

## Satisfaction with Life in Elderly With Reference To Gender, Age and Residence

Dr. L. Uma devi\*, V. KavithaKiran\*\*, P. Swachita\*\*

\*Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Home science, Hyderabad

\*\*Research associate, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Home science, Hyderabad

**Abstract:** The present study aims at finding out the life satisfaction of elderly with reference to age, gender and residence. A sample of 180 elderly above 60 years were selected for the study and Satisfaction with Life Scale by Diener was administered. The study revealed that there is no difference between gender with regard to satisfaction and significant difference in satisfaction was found between institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly. Elderly who were residing with their children in family had more satisfaction than their counterparts.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction with life, institutionalized and non-institutionalized.

### I. Introduction

According to Erik Erikson's "Eight Stages of Life" theory, the human personality is developed in a series of eight stages that take place from the time of birth and continue on throughout an individual's complete life. He characterizes old age as a period of "Integrity vs. Despair", during which a person focuses on reflecting back on his life. Those who are unsuccessful during this phase will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience many regrets. The individual will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair. Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. There are two different types of people described in this stage of life. The "young old" are the healthy individuals who can function on their own without assistance and can complete their daily tasks independently. The "old old" are those who depend on specific services due to declining health or diseases.

Life satisfaction is the way a person evaluates his or her life and how he or she feels about where it is going in the future. It is a measure of well-being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfaction with relations with others and with achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with daily life. It is having a favorable attitude of one's life as a whole rather than an assessment of current feelings.

The psychologists, Yuval Palgi and DovShmotkin (2009), studied the old-old — people who were primarily in their nineties. This subject group was found to have thought highly of their past and present. But generally the group thought lower of their future. These people were very satisfied with their life up until the point they were surveyed but knew that the end was near and so were not quite as hopeful for the future. A large factor that was talked about in life satisfaction was intelligence. The experiments talk of how life satisfaction grows as people become older because they become wiser and more knowledgeable, so they begin to see that life will be better as they grow older and understand the important things in life more.

**Objective:** To study the satisfaction with life in elderly with respect to age, gender and place of stay (Home/ Institution)

**Sample:** Total sample of 180 elderly adults who have crossed 60 years. The selected sample includes both genders, who reside with family and in old age homes.

#### Distribution Of Sample

S.no	Non Institutionalized n=120				Institutionalized n=60			
	Male n=60		Female=60		Male =30		Female= 30	
	Young old	Old old	Young old	Old old	Young old	Old old	Young old	Old old
1.	30	30	30	30	15	15	15	15

**Area Of Study:** Hyderabad

**Tools:** SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE by Diener (1985).

Description of Measure: A 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

## II. Results And Discussion

**Table 1: Gender Wise Distribution On Satisfaction With Life Scale**

S.no	GENDER	Very high (30-35)	High (25-29)	Average (20-24)	Below average(15-19)	Dissatisfied (10-14)	Extremely dissatisfied(5-9)
	Male( n=90)	51(56.66%)	8(8.88%)	15(16.66%)	16(17.77%)	-	-
	Female(n=90)	55(61.11%)	8(8.88%)	11(12.22%)	16(17.77%)	-	-

It can be inferred that half of the sample i.e(56.6%) of male and 61 percent of females scored very high on Satisfaction with life scale(SWLS). This reflects that half of selected sample including males and females love their life and feel that things are going on very well. Nearly 8.8 percent of both male and female sample scored high on SWLS, which shows that they like their life and major domains of their life like work, family, friends, leisure and personal development are going well in their life. It was interesting to note that 16 percent of male sample and 12 percent of female sample scored average and from this it can be concluded that they are generally satisfied with their life but they would definitely like improvement in some areas of their life. Around 17 percent of sample from both genders score below average scores on SWLS, it can be inferred from the score that these people usually have small but significant problems in several areas of their lives, or have many areas that are doing fine but one area that represents a substantial problem for them. It was surprising to find that none of the selected sample scored low which represents that none of them showed dissatisfaction or extremely dissatisfaction with their life.

**Table 2: Gender Difference In Satisfaction With Life Scale**

S.no	GENDER	MEAN	S.D	t- cal value	pvalue
1.	Male	29.7	1.75	1.14	0.255
2.	Female	30	1.78		

P< 0.05

It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between genders in satisfaction with life scale. Both male and female scored almost equal and more than half of selected sample score high on satisfaction with reflecting that they are satisfied with their life and all domains of their life like work, family, friends, leisure are doing well irrespective of gender.

**Table 3: Satisfaction With Life In Institutionalized And Non Institutionalized Elderly**

S.no		Very high (30-35)	High (25-29)	Average (20-24)	Below average(15-19)	Dissatisfied (10-14)	Extremely dissatisfied(5-9)
1.	Institutionalized (n=60)	6 (10%)	4(6%)	23(38.3%)	27(45%)	-	-
2.	Non institutionalized(n=120)	99(82%)	12(10%)	4(3%)	5 (4%)	-	-

It is clearly evident from the study that 45 percent of selected sample show below average satisfaction with life and 38 percent of institutionalized elderly scored average on SWLS. It was surprising to note that only 6 to 10 percent of selected sample show high level of satisfaction with life. On the other side selected elderly sample who were residing with family scored high SWLS. It was interesting to note that 82 percent of selected non institutionalized sample scored very high satisfaction with life. It can be concluded from the present study that elderly population residing with families showed more satisfaction with life. They love their life and feel that everything is going on well in their life. On the other hand the institutionalized elderly lack family support and this may be the reason that they showed below average satisfaction with life, reflecting that they may be having significant problem in any one area of life.

**Table4: Difference Between Institutionalized And Non Institutionalized Elderly In Satisfaction With Life.**

S.no		MEAN	S.D	t- cal value	pvalue
1.	Institutionalized (n=60)	19.2	1.29	81.277	0.0001**
2.	Non-institutionalized (n=120)	32	0.8		

P<0.05

The study establishes the fact that institutionalized and non institutionalized elderly showed extremely statistically significant difference in satisfaction with life. Elderly populations residing with families were found to have very high satisfaction than the non institutionalized elderly.

**Table 5: Age Wise Distribution on Satisfaction With Life Scale**

S.no	AGE	Very high (30-35)	High (25-29)	Average (20-24)	Below average(15-19)	Dissatisfied (10-14)	Extremely dissatisfied(5-9)
1.	Young old (n=90)	52 (57.77%)	8(8.8%)	20(22.3%)	10 (11%)		
2.	Old old (n=90)	57 (63.25%)	5(5.55%)	7(7.77%)	18(22.24%)	3(3.33%)	

It can be clearly stated from the study that 57 percent of the selected young old sample and 63 percent of selected old old sample have high satisfaction with life. It was surprising to note that 22 percent of young old were having average satisfaction levels where as 22 percent of old old sample were having below average levels of satisfaction. It was interesting to note that none of selected young old sample showed dissatisfaction with life, but 3 percent of old old sample had dissatisfaction with life.

**Table 6: Age Wise Difference On Satisfaction With Life Scale**

S.no		Mean	SD	tcal value	p value
	Young old	29.73	1.76	2.3396	0.02*
	Old old	29.15	1.56		

p<0.05

The study reveals an interesting fact that there is significant difference between the young old and old old in satisfaction with life scale. It can be noted that even though the same percent ( average 57%) of young old and old old scored very high on satisfaction with life scale, 22 percent of the old old score below average and 3 percent of the old old showed dissatisfaction with life. It can be concluded that as age increases the satisfaction with life decreases may be due increased dependency, health issues, loss of any close associate which are frequent in old old.

### III. Conclusion

There has been substantial increase in elderly population in last two decades. Aging is not a uniform experience, so satisfaction with life is an important psychosocial study of aging. Due to urbanization, modernization, industrialization brought major changes in family structure. With both partners working they have no option but to put their parents in old age homes. The study reveals that elderly population living with their families showed greater satisfaction than the institutionalized elderly.

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