"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LONELINESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE" PREMISES SOME DISTRICTS IN KERALA

Melvin K. J.
PhD Scholar at Arunodya University, Itanagar Arunachal Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the perception of loneliness and life satisfaction among the elderly. Descriptive-correlational research was carried out between August 2022 and December 2022, enrolling 46 individuals over the age of 60. A sociodemographic information form, the Loneliness Scale for the Elderly, and the Life Satisfaction Scale were used as data collection tools. A t-test was used as the statistical method to compare the means of the two groups.

*Total participants are 46 * Respondents from male 58%, female 41% *Age 60 and above Married 56.5%, married 26.1%, not married 17.4% *Life partner alive 54.8%, without life partner 45.2 % * Respondents from 46 participants financial status = 78.3% average, *Below average15.2%, high level 6.3%

Scores for the Loneliness Scale of the Elderly total and its emotional loneliness dimension were found to be significantly higher in the elderly. It was found that the life satisfaction of the elderly who felt well, who did not feel partially lonely, who were satisfied with life, and who were not living alone was significantly higher Value of t as α=.05 and d.o.f = 90=1.99 calculated value is greater than table value null hypothesis is rejected. that there exists no significant relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction among elderly people.

The Study asks four Questions:
- *What are the Characteristics of loneliness?*
- *Does loneliness affect the elderly? Are they satisfied with their situation?*
- *What are the reasons for loneliness?*
- *How can we reduce loneliness and improve life satisfaction among the elderly?*

KEY WORDS: *Loneliness, Life satisfaction, Elderly People.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction concerning the psychological well-being of elderly individuals residing in community settings within the Kerala state of India. For this study, individuals aged 60 and above are classified as older adults. The study involved a total of 46 participants, with 58% being male and 42% being female. However, the research has certain limitations. Being a cross-sectional study that relied on questionnaires, it may not be sufficient to establish causal relationships. Additionally, since not all participants were from community-dwelling settings, the findings may have limited generalizability to institutional environments.

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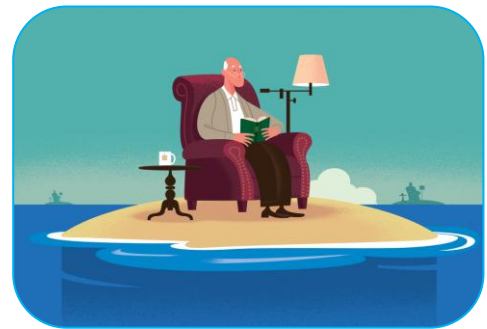
What is old age?

Old age: Old age is the final stage in an individual's life, representing an age group or generation consisting of the oldest members of a population. The social aspects of old age are influenced by the relationship between the physiological effects of aging and the collective experiences and the shared values of that generation to the particular organization of the society in which it exists.

What is Loneliness?

Loneliness: Loneliness is a complex and terrible emotion that often arises when a person's need for social interaction goes unfulfilled. It can manifest as a deep sense of emptiness resulting from isolation. While being alone can sometimes lead to loneliness, solitude itself does not necessarily indicate this feeling. Loneliness specifically refers to the unease or distress that occurs when an individual perceives a gap between their desire for social connection and the reality of their experiences.

What is Life Satisfaction?

It is a central aspect of human welfare, representing the ultimate goal that every individual strives to achieve throughout life. Life satisfaction is a multidimensional concept, influenced by psychological and environmental conditions. It is an emotional state characterized by a sense of fulfillment or joy that arises when one's expectations are met or surpassed.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Various risk factors can contribute to feelings of loneliness, particularly in older adults. These factors often intersect, with socio-demographic and psychosocial elements playing significant roles. When these aspects are present in a person's life, they may increase the likelihood of experiencing loneliness in old age. Understanding these potential triggers is essential for addressing and mitigating loneliness in later life.

Eg. Children are moving to a new city/ moving away, Death of a spouse/ The loss of a loved one, Lack of meaningful social connections, Retirement, Lack of transportation, Low education, Limited financial resources low income, isolating themselves out of feelings of guilt or worry about being a burden to loved ones, loss of friends, Fear of becoming a burden, Illness (cancer, Alzheimer's disease). Loneliness feels draining, distracting, and upsetting; desired solitude feels peaceful, creative, restorative.

Individuals may be able to identify feelings of loneliness if they have apprehensions regarding the following aspects: Sleep difficulties, Lower energy levels, bringing up people from their past who are not currently involved in their lives, Increase or decrease in communication and contact,

NEED FOR THE STUDY

As the elderly population has increased, the enhancement of their physical and mental health has become one of the most challenging goals today. A therapist can help them develop strategies to feel more connected. It also involves lost abilities such as visual acuity or physical impairment. There is a social obligation to understand how the needs and abilities of individuals can change with age and create programs, strategies, and sensibilities to aid this growing segment of the population and society.

Opportunities for active aging are plentiful, driven by improvements in health, extended workforce participation, and enhanced security. Active aging programs empower individuals to achieve their full potential for sustained physical, social, and mental well-being throughout their lives.

For continued success, our future public health policies and institutions must take on a leadership role by creating initiatives for the elderly that apply to both individuals and population groups. Education programs must be initiated, work policies regarding age must adapt, and health promotion must be prioritized. Such programs will position the growing global elderly community to remain productive, independent participants in life and adapt to the changing world demographics. Although much knowledge about aging exists, societies have historically been slow to respond to crises.

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AIM OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to analyze the levels of loneliness and life satisfaction among elderly individuals, considering the dynamic nature of their lives. The researcher focuses on life satisfaction among older adults, as they are often considered the most affected age group in terms of mental health due to lower levels of life satisfaction.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study most life satisfaction among elderly people
2. To study the level of loneliness among elderly people.
3. The relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction
4. How to improve life satisfaction among elderly people

RELATED WORKS

A. Review of literature related to Loneliness

Shankar Aparna's (2022) study, "Loneliness in Older Indian Dyads," explored the protective nature of social relationships on loneliness within the context of marriage. Typically, the benefits of social relationships are examined at the level of individual spouses rather than within the marital dyad. The study found no gender differences in the pattern of associations. Depression was positively associated with loneliness, with both actor and partner effects being significant. Additionally, having a partner who is employed was associated with less loneliness.

J T Cacioppo; (2018) "The growing problem of Loneliness" analysed Loneliness is one of the fastest-growing psychosocial health concerns in the modern age. The study revealed Loneliness has been associated with objective social isolation, depression, introversion, or poor social skills. However, studies have shown.

B. Review Related to Life Satisfaction

Life, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary (1990), is a state of functional activity unique to organized matter, particularly within living organisms such as animals or plants before death. Satisfaction, in general, refers to the fulfillment or gratification of desires, encompassing feelings of pleasure, happiness, contentment, and optimism. According to Wolman (1973), life satisfaction can be defined as the attainment of desired goals and the fulfillment of essential conditions. This perspective suggests that achieving one's goals and meeting fundamental needs are central to experiencing a sense of contentment and overall satisfaction in life. It involves the ability to find a positive aspect in every negative situation and is more concerned with the mind than with material possessions. Andrew (1974) suggests that life satisfaction represents an overarching criterion or outcome of human experience. Brown (1981) views life satisfaction as a dynamic process that evolves throughout one's life, while Diener (1984) defines it as an individual's judgment of well-being and quality of life based on personal criteria.

HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction among elderly individuals, both in institutional settings and those living outside of institutions.

STUDY DESIGN

- **Population**: Elderly people above 60 years old
- **Sampling technique:** Simple Random Sampling
- Sample size: 46
- Study period: August 2023- to December 2023.
- Data collection through interviews, observation, phone, used questionnaire prepared on Google form, read articles, books, the researcher searched in Google.

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ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Studying variables
- Life Satisfaction
- Loneliness

Tools Used in the Study
A. Temporal Satisfaction with Life (TSWLS): Fifteen statements have been taken from the standard scale of William Pivot Ed Diener and Eunkook suh,1998.

Scoring
A. All items on the TSWLS are positively keyed, and scoring involves summing the scores of either all 15 items or the five items within each subscale. The scale utilizes a seven-point Likert system, with the lowest possible score being 15 and the highest being 105.

B. For the second important variable **Loneliness THE REVISED UCLA Loneliness Scale(R-UCLA)** is described and used as an invitational Method twenty-item scale (Russel, Papau, and Cutrona (1980).

The researcher conducted both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the scale, using oblique rotations to account for the possibility of correlated factors. A standardized questionnaire was employed for the research purposes. From the dominant first factor, three items were selected to represent the loneliness construct. These items, with the highest loadings on the first factor, were "I feel left out," "I feel isolated," and "I am unhappy being so withdrawn." Due to the relative complexity of the wording of the last item, it was replaced with the next highest loading item: "I lack companionship."

Scoring: Items 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, 20 are all reverse scored. Keep scoring continuous.

STATISTICAL TEST
Statistical Tests and Techniques used
-t test

Results

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{S.E} = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

$$= \frac{70.24 - 46.70}{\sqrt{\frac{(8.27)^2}{46} + \frac{(10.22)^2}{46}}} = \frac{23.54}{\sqrt{\frac{833.7929}{46} + \frac{104.4484}{46}}}$$

$$= \frac{23.54}{\sqrt{7.27 + 2.27}} = \frac{23.54}{\sqrt{9.54}}$$

$$= \frac{23.54}{3.08868} = 7.621$$

$$t = 7.621$$

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6.6 Loneliness result

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um, Σx: 148

Life Satisfaction result

Sum, Σx:

    3206
    t=7.621
    Sum =2148, N =46

KEY FINDINGS

The value of t as α=.05and d.o.f = 90=1.99 calculated value is greater than the table value null hypothesis is rejected. There exists no significant relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction among elderly people.

Those who feel loneliness might have the pain experienced by others or they failed their past life experience

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The researcher experienced the life of old age people who cooperated with the researcher. Old-age people need physical support as well as spiritual support and psychological support. Psychological counselors and spiritual leaders can help old people. People who practice a spiritual life often experience greater life satisfaction compared to those who feel lonely. Loneliness can stem from various factors, such as inadequate financial support, the loss of a life partner, or a lack of proper guidance on overcoming addiction from community, family, or leaders. Despite these challenges, many individuals manage their lives through prayer and find contentment. The increase in loneliness among seniors can be attributed to major life changes, which often lead to a reduction in both the quantity and quality of their relationships. The differences between age groups, women tend to report feeling lonelier than men, although it appears as though part of this trend may be accounted for based on women's greater focus on personal relationships, distress around having poorer quality relationships, and more frequent reporting of loneliness as a result.

Women are also more likely to be widowed given their greater life expectancy than men, which also factors into women being at risk for loneliness. Single men are particularly at risk of being lonely given their smaller social networks and also because men are perhaps not as likely to acknowledge their loneliness or take action to increase opportunities for new social connections, which further exacerbates their loneliness.

It is also important to note that married women report being more lonely than married men, although single men tend to be lonelier than single women, which seems to reflect the perspective of men having fewer and fewer close personal relationships as compared to women.

As noted previously, women may be more likely to express feelings of loneliness and so the signs may be more visible and openly acknowledged in women. However, men are usually less vocal about their discontent. As a result, men may need to be monitored more closely for changes in mood, verbal and non-verbal communication, and self-care and social behavior that could reflect an increase in loneliness.

DISCUSSION

Loneliness makes people feel idle, neglected, and unhappy. Lonely people often crave human contact, there is a state of mind that makes it more difficult to form connections with other people. Family and friendship networks should be expanded for solitary older adults. In addition, a formal source of social support was not associated with life satisfaction among solitary old age people,

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although those with a more secure financial status had greater overall life satisfaction. Elderly people need psychological counseling as well as spiritual support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address emotional and psychological needs effectively, it is essential to ensure the availability of counseling services. This includes offering both individual and group therapy sessions. Providing these options helps to cater to a diverse range of needs and preferences, supporting overall well-being. Promote group activities such as gardening to enhance social engagement, and support regular visits from family and friends to sustain a robust support network.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The researcher's primary limitation for the research is the small sample sizes taken from different groups.
2. The short period allotted for this study is not sufficient to cover the entire elderly population at the state level.
3. Researcher couldn't give more questions to old age people because they might not respond

CONCLUSION

The appropriate study is to gain more knowledge on the benefits for older adults and to understand how they achieve life satisfaction. The study recommends the need and importance of mental health support for old age people through community intervention programs to reduce their feelings of loneliness. The present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by substantiating the mediating role of the relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction of old age people staying at home. Family and friendship networks should be expanded for solitary old age people. Elderly people need psychological counseling as well as spiritual support. Thus, an individual's level of satisfaction plays a crucial role in influencing their mental health and their ability to maintain relationships with society. Those who engage in spiritual practices tend to experience greater life satisfaction, while others may not achieve the same level of contentment.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There exists an opportunity for additional research; further investigations could enhance our understanding, thereby assisting the younger generation in alleviating the loneliness experienced by elderly individuals through the comprehensive insights gained from these studies. Furthermore, it would encourage older adults to participate in a variety of activities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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