



Socio-demographic Correlates of Life Satisfaction among Elderly People

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ABSTRACT

Present comparative study focused to examine the socio-economic correlates of life satisfaction among old age people ($M_{age} = 62.6$), living in urban and rural areas of Shamli and Muzaffarnagar, in relation of their socio-economic status. To attain the objective of present study 110 urban residents and 110 rural residents were randomly selected from Shamli and Muzaffarnagar districts. In order to collect data on Life Satisfaction Scale, developed by Alam and Srivastava, was used. Mean, standard deviation and t-test was calculated to analyze the data. Findings of this study revealed that socio-economic status make a significant difference in life satisfaction of urban people only ($t = 3.05, \rho < .01$). Among rural residents, there is no significant difference in life satisfaction of high and low socio-economic status holder.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, Socio-demography.

INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is one aspect of subjective well-being, and refers to one's cognitive assessment of own life (Diener&Diener, 1995). Satisfaction with life reflects both the extent to which basic needs are met and the extent to which other goals are considered attainable. Life satisfaction is made up of commitment to goals and beliefs about achieving those goals (Diener et al, 1999). Life satisfaction acts like a buffer against the impact of stressful life events on the development of psychopathology, according to Suldo& Huebner (2004). It is not surprising that a lot of research has been done on the satisfaction of living with adults, given that the willingness to act productively towards the main goals of adulthood (relationships, parenthood, work, participation community) is linked with satisfaction with various areas of life, as depicted by Diener and colleagues (1999).



Cummins and Nistico (2002) have argued that in politically and economically more favorable circumstances, life satisfaction must involve some process of comparison between current experience and internalized norms. Research has concluded that demographic factors explain very little variation in adult SB. In particular, other research (Lyubomirsky, 2001) has found that objective circumstances, demographic variables, and life events do not explain more than 8-15% of the variance in happiness. Given that income provides access to resources and that resources can enable participants to meet their basic needs and achieve their goals. Dew and Huebner (1994) have reported the life satisfaction as to be associated moderately with socioeconomic status (SES), but other research shows conflicting results regarding overall family demographics (Hagerty, 2000; Huebner et al., 2000).

Living Arrangements and Life Satisfaction

The living environment and the composition of the population living in the very large cities of developed economies play an important role in the formation of their lower average well-being than that of small urban and rural agglomerations (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2015). Most of the people choose to live in urban areas because they offer a better quality of life both in terms of employment opportunities and access to public facilities and services. However, these urban benefits may not be distributed evenly, as urbanization is often associated with higher real costs of living. Depending on their level of income and education, a person's urban residence may be accompanied by lower levels of social capital, as well as higher levels of pollution (MacKerron, & Mourato, 2009), traffic congestion, crime, inequalities, lack of green spaces and exposure to disease (Alirol, Getaz., Stoll, Chappuis, and Loutan, 2011). The degree to which these costs are incurred and presented in measures of well-being likely depends on the educational level of residents and the associated socioeconomic status.

Objective of the Study

Following are the objectives of the present research:

1. To test the SES difference in life-satisfaction of elderly people of Shamli.
2. To test the SES difference in life-satisfaction of elderly people of rural areas of Shamli.
3. To test the SES difference in life-satisfaction of elderly people of rural areas of Shamli.



Hypotheses of the Study

Following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

- There is no significant SES difference in life-satisfaction of elderly people of Shamli.
- There is no significant SES difference in life-satisfaction of elderly people of rural areas of Shamli.
- There is no significant SES difference in life-satisfaction of elderly people of rural areas of Shamli.

Method and Design

Design: In order to explore the socio-demographic differences in life satisfaction of elderly people, a normative survey method of research has been used.

Population and Sample: Total 220 elderly people were selected ($M_{\text{age}} = 62.6$), out of which 110 were from rural areas ($M_{\text{age}} = 61.8$) and 110 from urban areas ($M_{\text{age}} = 63.4$) of Shamli. These all people were marked and selected from voting list of Uttar Pradesh with simple random sampling method.

Variables of the Study

Independent Variable

1. Socio-economic status (High and Low)
2. Demographic Area (Urban and Rural)

Dependent Variable

- i. Life-satisfaction.

Controlled Variable

- i. Age



Tools for Data Collection

i. **Life Satisfaction Scale:** A self-reporting measure, consisted of 60 items, Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Alam and Srivastava was used to assess the level of satisfaction with life. Each item has two alternatives of yes and no. The reliability (test-retest) of this scale was reported by the authors as .84, and the validity as ranging from .74 to .82.

ii. **Socio-economic Status:** In order to assess the socio-economic status, a self-constructed questionnaire consisted of three subscales (education, occupation and monthly income) was used. All three scales were based on 7-point scaling system. Total score, based on education, occupation, and income, proposes the socio-economic status.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Results of this study reveal that elderly people with high socio-economic status scored 44.03 and those with lower socio-economic status scored 47.71 regarding the life satisfaction. The obtained mean difference between life satisfaction of elderly people with high and low socio-economic status, as shown in table-1, is significant ($t = 2.24$; $p < .05$). This demonstrates that elderly people with high socio-economic status show significantly greater life satisfaction with their life. There is no doubt that life satisfaction is largely depends on fulfillment of needs, which becomes feasible by people having high level of social as well as economic status.

Table-1: SES Difference in Life Satisfaction of Elderly People of Shamli

SES	N	Means	S.D.	SE _D	t-value
High	110	47.74	7.62	1.03	3.23**
Low	110	44.41			

* = Significant at .05-level



Figure-1: Bar Graph for Mean Difference in High and Low Socio-economic Status regarding Life Satisfaction

Table-2 shows the findings related to socio-economic differences among old age people living in urban and rural areas separately regarding the level of satisfaction with their life. Results show that the urban people with high socio-economic status scored 48.12 and with low socio-economic status scored 43.78 on life satisfaction scale. This is consistent with that of previous which indicates that people with high socio-economic status tend to show higher life satisfaction than those with low socio-economic status ($t = 3.05, \rho < .01$). But this trend of relationship between socio-economic status and life satisfaction disappear among rural people. Rural elderly people with high socio-economic status ($M = 47.36$) don't significantly differ to those with low socio-economic status ($M = 45.05$) in terms of satisfaction with their life. Rural people with low socio-economic status scored lower life satisfaction, but it was not up to the significant level. It implies that among rural people, socio-economic status makes no difference to the life satisfaction. There can be some other factors to be attributed to explain life satisfaction among rural people.

Table-2: Statistical Values for Socio-economic Differences in Life Satisfaction of Healthy and HIV-Positive Respondents

Demographic Area	SES	N	Means	S.D.	SE _D	t-value
Urban	High	55	48.12	7.44	1.42	3.05**
	Low	55	43.78			
Rural	High	55	47.36	7.22	1.37	1.68
	Low	55	45.05			

** = Significant at .01-level

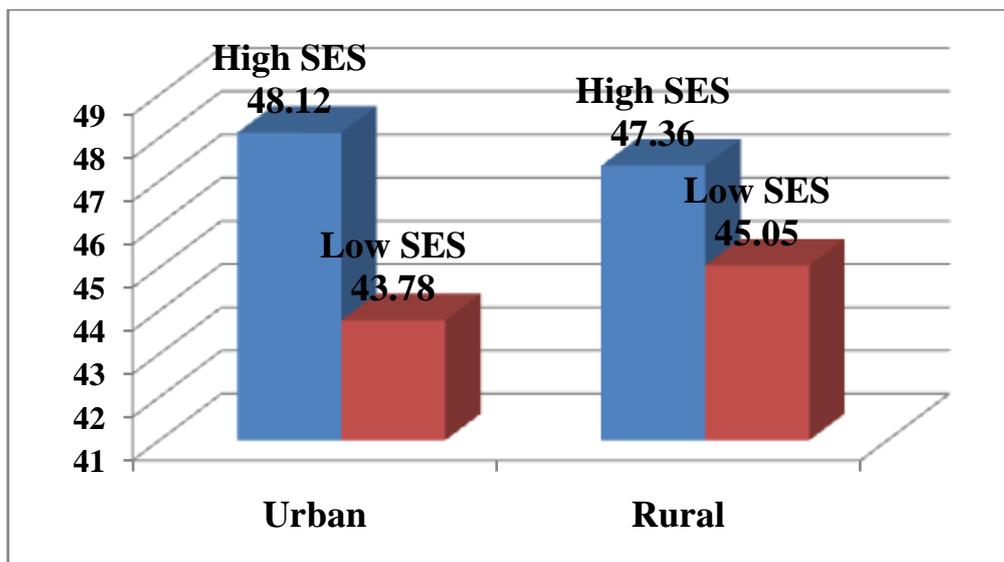


Figure-1: Bar Graph for SES Differences in Life Satisfaction of Urban and Rural Residents

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study have demonstrated that socio-economic status that respondents with higher socio-economic status, tend to show greater life satisfaction. People with low socio-economic status were found significantly lower in terms of their life



satisfaction than those with the high socio-economic status. People, brought up in families with a higher socio-economic status have better access of funds to continue their education, as well as variety of resources, and therefore to show greater general well-being, as reported by Douthitt et al (1992). On other hand, Seligson et al (2003) reported that participants with lower SES had lower life satisfaction levels than participants with higher socio-economic status. Socio-cultural factor can shape the patterns of relationship between personality and situational factors (Harkness & Super, 2003). Studies of adults have identified important differences in levels and correlates of life satisfaction across countries (Diener&Diener, 1995; Suh et al, 1998).

In conclusion, it can be posed that socio-economic status significantly influences the life satisfaction of people living in urban areas only. Old age people living in rural areas do not have their life satisfaction as influenced by socio-economic status. Li, C., Chi, I., Zhang, X., Cheng, Z., Zhang, L., & Chen, G. (2015) reported that financial strain, depressive symptoms, filial piety, and accessibility of health services plays significant role in determination of life satisfaction among the older adults in both urban and rural areas. This study also demonstrated the importance of age and family financial exchange to the life satisfaction of urban older adults. Sorensen (2014) has demonstrated in his research that rural people have a significantly higher life satisfaction than city dwellers when holding socio-economic factors constant.

1. Null hypothesis regarding general socio-economic difference in life satisfaction of elderly people is rejected.
2. Null hypothesis regarding socio-economic difference in life satisfaction of urban elderly people is also rejected.
3. Null hypothesis regarding socio-economic difference in life satisfaction of rural elderly people is accepted.



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