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The Association Between Socioeconomic Status and Psychological Wellbeing in Migrants: A Test of Mediation by Resilience

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Abstract

Non-western migrants in the United Kingdom face significant socioeconomic and psychological challenges that negatively impact their mental wellbeing. Despite growing interest in resilience as a protective factor, the mechanisms linking socioeconomic status (SES) to psychological wellbeing in this population remain poorly understood. This study examined whether resilience mediated the association between SES and psychological wellbeing among non-western migrants residing in the UK. A cross-sectional sample of 352 non-western migrants (mean age = 29 years; 59.1% male) completed the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale-10 (CD-RISC-10), and Ryff's Psychological Wellbeing Scale-18 (RPWBS-18). A causal mediation analysis was conducted using nonparametric bootstrapping (5,000 simulations), controlling for age, gender, ethnicity, legal status, duration of UK residence, migration reason, and equivalised household income. Subjective SES significantly predicted both resilience and psychological wellbeing, whilst resilience strongly predicted wellbeing. The indirect effect of SES on wellbeing through resilience was significant (ACME = 1.01, 95% CI [0.66, 1.42], $p < .001$), whilst the direct effect was not, suggesting resilience as the primary pathway linking perceived social standing to wellbeing. Sensitivity analyses indicated moderate robustness of the indirect effect to unmeasured confounding. Gender-stratified analyses revealed consistent indirect effects in both males and females. Findings support the delivery of culturally adapted resilience-building interventions alongside structural support to improve psychological wellbeing among non-western migrants in the UK.

Keywords: mediation analysis; migrants; psychological wellbeing; resilience; socioeconomic status