

# A Proposal About The Devastating Effects On The Stigma That Surrounds Mental Illness.

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## Abstract

The objective of the proposed study is to evaluate the stigma surrounding mental health disorders and how stigma negatively impacts a person's livelihood. Participants will be 100 undergraduate business students from a large urban university. Participants will attend a mock leadership seminar designed to give them a positive, negative, or neutral view of mental illness. After the seminar, for each job applicant participants will read a comprehensive packet of information which includes the applicant resume, answers to interview questions, and a list of pertinent health information, and the resumes will be designed for a specific job. Participants will rank which applicants they will be most likely and least likely to hire. The results are projected to indicate that exposure to negative views of mental health illnesses will make a person less likely to hire a person with a mental health disorders.

## Introduction

The purpose of the proposed study is to examine the specific effects that stigma has on individuals who suffer from mental illness. Previous studies about the stigma of mental illness fail to provide a focus on the specific effects that a negative stigma can have on a person's perception of mental illness. There is also a lack of research for perception of a person's own mental illness and the variables that affect that perception. The proposed study will aim to identify specific changes in perception of personal mental illness due to direct exposure to various outside opinions surrounding mental illness in general. It will likely find that negative outside opinions positively correlate with an increase in self-stigma and resentment towards the participants' own mental illnesses. This type of pilot study will provide this field of research a good starting point of knowing if opinions do have an impact at all, and how significant that impact is. Previous study conduct by Lai, et al. (2001) claims that stigma of mental illness can create harm to one's self-worth, relationships, and employment of psychiatric clients. Nevertheless, the significance of mental disease is and the stigma around it is real. Sufficient data may clarify mental illness and assist to diminish the apprehension and discrimination encircling it. Goretzki, et al. conducted a study that mental illness is a spiritual emergency, but they found that supernatural belief and realism analysis is too small to correlate, suggesting other potential topics of trouble, especially in the area of reality testing shortcomings. Research conducted by Barr et al., (2019) aimed to examine the effect of self-stigma on the probability of veterans obtaining care. The researchers gathered surveys from over 500 individuals that served in the armed forces, and their findings suggested that veterans that identified their mental illness as their own personal issues were more prone to exhibit signs of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. According to Markowitz (1998), an individual with a mental illness is more prone to be jobless, have lower income, have a reduced perception of their self, and lack social support. Markowitz's findings were that that stigmatization of mental illness consists of opinions of individuals with a broad range of mental illnesses as being less than human. Frequent misunderstandings and inaccurate education about mental health disabilities can enable individuals to cultivate a stigma about people with mental disorders



## Methods

### *Participants*

The population will be 100 first-year business students, and they will receive extra credit for participating. The purpose of using college students is to show how the stigma of mental illness could change one's opinion, and ideally, college students do not have a strong opinion on mental illness. The experiment will take place at a large urban university for a big enough sample and diversity, and if the one university did not have enough participants, researchers will integrate another university. The population will be exposed to three different opinions about mental illness, negative, neutral, and positive.

### *Procedure*

Participants will be business undergraduates from a large university. The goal will be to have at least 100 participants for the study. If one university could not get 100 participants, the research will need to integrate another university. The participants will be 100 undergraduates who have not been exposed to any severe mental illnesses or have mental illnesses. The participants will go to a "leadership" seminar with different perceptions on mental illness. There will also be different topics in the seminar, so they will not know this study is about the stigma around mental health. They will be told that this is a leadership seminar and to hire the proper candidate for a job.

Ideally, the ratio of the male and female participants will be close in number. There will be three different seminars, one with a negative view on hiring people with mental health issues, one seminar being neutral, and one seminar positive about mental illness. Before the study begins, participants will be randomly assigned to one of these three seminars. The negative group will demean ones with mental illness and steer the undergraduates away from hiring them. The neutral seminar will state the facts about leadership with no opinion, neither positive nor negative. The positive seminar will shed light on the stigma around mental illness, and people with "different" issues should not be a factor if they have all the qualifications for the position available.

The participants will come in at a particular time set for a "leadership" seminar for extra credit. They will then listen about being a leader, leading correctly, and hiring the proper candidates. After the seminar, there will be different applications and resumes applied to different jobs, and the candidate will have to pick out whom they will hire and rate them on a Likert scale. The job applications and resumes will be given at the end of the seminar. The participants will be put through debriefing after the seminar was over to guarantee that whatever negative opinion, they heard was not factual and make sure they had a clear understanding of that. The truth will then be divulged about the research and the stigma of mental illness and how negatively it can affect those with mental health disorders.

## Predicted Results

The proposed research will use a one-way ANOVA to test the hypothesis that mental illness stigma negatively impacts one's livelihood. This statistical analysis will let the researchers evaluate the connections among the various seminars influenced by the independent variable. This analysis is credible for this type of research and with little to no manipulation. Using the Likert scales lets the information be measurable, thus reducing any data manipulation. The first and second Likert Scale answers will be averaged. By averaging all the individual's answers, the overall group could be averaged. Once all the groups have been averaged, the researchers will compare all three groups. The expected results will show no significance in the neutral group, a positive correlation in the positive group, and a negative correlation in the negative group. The group with the largest significance is projected to be the negative group. However, the positive groups might show no significance in the results. If the study consisted of many undergraduates that their opinion is not easily swayed, this could significantly impact the research and fail to reject the null hypothesis.

## Discussion

Stigma exists, and the only way to reduce the amount of stigma is to educate people on mental illness facts. However, the stigma surrounding mental health disorders is profoundly entrenched into how one perceives mental illnesses. Stigma can be hard to change. The proposed research will help diminish the stigma around mental disorders. Furthermore, it will help people with mental illnesses and shed light for many people, and this is vital to recognize because it can improve individuals' understanding of how their views impact others negatively. The proposed research will eventually improve the knowledge of mental disorders. Studies that allow people to understand some of the complexities of mental illness and their thought and action have one with a mental disorder. A person with a mental illness can lead a productive life if they are not ashamed to get the help they need. Shedding light on the stigma of mental disorder can allow people not to be ashamed and get the help they need.

## References

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