

LONELINESS AND VALUES AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN OLD PEOPLE LIVING IN MANIPUR

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Abstract

The current study is an investigation to determine the level of prediction loneliness and values has on psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 300 participants. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation, multiple linear regression analysis was employed for statistical analysis. The result of the study revealed that Loneliness and has a significant negative relation with psychological well-being while values has a significant positive relation with psychological well-being. Loneliness, values and a dimension of values also emerged as significant predictors of psychological well being as a whole and also for its dimensions.

Key Words: Manipur, Old age, Loneliness, Values, Psychological well-being, predictors

INTRODUCTION

Aging is a gradual decline concerning physical ability and mental ability as the chronological age of a person increases. According to Venkataraman (1998) aging is inevitable for every organism and this process leads to extinction. Havighurst (1961, 1963) defines successful aging as having inner feelings of happiness and satisfaction with one's present and past life. Old age has a dual definition. It is the last stage in the life processes of an individual, and it is an age group or generation comprising a segment of the oldest members of a population (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). Aging may be described as a change in the behaviour of the organism with age, which leads to a decreased power of survival and adjustment. It is the deterioration of a mature organism resulting from time-dependent, essentially irreversible changes intrinsic to all members of a species, such that, with the passage of time, they become increasingly unable to cope with the stresses of the environment, thereby increasing the probability of death (Dersak, 2014). Aging or Senescence is the process of degradation and degeneration that follows every living organism after attainment of a certain level of maturity; physical or mental.

Old Age in Manipur

India has 104 million elderly populations (above 60 years) which is 8.6% of the total population (Register General, 2011). According to a report published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in 2016; 7% of the total population of Manipur is considered to be in old age, i.e., 60 years and above with literacy rate of 44.9% only. 2.5% of the aged are reported to be living alone, 3.9% with spouse only, 46.3% with spouse and other members, 28.3% with their children and 3.3% with other relations and non-relations.

The percentage of old age in Manipur will increase gradually as well as the literacy rate. With the improving medical facilities and awareness of health and its importance; people in the state are living longer than before. With the birth rate slowing down and people living longer, the percentage of old age population in the state is expected to increase.

Loneliness

Loneliness may be relevant to health risk. It is a perceived lack of companionship and a psychological experience related to social isolation (Steptoe et al., 2004). Other researchers have investigated instances where social relations are “too few,” and people feel subjectively “lonely”, (Russell, Peplau & Cutrons, 1980). Loneliness exists to the extent that a person's network of social relationships is smaller or less satisfying than the person desires (Peplau and Perlman, 1979). As other theorists (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Ortega, 1969; Weiss, 1973) concur and as existing evidence (Russell, Peplau & Ferguson, 1978) indicates, loneliness is an emotionally unpleasant experience. In particular, loneliness has been linked with feelings of general dissatisfaction, unhappiness, depression, anxiety, emptiness, boredom, restlessness, and marginality (Peplau and Perlman, 1979). Weiss (1975) implied that humans have an inherent set of social needs which much be adequately satisfied by one's relationship. He identified six important part of a relationship like social interaction and guidance. According to him, loneliness can be of two types i.e. emotional loneliness and social loneliness.

Bhatia, Swami, Thakur and Bhatia (2007) examined 361 people of 65 years and above for health problems and loneliness. During the study, they found that loneliness was prevalent more in females (72.8%) as compared to males (65.6%). Loneliness was more prevalent among persons who lived alone (92.2%) as compared to those who lived with their spouse (58.9%) or when husband and wife lived with the family (61.4%). It was higher among the widows (85.2%) and widowers (75.8%) who lived with the family as compared to the aged who lived with the spouse (58.9%) and the aged husband and wife who lived with the family (61.4%). They concluded aged persons should be involved in social activities to avoid loneliness among them.

Singh and Misra (2009) investigated the relationships among depression, loneliness and sociability in elderly people. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between loneliness and depression. No significant relationship was found between loneliness and sociability and depression and sociability. Men were found to be more sociable than women. A significant correlation was found between loneliness and depression in both men and women.

Values

Values are personal beliefs that one is committed to, they are firm but not rigid convictions (Ninivaggi, 2016). They are characterized as relatively stable individual preferences that reflect socialization (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994). They seem to be useful for describing and explaining a person's behaviour (Mischel, 1990). Values are metaphysical ideals but to Plato values were eternal ideas. Values are purely subjective if emotional components are counted, just a reflection of an individual's whims. (Thagard, 2013). According to R.K. Mukerjee (1949) the father Indian sociology who studied social values; “values are socially approved desires

and goals that are internalised through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations". Schwartz identified ten distinct types of values through empirical support and they are a) power, b) achievement, c) hedonism, d) stimulation, e) self-direction, f) universalism, g) benevolence, h) tradition, i) conformity, and j) security (Schwartz, 1992).

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) performed smallest space analyses on ratings given by 455 subjects from Israel and 331 subjects from Germany of the importance of 36 Rokeach values as guiding principles in their lives. Partitioning of the obtained multidimensional space into regions revealed that people discriminate among values according to our a priori specifications of goal types, interests served, and motivational domains in both societies.

Vauclair, (2009) proposed that cultural values are measurable at the individual-level using the concept of morality and suggested that moral values can be operationalized referring to either the individual's moral values or those of a social group.

Psychological Well-Being

Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff (2002) defined psychological well-being as "engagement with existential challenges of life", while Verma and Verma (1989) defined psychological well-being as "the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experience and one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc. These things are difficult to evaluate objectively, hence the emphasis on the term "subjective" well-being."

Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith (1999) conceptualized psychological or subjective well-being as a broad construct, encompassing four specific and distinct components including (a) Positive well-being, (b) Psychological distress, (c) Life satisfaction, (d) domain satisfaction. Psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept. McCulloch (1991) has shown that satisfaction, morale, positive affect, social support, etc. constitute psychological well-being. Psychological well-being as a concept may have different meanings for different persons. It has to do with people's feelings about their existential conditions. These feelings may range from negative mental states such as anxiety or depression to a state which has been called positive mental health (Jahoda, 1950; Warr, 1978).

A study by Krause, Dayton, Ellison, and Wulff (1999) found that doubt is associated with greater psychological distress and diminished feelings of well-being and deleterious effects of doubt are greater for younger than for older people.

A study found that subjective health was strongly associated with psychological well-being among oldest-old adults and physical health impairments and biomarkers had independent direct effects on subjective health, and they had an indirect association with psychological well-being (Cho, Martin, Margrett, MacDonald, and Poon, 2011).

Delimitation

Only mentally stable, literate people above the age of 55 years were taken for the study. All participants were willing and those not willing and were not included in the study. Individuals who submitted incomplete questionnaires were removed from the study.

Objectives

To identify the critical predictors of psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur.

Hypothesis

H1a Loneliness will have a significant co-relation with psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur.

H1b Values will have a significant co-relation with psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur.

H2 Loneliness and values will significantly predict the psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur.

Method

Sample

Purposive sampling method was used to collect data from 300 individuals aged 55 and above from places frequented by elderlies like religious congregation, parks, hospitals and banks. The sample includes 150 male participants and 150 female participants.

Tools Used

i). Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale

It is a 20-item four-point rating scale. The revised loneliness scale has high internal consistency, with a coefficient alpha of 0.94 (Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980). The Crohnbach Alpha of this scale in the current study was 0.78.

ii). The Short Schwartz's Value Survey

It is a 10-item nine-point rating scale measuring two dimensions viz. openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-Transcendence which contains ten value types in total (Lindeman & Yerkasalo, 2005). The Crohnbach Alpha of this scale in the current study was 0.80.

iii). Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale

It is a 42-items six-point rating scale measuring six dimensions of psychological well-being viz. autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). The Crohnbach Alpha of this scale in the current study was 0.84.

Procedure

The researcher met older people in different locations like hospitals, parks, religious congregations and banks and their consent was taken before administering the scales. Proper instructions were given, all doubt and suspicion were cleared and confidentiality of the data was assured.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Showing frequencies (F) and percentages (P) of socio-demographic characteristics for male and female older people living in Manipur (N= 300)

<i>Socio-demographics factors</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>P (in %age)</i>
Gender	Males	150	50.0
	Females	150	50.0
Religion	Hindu	145	48.3
	Christian	64	21.3
	Muslim	91	30.3
Job type	Private	120	40.0
	Public	180	60.0
Employment status	Retired	106	35.3
	Active	194	64.7
Family type	Nuclear	122	40.7
	Joint	177	59.0
Marital status	Married	221	73.7
	Unmarried	9	3.0
	Widow/Widower	70	23.3
Family size	Small	155	51.7
	Large	145	48.3
Residing with wards	Yes	147	49.0
	No	153	51.0
Health problems	Yes	237	79.0
	No	60	20.0

Table 1 describes the sample of 300 individuals on the basis of various socio-demographic characteristics. This classification was done by calculating the percentages and frequencies for each demographic variable under study. The results revealed that maximum number of male and female individuals are married and is active in professions. Also maximum of them has health problems and nearly half the sample was represented by Hindu participants.

Table 2 Showing Means and Standard deviation for loneliness, values and psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur (N= 300)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Loneliness	40.99	8.009
Values	63.16	10.398
Openness to change v/s Conservation	32.62	5.818
Self-enhancement v/s Self-Transcendence	30.54	5.729
Psychological well-being	172.09	20.721
Autonomy	26.79	4.199
Environmental mastery	27.19	3.633
Personal growth	29.25	4.900
Positive relations	30.27	5.295
Purpose in life	29.82	5.299
Self-acceptance	28.77	4.910

Table 2 shows that the mean score of overall Values of male and female individuals was higher than its two dimensions also the mean score of Psychological Well-Being is higher than its six dimensions too.

Table 3 Showing Inter Correlation matrix: Loneliness, Values and Psychological well-being of people living in Manipur (N=300)

	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	Y_1	Y_2	Y_3	Y_4	Y_5	Y_6	Y_7
X_1	1	-.139*	-.143*	-.108	-.463**	-.219**	-.267**	-.321**	-.516**	-.230**	-.445**
X_2		1	.902**	.899**	.196**	.061	.054	.162**	.215**	.163**	.166**
X_3			1	.622**	.231**	.078	.063	.218**	.246**	.185**	.177**
X_4				1	.122*	.032	.034	.072	.139*	.107	.122*
Y_1					1	.533**	.617**	.821**	.809**	.776**	.778**
Y_2						1	.155**	.322**	.313**	.221**	.380**
Y_3							1	.458**	.417**	.400**	.393**
Y_4								1	.549**	.667**	.541**
Y_5									1	.562**	.606**
Y_6										1	.439**
Y_7											1

*correlation significant at $p < 0.05$ level

**correlation significant at $p < 0.01$ level

X_1 = Loneliness, X_2 = Total values, X_3 = Openness to change v/s Conservation, X_4 = Self-enhancement v/s Self-Transcendence, Y_1 = Psychological well-being, Y_2 = Autonomy, Y_3 = Environmental mastery, Y_4 = Personal growth, Y_5 = Positive relations, Y_6 = Purpose in life, Y_7 = Self-acceptance

Table 3 shows the result of pearson product moment co-relation indicating that there is a significant negative relationship between loneliness and overall psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur, ($r = -.463$, $p < 0.01$). The result also indicates that loneliness is negatively associated with all the dimensions of psychological well-being (Autonomy, $r = -.219$, $p < 0.01$; Environmental mastery, $r = -.267$; $p < 0.01$; Personal growth; $r = -.321$, $p < 0.01$, Positive relations; $r = -.516$, $p < 0.01$; Purpose in life, $r = -.230$, $p < 0.01$; Self-acceptance, $r = -.445$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, these results support *H1a* (Loneliness will have a significant co-relation with psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur). Table 3 also shows a positive and significant relationship between overall values and overall psychological well-being of old people living in

Manipur, ($r = .196, p < 0.01$). There is also positive relationship between overall values and the dimensions of psychological well-being (Personal growth; $r = .162, p < 0.01$, Positive relations; $r = .215, p < 0.01$; Purpose in life, $r = .163, p < 0.01$; Self-acceptance, $r = .166, p < 0.01$). Also dimension of values openness to change vs conservation shows positive co-relation with overall psychological well-being ($r = .231, p < 0.01$) and its dimensions (Personal growth; $r = .0218, p < 0.01$, Positive relations; $r = .246, p < 0.01$; Purpose in life, $r = .185, p < 0.01$; Self-acceptance, $r = .177, p < 0.01$). The dimension of values self-enhancement vs self-transcendence also shows positive co-relation with overall psychological well-being ($r = .122, p < 0.05$) and its dimensions (Positive relations; $r = .139, p < 0.05$; Self-acceptance, $r = -.122, p < 0.05$). Therefore, these results support *H1b* (Values will have a significant co-relation with psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur).

Table 4 MLRA: Loneliness and values as predictors of Psychological well-being older people living in Manipur

Predictor	B	R	R ²	ΔR ²	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness and Values (Model $Y_1 = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_3 X_3$)								
X ₁	-1.137	0.463	0.215	-	81.461	(1,298)	0.00	0.273
X ₃	0.598	0.492	0.242	0.028	47.490	(2,297)	0.00	0.319
Constant	199.168							

X₁= Loneliness, X₃= Openness to change v/s Conservation, Y₁= Psychological well-being

Table 4 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness and one dimension of values i.e. Openness to change v/s Conservation emerged as critical predictors of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness was found to be negatively predicting 21.5% of psychological well-being, $R^2 = 0.215, F(1, 298) = 81.461, p < 0.01$, in older people living in Manipur. However, Openness to Change v/s Conservation (dimension of values) is positively predicting 24.2% of psychological well-being, $R^2 = 0.242, F(1, 297) = 47.490, p < 0.01$ of older people living in Manipur. This result supports *H2* (Loneliness and values will significantly predict the psychological well-being of old people living in Manipur).

Table 5 MLRA: Loneliness and Values as predictors of Autonomy dimension of psychological well-being

Predictor	β	R	R ²	ΔR ²	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness and Values (Model $Y_2 = a + \beta_1 X_1$)								
X ₁	-0.115	0.219	0.048	-	14.961	(1,298)	0.00	
Constant	31.486							

X₁= Loneliness, Y₂= Autonomy

Table 5 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness emerged as a critical predictor of autonomy dimension of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness showed 4.8% negative variance of autonomy dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2 = 0.048, F(1, 298) = 14.961, p < 0.01$, in older people living in Manipur.

Table 6 MLRA: Loneliness and Values as predictors of Environmental mastery dimension of psychological well-being

Predictor	β	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness and Values (Model Y ₃ = a + $\beta_1 X_1$)								
X ₁	-0.121	0.267	0.071	-	22.884	(1,298)	0.00	
Constant	32.159							

X₁= Loneliness, Y₃= Environmental mastery

Table 6 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness emerged as a critical predictor of environmental mastery dimension of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness showed 7.1% negative variance of environmental mastery dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.071$, $F(1, 298)=22.884$, $p<0.01$, in older people living in Manipur.

Table 7 MLRA: Loneliness and Values as predictors of Personal growth dimension of psychological well-being

Predictor	β	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness (Model Y ₄ = a + $\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_3 X_3$)								
X ₁	-0.181	0.321	0.103	-	34.321	(1,298)	0.00	
X ₃	0.148	0.366	0.134	0.030	22.914	(1,297)	0.00	
Constant	31.839							

X₁= Loneliness, X₃= Openness to change v/s Conservation, Y₄= Personal growth

Table 7 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness and one dimension of values i.e. Openness to change v/s Conservation emerged as critical predictors of personal growth dimension of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness was found to be negatively predicting 10.3% of personal growth dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.103$, $F(1, 298)=34.321$, $p<0.01$, in older people living in Manipur. However, Openness to Change v/s Conservation (dimension of values) is positively predicting 13.4% of personal growth dimension psychological well-being, $R^2=0.134$, $F(1, 297)=22.914$, $p<0.01$ of older people living in Manipur.

Table 8 MLRA: Loneliness and Values as predictors of Positive relations dimension of psychological well-being

Predictor	B	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness and Values (Model Y ₅ = a + $\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_3 X_3$)								
X ₁	-0.325	0.516	0.266	-	108.153	(1,298)	0.00	
X ₃	0.160	0.545	0.297	0.030	62.631	(1,297)	0.00	
Constant	38.346							

X_1 = Loneliness, X_3 = Openness to change v/s Conservation, Y_5 = Positive relations

Table 8 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness and one dimension of values i.e. Openness to change v/s Conservation emerged as critical predictors of positive relations of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness was found to be negatively predicting 26.6% of positive relations dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.266$, $F(1, 298)=108.153$, $p<0.01$, in older people living in Manipur. However, Openness to Change v/s Conservation (dimension of values) is positively predicting 29.7% of positive relations dimension psychological well-being, $R^2=0.297$, $F(1, 297)=62.631$, $p<0.01$ of older people living in Manipur.

Table 9 MLRA: Loneliness and Values as predictors of Purpose in life dimension of psychological well-being

Predictor	B	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness (Model $Y_6 = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_3 X_3$)								
X_1	-0.137	0.230	0.053	-	16.623	(1,298)	0.00	
X_3	0.142	0.277	0.077	0.024	12.315	(1,297)	0.00	
Constant	30.825							

X_1 = Loneliness, X_3 = Openness to change v/s Conservation, Y_6 = Purpose in life

Table 9 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness and one dimension of values i.e. Openness to change v/s Conservation emerged as critical predictors of purpose in life dimension of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness was found to be negatively predicting 5.3% of purpose in life dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.053$, $F(1, 298)=16.623$, $p<0.01$, in older people living in Manipur. However, Openness to Change v/s Conservation (dimension of values) is positively predicting 7.7% of purpose in life dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.077$, $F(1, 297)=12.315$, $p<0.01$ of older people living in Manipur.

Table 10 MLRA: Loneliness and Values as predictors of Self-Acceptance dimension of psychological well-being

Predictor	β	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F	df	p	f ²
Loneliness (Model $Y_7 = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_3 X_3$)								
X_1	-0.263	0.445	0.198	-	73.788	(1,298)	0.00	
X_3	0.098	0.60	0.212	0.013	39.865	(1,297)	0.00	
Constant	36.356							

X_1 = Loneliness, X_3 = Openness to change v/s Conservation, Y_7 = Self-acceptance

Table 10 Shows result of multiple regression analysis where Loneliness and one dimension of values i.e. Openness to change v/s Conservation emerged as critical predictors of Self-Acceptance dimension of psychological well-being of older people living in Manipur. Loneliness was found to be negatively predicting 19.8% of Self-Acceptance dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.1983$, $F(1, 298)=73.788$, $p<0.01$, in older people living in Manipur. However, Openness to Change v/s Conservation (dimension of values) is positively predicting 21.2% of Self-Acceptance dimension of psychological well-being, $R^2=0.212$, $F(1, 297)=39.865$, $p<0.01$ of older people living in Manipur.

Discussion

The result of the study is a clear indication of the current scenario of senior citizens living in Manipur. Manipur with its degrading law and order condition day by day and the never ending insurgency related violence and civil unrest has left everyone on their toes. The uncertainty and the insecurity is something the younger generation was born into and hence are more conditioned to the situation there. But the senior citizen seems to be having a very hard time adjusting to it. There is rapid increase in literacy rate but the undeveloped infrastructure and lack of capital investment has frustrated many young generation. These led to mass migration of younger generation to other states of the country for education and jobs. The family oriented Manipuri tradition and custom is rapidly coming to an end because of these. The elders are left at a violence prone region all alone missing their children. They are unable to leave the state at the same time unable to bring their children back. Also, age brings about loss of spouse, loss of income and deteriorating health conditions which all has hand to play in loneliness. Loneliness has become a common problem with every elderly. Hence, the result of the study is highly relatable to the ground level real scenario.

However, there is a ray of hope for better psychological well-being as elderlies with better openness to change has better psychological well-being. Being able to adapt to their surrounding situations and adapting to new changes can be better for their psychological well-being. Accepting and embracing the uncertainty and insecurity of the situation and trying to move out of the conservative mind set will help in better countering psychological problems.

Conclusion

When health, status, loneliness, migration of children, strained family relations or other conditions has become a common problem in every aged person in the society; it is a grave condition that needs to be addressed to find a solution because growing old is inevitable for every individual. Old age is a stage in which almost everyone will face one day or the other. One might be able to escape from one or two problems of old age, but we are bound to face some of the inescapable problems. Given that a major percentage of our societies are elderly it is important for us to concentrate on their well-being and needs. If we want a better experience during our old age, then it is necessary to learn more about our elders so that our sons and daughters will do the same for us. Family members should ensure maximum effort to help elders in their families. The government and community leaders should conduct workshops, seminars and discussions more and frequently. Recreational activities and regular counselling in hospitals, parks and religious congregation can help maintain a better psychological well-being in old age.

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