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A STUDY OF LIFE SATISFACTION AND HEALTH IN OLD AGE

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ABSTRACT:

Life satisfaction among aged is an important construct in psycho-social study of ageing. In the present study is based on a sample of one hundred people 50 males and 50 females drawn from Jammu region. Sample consisted of adults living in homes with families It is planned to assess the relationship between life satisfaction and physical and mental health of old age people. Researcher used two scales to produce better results. The first one is Satisfaction with life scale is used to assess a person's global judgement of the life satisfaction, which is theoretically predicted to depend on a comparison of life's circumstances to one's standards. The second scale used P.G.I Health questionnaire scale used to assess the quality of physical health and mental health in old age people. Results of the present study revealed that there is relationship between life satisfaction and physical and mental health. On applying Pearson's coefficient correlation significant relationship found in life satisfaction and physical health and mental health.

KEYWORDS- Life Satisfaction, Physical Health, Mental Health

INTRODUCTION-

Older people who are not able to manage daily life by themselves may have a different view of life satisfaction than those with preserved self-care capacity. It may well be that the transition from being healthy and independent of help with activities of daily living to having to live with reduced self-care capacity alters the view of aspects contributing to life satisfaction. Knowledge is sparse about such factors in those with impaired self-care capacity, although this is important in health care and nursing, especially in Sweden, as in many other countries, there is an increasing older population and the average length of life also seems to be increasing. The proportion of the oldest old (80 years of age or above) will increase most in the years to come, which in turn will make demands on the health-care system.

Life satisfaction is one among a range of concepts that is assumed to reflect the conditions of a good life. This section aims to clarify the relationship between life satisfaction and the two related concepts of quality of life and subjective well-being. Subjective well-being also provides the theoretical context for the definition of life satisfaction applied in the thesis. The distinction between a top-down and bottom-up theoretical framework for life satisfaction judgments is also addressed.

Diener defined life satisfaction as-a cognitive judgmental global evaluation of one's life. It may be influenced by affect but is not itself a direct measure of emotion (1984). The definition highlights the distinction between the sub-categories of subjective well-being; the evaluation of life satisfaction involves a judgmental process that differs from that involved when reporting affect as it requires a conscious, cognitive assessment of life circumstances and a comparison of these to a subjectively set standard. A greater amount of discrepancy between the set standard and one's actual standing means less happiness. However, there are different perspectives on the judgmental process of life satisfaction.

LIFE SATISFACTION AND AGING-

Life satisfaction, a component of personal well-being, is also an important part of aging well. Life satisfaction can also be connected to sense of control among older adults. Even life events that could be highly stressful, such as financial problems, may have little negative effect if the individual feels he has

some choice. What is critical to life satisfaction in almost all cases is an individual's perception of control within his or her own situation, which appears to be more important than objective measures. The field of aging has long been concerned with what happens to well-being as people grow older. Social gerontology was launched as a field with prominent emphasis on whether life satisfaction was affected by the aging process. Initial research revealed that aging was not as strongly linked with declines in well-being as many had expected. Several studies show that psychological well-being remains stable or even increases with age so that, despite biological and social changes in aging, life satisfaction does not necessarily decrease in later life. Older adults, on average, appear to have positive and satisfying affective lives and while some disciplines have traditionally viewed late life as a time of emotional flattening and disengagement, recent research has suggested that older adults remain emotional beings who not only experience a full range of emotions, but who also seem more adept than their younger counterparts at avoiding negative affective states. Getting older is the strongest cue that time is finite, and individuals may become more optimistic with age by proactively regulating their socio-emotional world. Life Satisfaction and Indicators of Health Functional capacity and health are likely to become compromised in late life, and therefore, are often assumed to be critical for life satisfaction. Markides and Martin determined that functional capacity, including the ability to perform activities of daily living, is a predictor of life satisfaction. Even in the oldest old population, greater functional capacity is associated with greater life satisfaction. The sense of being in control of one's life represents an important dimension of life satisfaction among older adults. Locus of control influences wellbeing, health, and functional capacity, as well as the ability to access social support. Lewinsohn, Redner, and Seeley researched the nature of the relationship between life satisfaction and psychosocial variables and determined that most of the psychosocial variables were significantly correlated with life satisfaction. Individuals with higher life satisfaction describe themselves as having more extensive, frequent, and reliable social supports, as being more socially skilled, and as feeling more content in their relationships with others, as well as engaging in a greater number of pleasant activities. They reported fewer irrational beliefs, were more optimistic and less pessimistic, and had lower levels of reported cognitive difficulty. Another significant result that emerged from the study revealed that health, both self-rated and interviewer-rated, was positively related to higher levels of life satisfaction. It has been stated that human beings seem to possess a unique ability to maintain or regain high levels of well-being even in the face of the most aversive life changes, including the sudden onset of critical health problems.

According to Diener Subjective well being has affective component and a cognitive component of subjective well being the present focuses on the cognitive components of subjective well beings is typically assessed by life satisfaction judgements

ACTIVITY THEORY-

The main assumptions of this theory is that the nature of the relationship between activity and life satisfaction is positive. The basic idea behind his approach is successful ageing. That the pattern of activity to keep middle values is created. Ageing can be reached starting denial happiness. Replacing them with new ones in order to maintain life satisfaction is important A berg, Siden vall, Hepworth, O'Reilly, and Lithell discovered that among the subjects they studied, the onset of illness became a turning point in life, when feeling old became an experienced reality and reassessment of their life situation became a necessity. However, very few participants expressed experiencing low levels of life satisfaction. Researches on the oldest-old's self perception of health indicate that there is a strong association between life satisfaction and self-reported health. Berg, Hassing, Mc Clearn, and Johansson found that medically defined health was not significantly related to life satisfaction, however, there was a strong association between life satisfaction and self-rated overall health, especially in women. This indicates that the subjective perception of health provides more information about life satisfaction compared to medically-based measures. Health related quality of life includes physical, mental, and social components and encompasses perceived, valued health attributes, such as a sense of comfort and well-being, the ability to maintain good physical, emotional and intellectual functions, and the ability to satisfactorily take part in social activities. Among older adults, it was these components that were most strongly connected to life satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

Research methodology is a scientific procedure of looking at research issues. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedure by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena is called research methodology. It is also defined as the study of methods by which knowledge is gathered. Its aim is to give the work plan of research. It is necessary for a researcher to design a methodology for the problem chosen. One should note that even if the method considered in two problems is same the methodology may be different. It is important for the researcher to know not only the research methods necessary for the research under taken but also the methodology. The present chapter throws light on the research methodology adopted for the present study. Here research objectives and design of the study i.e. sample for the study and selection of the research instrument are discussed. Methods for the collection of the data and statistics for analyzing the data have also been discussed.

SAMPLE

Sampling is the process of selection of units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample may fairly generate results back to the population from which they were chosen. The present study consisted of 100 adults (age group 60-80 years) from the Jammu region. It will consist of 50 males and 50 females. Sample consisted of adults living in homes with families.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE-

Random sampling technique has been used in the present investigation. A random sample is a probability sample. A random sample requires (a) a complete listing of all elements (b) an equal chance for each element to be selected (c) a selection process whereby the selection of one element has no effect on the chance of selecting another element. Thus random sampling may be defined as one in which all possible combinations of samples of fixed size have an equal probability of being selected.

VARIABLE STUDIED: There are two types of variables in the study-

Independent Variables-

- Gender
- Physical health
- Mental health

DEPENDENT VARIABLE-

- Life satisfaction

RESEARCH TOOL EMPLOYED AND ITS DESCRIPTION-

- Satisfaction with life scale
- P.G.I Health questionnaire scale

The satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) has been developed by Diener. SWLS is a self report measure, designed to assess a person's global judgement of the life satisfaction, which is theoretically predicted to depend on a comparison of life's circumstances to one's standards. Life satisfaction is a conscious cognitive judgement of one's life in which the criteria of comparison are up to the person. SWLS is a five-item scale assessing positive cognitive appraisals of life in general, with items. The items of the scale are global rather than specific in nature, allowing the respondents to weigh domains of their lives in terms of their own values, in arriving at the global judgements of life satisfaction. The items have a 7-point rating scale, ranging from -strongly agree to -strongly disagree. P.G.I health scale is an instrument designed to measure the psychological tool as perceived by old age people. It provides measures to physical health and mental health in old age people. P.G.I Health scale was constructed by S.K Verma, N.N wig and D.Pershad in 1974.

- a) 38-items scale divided into a physical distress and
- b) (Psychological distress) sections with 16 and 22 items, respectively.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED-

- Descriptive statistics (Mean, Median, Standard deviation)
- Inferential statistics (Co-relational analysis: Pearson -r)

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY-

- To study the relationship between life satisfaction and physical health among old adults.
- To study the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among old adults.

HYPOTHESES OF THE PRESENT STUDY-

- There will be significant relationship between life satisfaction and physical health among old adults.
- There will be significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among old adults.

CONCLUSION-

This study examined the relationship between life satisfaction and health in old age. The first aim was to find out the relationship if any, between physical health and life satisfaction. The second aim was to find out the relationship, if any, between mental health and life satisfaction. The findings reveal that there is consistent relationship between life satisfaction and health in old age. On applying Pearson's coefficient correlation significant negative relationships were found between physical health, mental health and life satisfaction.

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