was accepted; the result indicated that psychological wellbeing significantly and negatively correlated with somatic symptoms among public servants in Enugu Urban ( $r = -.227^{**}$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The association between socioeconomic and psychological well-being among Enugu City public officials was explored. A second hypothesis was required to achieve the investigation's second purpose. The hypothesis was accepted when it was demonstrated that somatic symptoms among Enugu Urban public officials correlated negatively with socioeconomic well-being ( $r = -.208^{**}$ ). This supports the first hypothesis. Socioeconomic well-being is linked to workplace efficiency and effectiveness. Employees' socioeconomic status can impact workplace efficiency and productivity. Workers' economic conditions can affect their advancement, happiness, and well-being. Working conditions can also impede or promote growth, affect happiness/satisfaction, and expose employees to physical symptoms of a variety of diseases. So workers should be permitted to accept their socioeconomic status to avoid bodily discomfort.

Pinquart & Sorensen (2000) came to another conclusion. The previous study may have utilised older persons (60+) as subjects, but the current study used workers under the age of 60. (public servants). These variables may explain the disparity in their findings. Those who are happy with their social and economic conditions have less somatic symptoms than those who are unhappy. Worker somatic symptoms are strongly linked to a worker's socioeconomic well-being. This discovery may have a reason. The tunnel effect hypothesis explains the observed behaviour. Those left behind are destitute, anxious, resentful, and enraged, according to this hypothesis. People in this condition are unhappy, and their quality of life is poor, leading to physical ailments. A better quality of life reduces somatic symptoms in people who aren't static or happy (Marshall & Firth 1999). Another explanation for the findings' differences from earlier research like Yilmaz (2017) and Buijs, Maes, Salonna, Damme (2017 and 2016) is that previous studies used teenage reports while the current study used worker reports. Finances and environmental factors significantly differ between the two groups, which could explain their findings.

The second hypothesis claimed that psychological well-being would be highly connected with physical difficulties among Enugu City employees. The data reveal a negative relationship between public officials' psychological health and physical complaints in Enugu City.  $R$  is  $-.227^{**}$ , and the significance level is .05. A healthy psychological foundation is critical for a worker's quality of life, contentment, enjoyment, meaning, and productivity. Somatic symptoms can lead to poor mental health, which can negatively effect working productivity. The results do not match those of Muslims (2011). Methodological differences, such as using students instead of workers, may be the reason of the discrepancy. This could also be a factor in the outcome disparity.

Somatic symptoms increase as psychological wellbeing diminishes, implying that when psychological wellbeing decreases, somatic symptoms increase among employees. Because the current finding shows a negative connection, workers in Enugu urban are more likely to suffer somatic complaints. This discovery is unexpected, but it aligns with Maslow's Theory of Self Actualization (Maslow, 1967): The thinker emphasised the theory of

growth or hierarchy of wants; he argued that satisfying one need leads to the emergence of another higher in hierarchy (eg physiological, safety, belongingness/love, esteem, self-actualization needs). According to him, unfulfilled needs lead to stagnation; unfulfilled needs impede human progress, self-acceptance, autonomy, and personal relationships with others. This can lead to poor mental health and somatic complaints.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that workers with inappropriate socioeconomic and psychological wellbeing could predispose somatic symptoms among workers.. The researcher therefore recommends that workers should be exposed to important life skills like ability self-tolerance and stress inoculation exercise; apart from that, motivation of workers and payment of their benefits on time are advocated for public servants in Enugu Urban study aimed at establishing the relationship between socioeconomic and psychological wellbeing

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