Social Capital & Mental Health: Role of Access to Social Network Resources

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More **resources** in your **social network** suggest better **mental health**.
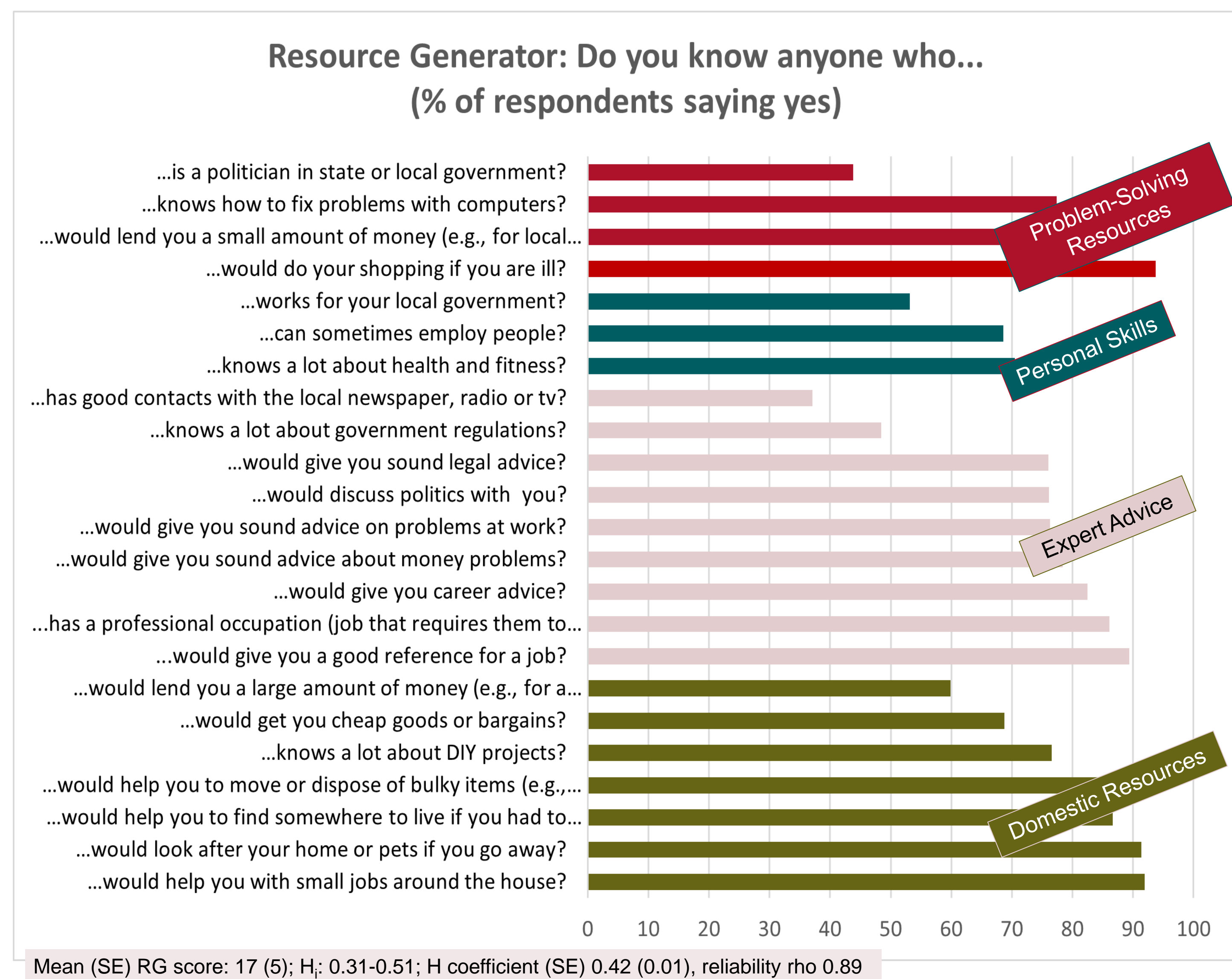
OBJECTIVE & BACKGROUND

- To examine whether social capital, defined by individual access to resources embedded within social networks, is associated with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and psychological distress among women in Louisiana

Social capital has been linked to mental health, but the exact nature of this relationship remains unclear. Resource generators measure a form of social capital that represents an individual's access to social resources within their social network. The advantages of using these resources include helping individuals achieve life goals, including potentially improved mental health.

METHODS

- Cross-sectional survey data from Wave 2 of WaTCH Study
- N=2020 women living in southeast Louisiana in 2014-2016
- **Exposure: Resource Generator**, derived using Mokken Scaling from 23 yes/no items asking whether respondents know anyone who could provide specific resources; score calculated from sum of 23 items. Higher scores reflect more available resources.
- **Outcomes: Depression**, 20-item CES-D, scores ≥16 indicative of depressive symptoms; **PTSD**, 20-item PCL-5 Checklist for DSM-5, scores ≥32 indicative of PTSD symptoms; **Psychological distress**, 6-item Kessler-6, scores ≥13 indicative of psychological distress.
- Independent multivariable log binomial regression models to estimate the association of Resource Generator on each mental health outcome.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics, N=2020 women

RESULTS CONTINUED

Resource Generator: Do you know anyone who... (% of respondents saying yes)

Mean (SE) RG score: 17 (5); H$_i$: 0.31-0.51; H coefficient (SE) 0.42 (0.01), reliability rho 0.89

Characteristics of women with higher RG levels: younger age, partnered marital status, employed, higher income, higher education

Association of Resource Generator on 3 Mental Health Outcomes (adjusted models)

	PR	95% CI
Depression	0.96	0.95-0.98
PTSD	0.96	0.94-0.99
Psychological Distress	0.95	0.92-0.98

PR Prevalence Ratio; CI Confidence Interval
Each model adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, income, employment

CONCLUSIONS

- The Resource Generator score, a measure of social capital and access to resources, is protective for depression, PTSD, and psychological distress.
- Having access to more resources embedded within one's social network is related to better mental health.
- Future work should examine whether access to resources predicts better mental health longitudinally.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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