

A Comparative Study on Psychological Well-Being of Senior Citizens across Gender

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ABSTRACT

Seasons of life are the offerings of the dynamic creation of God. Each developing phase has its unique characteristic features, developmental tasks, qualities and realization points in the platform of positive psychology. Old age is the final developmental stage which is adorned by folds of wisdom, generatively and ripened meaning of life for successful aged. Since the dawn of civilization, human beings have recognized a progression through the life course, from infancy through old age. The increase in the number of elderly individuals has led to discussions about health care facilities and social support system in India. Aging is usually associated with physical decline and frailty as well as psychological modifications. The present study was conducted with the aim to find the level of psychological well-being of senior citizens across gender. The study was conducted in Sirsa district of Haryana state, purposively selected due to easy accessibility. Various areas of Sirsa city were considered to draw the sample. The study was conducted on 200 senior citizens equally comprising both males and females of age group 65-70 years. Psychological well-being of senior citizens was assessed by using Psychological well-being scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2005). The study elucidates that majority of the senior citizens had moderate level of psychological well-being. On comparing the mean scores of male and female respondents significant differences were observed in life satisfaction, mental health, interpersonal relations and overall psychological well-being. It can be concluded from the results that male senior citizens had better psychological well-being as compared to their female counterparts.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, social support, aging, developmental tasks.

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INTRODUCTION

As India moves closer to become the most populous country in the next few years, the country is facing another serious concern about ageing population. India has currently become grey country with highest population of the aged in the world after China. The age groups are also known as "geriatric age groups". Sometimes old age is called as "second childhood" due to its dependence for personal requirements. "India Ageing Report 2017"^[4], by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) says the share of population over the age of 60 could increase from 8 per cent in 2015 to 19 per cent in 2050.

Ageing is an inevitable developmental phenomenon bringing along a number of changes in the physical, psychological, hormonal and the social conditions. Define ageing in terms of the biology; referring to "the regular changes that occur in mature genetically representative organism living under reprehensive environmental conditions as they advance in chronological age." old age has been viewed, as problematic period of one's life and this is correct to some extent. The aged become increasingly dependent on others. As man grows, his reduced activities, income and consequent decline in the position of the family and society makes his life more vulnerable. An old person begins to feel that even his children

do not look upon him with that degree of respect, which he used to get some years earlier. The old persons feel neglected and humiliated. This may lead to the development of psychology of shunning the company of others [3].

Researches indicate that old age is more vulnerable to certain losses. Elderly people lose their life partners, relatives, friends, due to disease, divorce, death, geographical mobility, retirement. It is that stage of life in which people face various common problems viz physical helplessness, economic insecurity, loneliness, increased leisure time, lack of social support and health complaints etc., which directly affect the mental health as well as psychological wellbeing.

Psychological wellbeing is defined as people's evaluations of their own lives. Such evaluations can be both cognitive judgments, such as life satisfaction, and their emotional responses to events, such as feeling positive emotions. It is a wide concept includes different aspects of everyday experience. How people think, feel, behave, and take decisions etc. It is a subjective concept which describes the mental state of the individual. Ryff et al. [8] psychological wellbeing refers to the extent to which people feel that they have meaningful control over their life and their activities.

Psychological wellbeing may be defined by the proper functioning of psychological system. Positive functioning encompasses six dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy. Each dimension of psychological wellbeing contributes to mental health.

Psychological well-being indicates physical and mental wellness. It has been regarded as consist of discomfort and disturbance of mental functions. It is somewhat malleable concept which has to do with people's feelings about everyday life activities. The psychologists have long been interested in studying the role of religious belief and attitude in psychological well-being. Within the psychology of health an important contribution made by researchers is the significant relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being. The practice of religion has a significant effect on happiness and an overall sense of personal well-being [5].

Psychological well-being has been examined as an indicator of successful adaptation during old and very old age. Psychological well-being studied extensively as there is a need to improve the state of mental condition of people. Researchers find a large number of people are getting affected by mental health problem [11]. A person who has a high degree of psychological well-being, excels in all fields, carries higher levels of satisfaction and self-esteem and is able thoughts about oneself or others. It emphasizes positive characteristics of growth and development. In recent times psychologists and social scientists have conducted surveys to measure psychological well-being and subjective wellbeing among people. Psychological well-being generally means how people evaluate their own life. It means a person's own perspective regarding their social life, relationships, job satisfaction etc. [1]. Keeping in view the current prevalence of senior citizens regarding their psychological well-being, the present study has been planned with the following objectives:

Objectives

The main objectives of study were as under

1. To assess the level of psychological well-being of elderly
2. To compare the level of psychological well-being of elderly across gender

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tejal [12] expounded a study on psychological well-being of aged individuals in India. It was found that institutionalized aged experience poor sense of psychological well-being that the non-institutionalized aged. Moreover, females had greater psychological well-being than the males. level of psychological well-being was comparatively higher among the lower age group aged than higher age group aged.

Lim and Kua (2011)^[6] observed that elder people who lived alone had a poor mental health status and quality of life than compared to those who lived with others. Due to lack of social integration, loneliness prevailed in elders who lived all by themselves. They also found that loneliness had a great impact on elders' psychological well-being.

Narkhede *et al.* [7] reported in their study that elderly who live with their spouses in old age homes had better scores on psychological well-being.

Sharma et al. [9] concluded that feelings of self-worth, flexibility, setting new goals, and perceived availability of interpersonal resources, not having regrets about past life, involving oneself in leisure time activities, and living in joint family system can enhance a retirees' quality of life. It can be inferred that these psychosocial predictors of psychological well-being, would prevent deterioration of well-being and enable the retirees to adjust better with family relationships and society.

Chamuah and Sankar [2] confirmed that male elderly subjects have better psychological wellbeing than female elderly subjects. The mean scores (161.33) of male subjects in respect to psychological well was found more than mean scores (126.36) of female subjects. Significant difference were also found between the mean scores of psychological wellbeing in respect to gender, the obtained t- value (2.85) was found significant at 0.05 level. Further findings of the study did not show any significant differences between the mean scores of Hindu and Christian subjects in respect to their psychological wellbeing.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Locale of the study: As per the objectives, the study was conducted in Sirsa district of Haryana state, purposively selected due to easy accessibility. Various areas of Sirsa city were considered to draw the sample.

Research samples

Lists of senior citizens were prepared from various areas of the city, using snow ball method. Out of prepared lists 100 males and 100 females were selected on random basis. Hence the total sample of the study was 200 senior citizens.

Instruments:

Self-developed schedule for general information was used which contained questions regarding personal, social and economic variables. Personal variables included- age, sex, education, marital status and level of physical dependency.

Psychological well-being: psychological well-being may be described as satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, interpersonal relations. psychological well-being status of senior citizens was assessed via Psychological well-being scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2005)^[10] comprising of 50 statements with a view to measure several aspects of well-being like satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, interpersonal relations. Each aspect had 10 items.

Scoring procedure:

The scale consists of fifty statements. All statement was of positive manner. 5 marks to strongly agree, 4 marks to agree, 3 marks to undecided, 2 marks to disagree and 1 mark to strongly disagree responses were assigned. The sum of marks was obtained for the entire scale. The higher the score more is the well-being.

Methods of data collection: After identifying the sample, above mentioned tools were administered upon selected senior citizens, above the age of 65 years (preferably the age group 65-70 years) after getting permission, fixing time and date with them. The data was collected personally with individual approach. The whole procedure of fill the inventory was explained to them fully and clearly. The instructions given on the questionnaire were explained to them. It was also made clear to them that their scores would be kept secret. It was checked that none of the subjects left any questions unanswered.

Analysis of data:

Qualitative data obtained from the measures were quantified and analyzed using the statistical package for the social science (SPSS for windows). To calculate statistical inferences frequency, percentage, mean score, standard deviation and Z test were computed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per gender:

Data presented in table 1 rendered results related to psychological well-being of senior citizens against gender. As far as overall psychological well-being of senior citizens is concerned it was found that the highest percentage of respondents both male as well as female had moderate level of psychological well-being (49.0%, 57.0% respectively) followed by high level of psychological well-being where the males had higher percentage (37.0) as compared to their female counterpart (21.0%).

As the table reveals that majority of male respondents (55.0%) had moderate level of scores in life satisfaction while 32.0 per cent were in high category and only 13.0 per cent were having low level of life satisfaction. Similar results were observed among female respondent where 60.0 per cent had moderate level of life satisfaction followed by low (22.0) per cent and high level (18.0%) of life satisfaction.

In terms of efficiency the table elucidates that majority of the respondents had moderate (55.0%) level of efficiency followed by high (32.0%) and low (13.0%) level of efficiency. female respondents surpasses the percentage of efficiency level as compared to their male counterpart. from the results it is clear that female respondents are more efficient in their daily tasks as compared to males.

Table 1: Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per gender:

Gender	Male n1=100	Female n2=100	Total N=200
Psychological well being			
Life satisfaction			
Low (17-27)	13 (13.0)	22 (22.0)	35 (17.5)
Medium (28-38)	55 (55.0)	60 (60.0)	115 (57.5)
High (39-49)	32 (32.0)	18 (18.0)	50 (25.0)
Efficiency			
Low (16-26)	15 (15.0)	11 (11.0)	26 (13.0)
Medium (27-37)	54 (54.0)	56 (56.0)	110 (55.0)
High (38-48)	31 (31.0)	33 (33.0)	64 (32.0)
Mental health			
Low (22-30)	26 (26.0)	36 (36.0)	62 (31.0)
Medium (31-39)	50 (50.0)	46 (46.0)	96 (48.0)
High (40-48)	24 (24.0)	18 (18.0)	42 (21.0)
Sociability			
Low (20-28)	28 (28.0)	32 (32.0)	60 (30.0)
Medium (29-37)	58 (58.0)	55 (55.0)	113 (56.5)
High (38-46)	14 (14.0)	13 (13.0)	27 (13.5)
Interpersonal relations			
Low (20-28)	18 (18.0)	22 (22.0)	40 (20.0)
Medium (29-37)	40 (40.0)	51 (51.0)	91 (45.5)
High (38-46)	42 (42.0)	27 (27.0)	69 (34.5)
Overall psychological well being			
Low (95-138)	14 (14.0)	22 (22.0)	36 (18.0)
Medium (139-182)	49 (49.0)	57 (57.0)	106 (53.0)
High (183-226)	37 (37.0)	21 (21.0)	58 (29.0)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Results further unveils that highest percentage of respondents both male as well as female had moderate level of mental health (50.0% and 46.0% respectively) followed by low (26.0% and 36.0%) and high level of mental health. Similar trends were observed in sociability.

In terms of interpersonal relations the data illustrated that majority of the male respondents had high (42.0%) level of interpersonal relations followed by moderate (40.0%) and low (18.0%) level of interpersonal relations. interpersonal relations regarding female respondents shows that majority of the females had moderate (51.0%) level of interpersonal relations followed by high (27.0%) and low (22.0%) level.

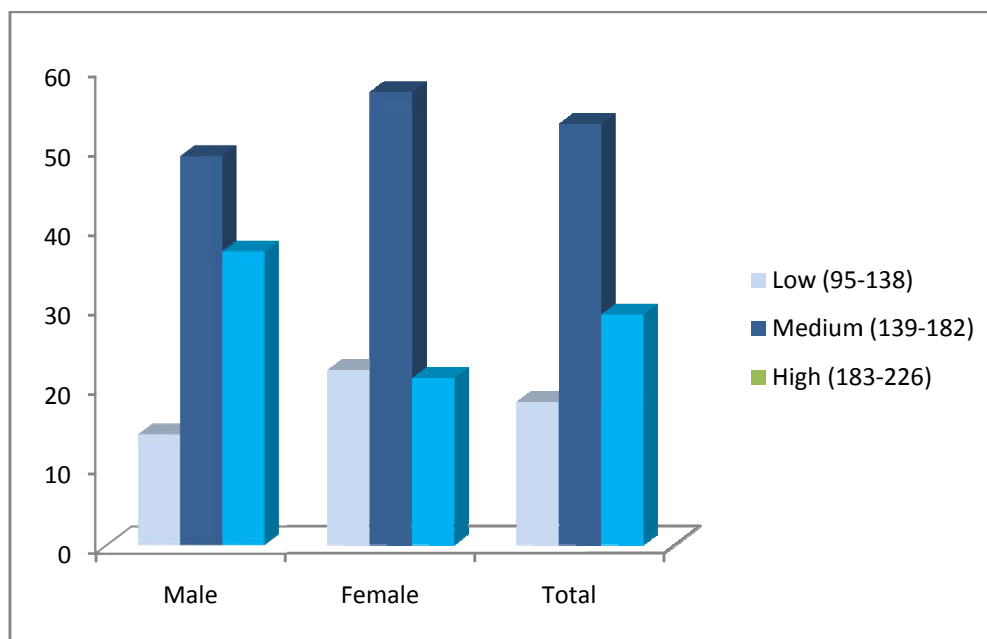


Fig: Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per gender.

Comparison of psychological well-being of senior citizens across gender

Means and standard deviations of different sub aspects of psychological well-being and overall psychological well-being was computed. Independent sample z-test was computed to explore whether there existed differences in psychological well-being on the basis of gender of senior citizens. Overall psychological well-being and different dimensions of psychological well-being were taken as dependent variables and gender was taken as independent variable.

Table 2: Comparison of psychological well-being of senior citizens across gender

Gender	Male Mean ± SD	Female Mean ± SD	Z value
----- Psychological well being			
Life satisfaction	35.93 ± 7.43	32.03± 6.41	3.97**
Efficiency	33.05 ± 7.33	34.99 ± 7.36	1.87
Mental health	35.98 ± 6.49	32.03 ± 6.87	4.03**
Sociability	32.58 ± 6.27	30.89 ± 6.12	1.82
Interpersonal relations	35.98 ± 6.51	32.68 ± 6.42	4.82**
Overall psychological well being	173.52 ± 30.08	161.26 ± 29.0	2.93**

** Significant at the 0.01 level

Results pertaining to comparison of psychological well-being across gender were apparent in table 2. The data in table reflected significant differences for psychological well-being as well as various aspects of psychological well-being against gender. Significant differences were observed in life satisfaction, mental health, interpersonal relations and overall psychological well-being. Comparative mean values shows that females (M=34.99) outscored males in terms of efficiency. The results of the study are in line with the findings of Chamuah and Sankar [2] who confirmed that male elderly subjects have better psychological wellbeing than female elderly subjects. The mean scores (161.33) of male subjects in respect to psychological well was found more than mean scores (126.36) of female subjects. Significant difference were also found between the mean scores of psychological wellbeing in respect to gender, the obtained t- value (2.85) was found significant at 0.05 level. Hence on the basis of our findings we can say that male senior citizens enjoy the prosperous and happy life than female senior citizens, as their psychological well-being is better than elderly female group.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the level of psychological wellbeing among senior citizens. The first objective was to find the level of psychological well-being among male and female senior citizens of Sirsa district, and second objective was to compare the level of psychological well-being across gender of senior citizens. The results of the study elucidates that majority of the senior citizens had moderate level of psychological well-being. On comparing the mean scores of male and female respondents significant differences were observed in life satisfaction, mental health, interpersonal relations and overall psychological well-being. Therefore on the basis of our finding we can conclude that gender is an influential factor in psychological wellbeing and male senior citizens enjoy the prosperous and happy life than their counterpart.

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