
BIOGRAPHICAL FACTORS AND LIFE SATISFACTION AFFECTING ON AGED PERSONS

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Abstract:

The study showed that a highly significant difference in life satisfaction among single and married (double) aged females was existing whereas no significant difference was observed among single and married (double) aged males. Type of family has also not affected the life satisfaction of aged persons. Regarding impact of education on life satisfaction of aged persons, it was found that it had no effect on their life satisfaction.

Key words: Biographical Factors , Life Satisfaction , education.

INTRODUCTION

With increasing life-expectancy, due to drastic decline in mortality rates and better medical facilities, number of elders in the world population is grown at a faster rate. This had lead to several economical and social repercussions in the society. Unfavourable social attitude towards elders has forced them to think themselves useless and unwanted. They developed feelings of humiliation and resentment. Because of poor social support, life satisfaction of elders who are left alone to face psycho-social stresses is affected. Thus, to study the effect of biographical factors on life satisfaction of elders, a study was carried out on elder citizens of Kanpur during 1996.

METHODS:

The present study was undertaken to test the hypothesis that biographical factors such as age, marital status, type of family and education affect the life satisfaction of aged persons. For selection of the respondents for this study, 100 aged persons between the age group of 60 to 75 years were selected randomly from the middle-class families of different localities of Bidar City. All respondents personally interviewed on well prepared schedule after convincing them with the objectives of the study. For testing the life satisfaction of respondents, sixty statements based on six areas, i.e., health, personal, economic, marital, social and job of life satisfaction scale of Alam and Srivastava were administered to each respondent, and their binary responses (Yes/No) were recorded. Every 'yes' response was assigned one mark. Information on biographical factors also recorded and data were analysed statistically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Life satisfaction is considered an important variable in younger mature as well as in aged persons. Age and the accompanying physiological changes have an effect upon the incidence of various psychiatric syndromes. Life satisfaction of any person is affected by the biographical factors like age, marital status, education and type of family. How much these factors affect the life satisfaction of aged persons was the subject of this study. Biographical factor-wise findings are as follows:

TABLE 1
Comparison in Life Satisfaction of Aged Persons of Two Different Age-groups

Age-group	Sample Size	Score Range (Mean \pm SD)	t-value	P-value
Group - I (60-68 yrs.)	61	43.59 \pm 5.03	1.27 NS	> 0.05
Group - II (69 and above)	39	42.28 \pm 5.01		

It is evident from Table 1 that aged persons of two different age-groups did not show any significant difference in their life satisfaction. The probable reason of no difference is the similar attitude towards all the areas of life satisfaction. Be it any area, persons of both the age-groups are content with their life. They have no different high desire, aspirations, job problems, family binding, etc., which may change their life satisfaction. To avoid loneliness and augment their life satisfaction, most of the aged persons spend their leisure time with family members, intimate friends and with their children newly established families. Some also attend religious congregation. Hawkins (1969), Lopata (1966) and Philips (1967) had also found these facts in their studies.

TABLE 2
Comparison in Life Satisfaction of Single and Married (Double) Aged Persons

Particulars	Score Range (Mean \pm SD)			
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Single	Married (Double)	Single	Married (Double)
Sample-size	29	21	23	27
Mean \pm SD	41.55 \pm 5.54	43.67 \pm 4.70	42.26 \pm 5.43	45.33 \pm 3.13
t-value	1.42 NS		2.49**	
P-value	> 0.05		< 0.01	

In order to examine the effect of marital status of aged persons on the life satisfaction, average scores of aged males and females were compared separately. It would be seen from Table 2 that marital status of aged males has no significant effect on their life satisfaction, whereas it has significant effect on the life satisfaction of aged females. The possible reason of the significant difference may be that the status of single aged females is quite different in our society where divorced, widow and unmarried women do not get any recognition. Apart from ostracized, they have to face acute financial problem. Even those who manage to eke out their lives with decreased income fail to maintain the living standard which they were maintaining at the time of living with husband. Harvey and Bahr (1974) had also reported that widow women face acute economic problems that are inevitable when the family breadwinner no longer provides for the family. These problems are not faced by single aged males. They get all privileges of social interactions and have all sympathies. Also at economic front, being self earner, they are economically sound. Goode (1967) had also pointed out that divorcee is often anathema to married couples because she embodies tensions they may be feeling but are trying to overlook.

TABLE 3
Comparison in Life Satisfaction of Aged Persons Living
in Nuclear and Joint Families

Type of Family	Sample Size	Score Range (Mean \pm SD)	t-value	P-value
Nuclear	35	43.20 \pm 5.07	1.74 NS	> 0.05
Joint	65	43.01 \pm 5.06		

Normally, it is presumed that family network effects the life satisfaction among aged persons, but the findings of this study are quite different. It is evident from Table 3 that aged persons of nuclear and joint families have no significant difference in their life satisfaction. The probable reason of no significant difference may be attributed to the fact that aged persons do develop a philosophical attitude of the life, they do not interfere in family affairs nor they are contacted for approval. Interaction confined among old couples alone. Hence, their life satisfaction is not much affected by family network.

Life satisfaction of aged persons having different educational levels did not differ significantly as is evident from Table 4 (F = 0.44 NS). Aged persons having no formal education, had scored the highest (44.05) and those who have studied upto primary level had scored the lowest (42.25). This indicates that life satisfaction of aged persons is not affected by their educational qualification since it is psycho-social process.

TABLE 4
Comparison of Life Satisfaction Among Aged Persons having
Different Educational Levels

Education Level	Sample Size	Score Range (Mean \pm SD)	F-value	P-value
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No Education	21	44.05 ±4.68	0.44 NS	> 0.05
Primary	8	42.25 ±4.77		
Secondary	39	42.61 ±5.25		
Graduates and above	32	43.22 ±5.18		

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of this present study, it may be concluded that different age levels of aged persons do not affect their life satisfaction. Marital status of aged females affect their life satisfaction, whereas it does not affect the life satisfaction of aged males. Family network has also no significant effect on the life satisfaction of aged persons. Similarly, education of aged persons have no significant effect on their life satisfaction.

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