

Life Satisfaction and Loneliness Among Geriatric People

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Abstract

Life satisfaction and feelings of loneliness play a crucial role in determining the overall well-being of individuals, encompassing their physical, psychological, and emotional health, particularly among geriatric populations. With advancing age, individuals often encounter significant life transitions such as retirement, declining physical health, loss of loved ones, and reduced social interaction, all of which can influence their psychological state. These changes may lead to emotional instability, increased isolation, reduced social engagement, and greater dependency on others, thereby affecting how individuals evaluate their overall life satisfaction. The present study focuses on examining the relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness among elderly individuals aged 60 years and above in South India. A total of 300 participants were assessed using standardized tools: the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985) and the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) developed by Russell (1996). Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and descriptive statistical analyses were employed to analyze the collected data. These instruments ensured reliability and validity in measuring the psychological constructs and provided accurate insights into the emotional conditions of the elderly. The results revealed that the mean score for loneliness was 47.45 (SD = 13.394), while the mean score for life satisfaction was 22.28 (SD = 7.284). A significant negative correlation was found between life satisfaction and loneliness ($r = -0.602$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of loneliness are associated with lower levels of life satisfaction. This finding suggests that loneliness is a critical factor influencing the emotional and psychological well-being of elderly individuals. The study highlights the importance of addressing loneliness through social, emotional, and community-based interventions to enhance life satisfaction among geriatric populations. Strengthening community-based support systems, promoting

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1. Introduction

Life satisfaction is how happy a person is with their life. It is a part of how well a person feels about themselves. For people life satisfaction is really important because as they get older their bodies and minds change. They may not be able to do the things they used to do. As people get older, their health may not be as good. They may lose their spouse or friends. Not be able to get out and meet new people. This will make them feel lonely and isolated. Geriatric people may also need help from others, which can make them feel less confidence about themselves which makes them feel worthless. Feeling lonely is when a

person feels sad because they do not have the relationships they want. It is not about being alone it is about not having people to talk to and share feelings with. A lot of people feel lonely because they do not have as many friends they may have trouble getting around and they do not have as many chances to meet new people. Loneliness feeling can make a person feel sad and anxious. It can also affect their memory function. Make them feel unhappy with day to day life. If a person feels lonely for a long time it can even affect their physical health. It can make them more likely to have heart problems and get sick easily. Research shows that there is a strong connection between a loneliness feeling and a life satisfaction among old age People. People who feel lonely often say they are not happy with their personal life. Therefore, it is very important to deeply understand how loneliness affects life satisfaction which is essential for to improve the well-being of geriatric people. This can help us find evidence Based solution to make older people happier and healthier. We need to help them deal with feeling lonely so they can have a life. Life satisfaction and loneliness are closely interconnected connected and by addressing loneliness we can improve life satisfaction among geriatric people.

Concept of Life Satisfaction and Loneliness

Definition:

- **Diener et al. (1985):** Life satisfaction is defined as a mind level evaluation of one's overall quality of life.
- **Shin & Johnson (1978):** Life satisfaction refers to an individual's overall assessment of their life based on personal standards.

Definitions of Loneliness

- **Weiss (1973):** Loneliness is the emotional distress feeling resulting from a discrepancy between desired and actual social relationships.
- **Peplau & Perlman (1982):** Loneliness is a subjective psychological experience of social isolation of an individual.

2. Literature Review

1.**Diener et al. (1985)** was developed The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS),who found that life satisfaction is a key factor in subjective well-being. According to their research, social relationships, emotional stability, and social environmental factors all have a big impact on people's life satisfaction. People who have robust support networks typically exhibit greater levels of satisfaction. The study also emphasized that life satisfaction is a judgmental, cognitive process in which people evaluate the quality of their lives using criteria of their own choosing. Additionally, it proved that overall well-being is determined by the interaction of both external (like income and social environment) and internal (like personality traits) factors.

2.**Russell (1996)** discovered evidence that loneliness is closely linked to psychological distress, depression, and decreased well-being with the UCLA Loneliness Scale. The study claims that loneliness is a psychological condition that has detrimental effects on mental health. It further explained that loneliness is the subjective perception that one's social connections are insufficient rather than just a lack of social interaction. The scale is popular because it measures perceived loneliness across a range of age groups with validity and reliability.

3. **Pinquart and Sörensen (2001)**, loneliness is strongly linked to lower life satisfaction and decreased well-being. According to their findings, social support can significantly improve older people's psychological well-being. The researchers discovered that living arrangements, marital status, and health status all had a significant impact on loneliness and life satisfaction. People's overall well-being has been found to improve when social interaction is increased through interventions.

4. **George in 2010** said that getting older can also cause social problems, which can make people less happy with their lives. "The people who are social and active are happier with their lives. A study found that doing things in the community, having friends and family, and knowing you have something to get up for in the morning are important in getting older. It also found that finding ways to relieve stress and having an attitude about getting older can help people through big changes in their lives. In the study done by George, it found that doing things in the community, being with your friends and family, and having something to get up for in the morning are important in getting older."

5. **Victor and Yang (2012)** found that among elderly individuals, reduced social participation and isolation were major contributors to loneliness, which negatively affected their life satisfaction. Their research highlighted that changes such as retirement, loss of spouse, and declining health often lead to decreased social networks. The study suggested that enhancing opportunities for social engagement and community involvement can significantly reduce loneliness and improve quality of life among older adults.

6. **Cacioppo and Hawley (2009)** found in their conclusion that both psychological and physical health will have. Long-term negative effects due to chronic loneliness, which will ultimately lead to low life satisfaction. From their findings, it is evident that an individual experiencing. A long duration of loneliness will lead to an increased possibility of experiencing. High stress levels, low immune system, and an increased possibility of experiencing. Serious health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, which may lead to death. In addition, their findings are emphasizing. That loneliness can lead to a vicious cycle of negative thoughts and social withdrawal, which may make it difficult for an individual to rebuild social connections with their families and society.

3. Research Methodology

3.2 Objectives

- To study life satisfaction among geriatric people
- To understand loneliness among geriatric people
- To explore the relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness

3.2 Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness among geriatric people.

H₁: There is a significant negative relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness among geriatric people

3.3 Research Design

The quantitative study was used by the researchers to investigate how life satisfaction and loneliness affect elderly people through their correlational research methods. The quantitative study design enables the

researcher to test the strength of the association between two variables, as well as the direction of the association.

4. Sampling Technique

The team used the convenience sampling method in order to obtain the data for their research. The sample used in the research consisted of elderly people who were both male and female. The sample used in the study consisted of 300 elderly participants who were above 60 years.

4.1 Inclusive Criteria

- All individuals who are all belongs to the age group of 60 years and older
- The study includes male and female participants
- Participants who are ready to take part in the study

4.2 Exclusive Criteria

- Individuals who have a psychiatric or a neurological disorders
- Participants who have not completed all survey questions

4.3 Tool Description

Life Satisfaction: The team of researchers utilized the satisfaction with life scale developed by Diener and his team in 1985 to measure life satisfaction. This scale has five items that are rated using the seven-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Individuals who are able to attain high scores show high levels of life satisfaction. This scale has shown good reliability with the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.87. This psychological scale enables the researchers to measure the subjective well-being of different population groups using the satisfaction with life scale developed by Diener et al.

Loneliness: The researchers utilized the UCLA loneliness scale Version 3 that was developed by Russell in 1996. The loneliness scale was used to measure the level of loneliness experienced by the participants in the study. The loneliness scale comprises 20 items that are rated on a four-point Likert-type scale that ranges from "never" to "often." The loneliness scale showed high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.89. The loneliness scale is the only tool that can be used to measure loneliness since it provides an overall evaluation of the individual's social isolation experiences.

4.3 Statistical Analysis

The SPSS software was used in analyzing the data. The researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation to check how strongly two variables correlated with each other and in which direction the correlation occurred.

5. Result

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of life satisfaction and loneliness

Variables	Mean	Std Deviation	N
Loneliness	47.45	13.39	300
Life satisfaction	22.28	7.28	300

The above table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the variables. Loneliness has a sample N = 300, mean = 47.45 and standard deviation = 13.394. Life satisfaction has a sample N = 300, mean = 22.28 and standard deviation = 7.284.

Table 2

Correlation analysis showing the relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness

Variables	Life satisfaction	Loneliness	Decision
Life satisfaction	1	-0.602	Rejected
Loneliness	-0.602	1	

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The above table 2 indicates the values of Pearson correlation between these two variables. There is a strong negative correlation between life satisfaction and loneliness, which is indicated by $r = -0.602^{**}$ and $p < 0.01$. This indicates that with an increase in loneliness, life satisfaction is likely to decrease among geriatric individuals. As indicated in the statement of the above hypothesis, it is evident that the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected. In other words, it is evident that there is a significant relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness among geriatric individuals at 0.01.

6. Discussion

The present study established a statistically significant negative correlation between life satisfaction and loneliness which produced a correlation coefficient of Pearson $r = -0.602^{**}$ and a p-value of less than 0.01. The study participants achieved an average life satisfaction score of 22.28 according to the Satisfaction with Life Scale which had a standard deviation of 7.284. The researchers assessed loneliness through the UCLA Loneliness Scale which produced an average score of 47.45 with a standard deviation of 13.394. The negative relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness shows that when one variable increases the other variable decreases. The study results show that people who experience higher loneliness symptoms actually have lower levels of happiness. Elderly people experience loneliness because they have to deal with three main obstacles which include their spouse's death and their restricted social contact opportunities and their health difficulties and their retirement from their jobs. The factors lead to emotional isolation which results in psychological wellbeing to decrease. The research shows that loneliness operates as an essential element that shapes how individuals perceive their life satisfaction. The research proves that studied variables have strong relationship because null hypothesis gets rejected. Future research will study these variables across multiple research environments and different populations.

7. Summary

The main aim of this study is to examine how loneliness affects life satisfaction among elderly people. Elderly people experience life satisfaction emotionally and psychologically through social connections, which are vital in their last years of life. During the process of aging, elderly people undergo various life changes, which include retirement, health conditions, death, and social connections.

The psychological condition of loneliness plays an important role as an element which can influence both psychological health and life satisfaction. The research identifies the relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness among elderly people through an investigation of these two variables. The research findings indicate that life satisfaction and loneliness are in a significant negative relationship with a correlation of $r = -0.602$ and $p < 0.01$. This indicates that with an increase in the level of loneliness among elderly people, life satisfaction also decreases. The findings of this study indicate that elderly people need emotional bonds and social connections and relationship support to attain psychological health and life satisfaction. In this research, it is necessary for the participants to receive details of the research before becoming a part of it, ensuring them that their details will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. All ethical considerations were kept in mind during this research. During this research, data was collected through two standardized questionnaires, which were Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985) and UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) developed by Russell (1996). These scales were used to provide reliable and valid measures of these variables.

8. Conclusion

The study reveals that there is a significant correlation between life satisfaction and loneliness in the life of the elderly people. The study also reveals that there is a negative correlation between the two variables, and this implies that as the level of loneliness in the life of the elderly person increases, the level of life satisfaction also decreases. The study results have significant implications for the understanding of the various factors that affect the life of the Geriatric population in the future. The results of this study have significantly contributed to the development of the field of geriatric psychology.

9. Limitations

- Non-probability sampling was used in this study. This may affect the generalization of the study.
- Only two variables were taken into account in this study. Other variables were not taken into account.
- Social and cultural aspects were not discussed in detail.
- The study was conducted in only one region.
- This study could be conducted in other populations.

10. Recommendations

- The future studies can include a larger and diverse sample.
- More variables can be included for a better understanding.
- Intervention programs can be developed.
- Cross-cultural studies can be conducted.

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