2021

Factors Associated with Poverty Among Refugees in the United States

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1. Introduction

- Poverty is a challenge that has a formative impact (Habib et al., 2014; Tanumihardjo et al., 2007)

- Worldwide, refugees are one of the most at-risk groups to experience poverty (Jacobsen, 2005; Potocky & Naseh, 2019)

Abrupt and unplanned escape → Arduous journey to safety → Stigma & discrimination → Language barriers
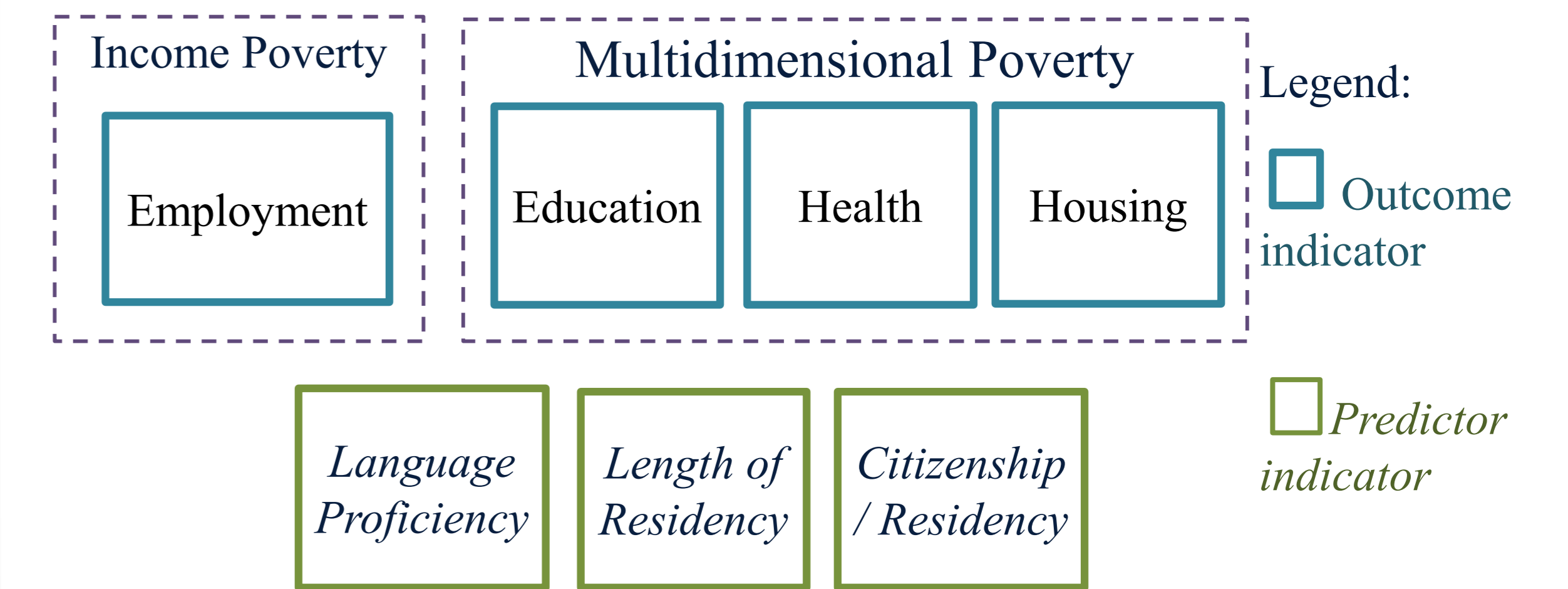
2. Objectives

- Examine the association between selected risk factors based on Ager and Strang's (2008) refugee integration framework and poverty (income and multidimensional poverty) among refugee

- Ager and Strang's (2008) refugee integration framework

- Monetary and capability approaches to poverty (Sen, 1988; 1999)

3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Income Poverty	Multidimensional Poverty			Legend:
Employment	Education	Health	Housing	☐ Outcome indicator

Language Proficiency	*Length of Residency*	*Citizenship / Residency*	☐ *Predictor indicator*

Sources: Adapted from Ager and Strang (2008)

4. Operational Definitions

- Income poverty: (binary: poor, not poor), calculated based on a comparison between household income and federal poverty lines

Table 1: Multidimensional poverty index

Dimension	Indicator	Poverty line: Deprived if…	Relative Weight
Education	School attainment	A member has not completed 11 years of schooling	33%
Health	Self-reported health	A household member reported a chronic health condition	16.5%
		A household member was not able to work due to poor health condition	16.5%
Housing	Living in public housing project	A household was living in a housing project at the time of the interview	33%

6. Conclusions

Poverty rates were concerning & lack of English language proficiency was the best predictor of poverty

Investment on English language learning

5. Results

Table 2. Characteristics of the surveyed households

Characteristics	Subgroups	% (# of households)
Income poverty	Poor	24% (354)
Multidimensional Poverty	Poor	70% (1,048)
English language proficiency	All members could speak English well or very well	38% (569)
Cohort of arrival in US	2011 to 2012	36.5% (547)
	2013 to 2014	43.6% (654)
	2015	19.9% (299)
Application for permanent residency	Yes	70% (1,048)

Table 3. Results of the bivariate cross-tabulation analyses

	Dependent variable Chi-square, *p* value, Cramer's V	
Independent variable	**Income poverty**	**Multidimensional poverty**
Lack of English language proficiency	$\chi2(1)= 7.40, p= 0.007$, Cramer's V=.10	$\chi2 (1) = 186.81, p= 0.00$, Cramer's V= .35
Shorter period of residency in the US	$\chi^2 (2)= 8.10, p= 0.02$, Cramer's V=.07	Not statistically significant
Lack of permanent residency	Not statistically significant	$\chi^2 (1)= 16.90, p= 0.000$, Cramer's V= .11

Table 4. Multivariate logistic regression models

Poverty	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	Z	P>|z|	95% Confidence Interval	
Income poverty						
Lack of English language proficiency	**1.440**	0.183	2.86	0.004	1.121	1.848
Length of residency	1.197	0.085	2.51	0.012	1.040	1.378
Marital status	1.222	0.059	4.09	0	1.110	1.345
Age	0.769	0.062	-3.23	0.001	0.656	0.902
Sex	1.331	0.173	2.19	0.028	1.031	1.719
Constant	0.200	0.067	-4.78	0	0.103	0.387
Multidimensional poverty						
Lack of English language proficiency	**4.178**	0.519	11.51	0	3.275	5.329
Application for permanent residency	1.271	0.184	1.65	0.098	0.956	1.689
Marital status	1.140	0.052	2.88	0.004	1.043	1.247
Age	1.180	0.099	1.97	0.049	1.000	1.391
Sex	1.116	0.153	0.8	0.425	0.852	1.459
Constant	0.386	0.116	-3.16	0.002	0.214	0.696