

## Resilience and Life Satisfaction: Predictors of Well-being in Pensioners and Non-Pensioners

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### ABSTRACT

Aging is a natural phenomenon that brings along changes in physical, psychological, and social conditions. One being the transition from becoming a working to a non-working person, i.e., the retirement phase. Getting pension can ensure one is able to maintain a secure lifestyle. However, in India, majority of older adults are still not entitled to any pension after retirement. Thus, the present study aims to understand the impact of resilience and life satisfaction on well-being of pensioners (n=70) and non-pensioners (n=69). The study uses independent t-test, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression to analyse the data. Results suggest that a significant mean difference exists for all three variables among pensioners and non-pensioners, wherein, resilience, life satisfaction, and well-being are higher in pensioners. This study suggests an organized and time-bound expansion of governmental initiatives regarding pension schemes and health-related policies, which in turn will help in promoting the well-being of the elderly.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Well-being, Life satisfaction, Older Adults, Pensioners, Non-pensioner

Retirement is a complex social mechanism involving withdrawal from the role of a provider to that of a beneficiary. There are many aspects of successful ageing, but it is generally characterized as freedom from chronic illness and disability, as well as high physical and mental functioning (Jeste, et.al., 2013). As per the 2011 census (OECD, 2019), only 12% of the workforce (or approximately 58 million people) are covered under pension systems. The welfare of the elderly in society has been challenged by the modernization of the family structure and financial stressors. In developed economies, concerns about population ageing and the related health and socioeconomic effects are comparatively higher (Rank, Hadley, & Williams, 2014), however in developing nations, like those of India, insufficient research and an absence of acknowledgment regarding the problem discourages the implementation of policies and measures required to improve the population's health and well-being.

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Well-being as a product of various determinants impacts older adults. According to the studies, resilience and life satisfaction are important mediators in regulating the well-being of the elderly population (Gerino, et.al., 2017; Reyes, et.al., 2019). Although, there is currently minimal scientific evidence on how receiving a pension affects well-being among older persons in developing nations. Thus, the present study aims to understand the relationship of resilience and life satisfaction with well-being among pensioners and non-pensioners.

### ***Well-being***

Well-being in old age has been associated with health, quality of life, and intra-individual conditions (Muhli & Svensson, 2017) such as housing and environment, etc. Older adults share an increased susceptibility to healthcare costs in developing countries, increased frequency of situations that entail personal loss, inequalities, disabilities, and the general challenges of aging (Stephens et al., 2015) that can have an important effect on their health and well-being. Bender (2012) assessed the economic and non-economic determinants of retiree well-being and concluded that retirees with a pension had higher well-being. Those who have a defined pension report much higher levels of happiness than those who have neither a pension nor a defined contribution pension, demonstrating this group's risk aversion (Case & Jensen, 2007; Galiani, Gertler, & Bando, 2016). Sherlock and Agrawal (2014), on the other hand, found no indication that pension income was linked to well-being.

### ***Resilience***

The product of successful adaptation to adversity is resilience. Even though it is associated with older adults due to their experiences with change and loss, it can be demonstrated as an outcome of recovery from traumatic events and thriving in the face of challenges. High resilience has been found to be positively correlated with various socio-economic factors such as interpersonal relationships (Blane et.al, 2011; Wells, 2010), optimal outcomes, such as reduced depression and mortality risk (Bowling & Iliffe, 2011) as well as better self-perceptions of aging successfully (Montross, et.al. 2006) increased quality of life, and improved lifestyle behaviours (Netuveli & Blane, 2008). The ability of older adults to deal with unanticipated changes regarding their economic status has a big impact on their retirement experience, thus their resilience toward the shifting economic situation continues to be challenged (Fenge et.al., 2012). This may be exacerbated by the inability to obtain adequate financial services (Mitton, 2008). The role of government-provided funds has been investigated in South Africa, and people who receive monthly pensions have been found to be more resilient (Petros, 2012). Resilience becomes a pivotal factor due to its positive correlation with well-being (McGinnis, 2018; Chai, et.al., 2018; Svence, & Majors, 2015).

### ***Life Satisfaction***

Beck (1982) stated that medical burdens, health influences, widowhood, and income have been significant causes of life and retirement dissatisfaction, particularly through a loss. In regards to the correlation between life satisfaction and retirement, pension has been proven to be a key factor of cross-country differences. Pension has a beneficial impact on elderly people's life satisfaction (Abruquah, Yin & Ding, 2019). Life satisfaction has been proven to improve significantly through the provision of better-quality pension schemes for employees, both during and prior to retirement (Li, Zhang & Liu, 2014), and a greater commitment to providing a better pension policy for the citizens (Calvo, 2009). Life satisfaction, consequently, is a predictor of psychological well-being in people (Bidzan et al. 2020; Charle & Kulandai, 2020)

However, there is a dearth of research that examines the influence and relationship of resilience and life satisfaction with well-being satisfaction, especially in the context of pensioners and non-pensioners. The present study was carried out for the purpose of evaluating the relationship of the aforementioned variables in the elderly population.

### *Hypotheses*

- H1: Pensioners will score more than Non-Pensioners on the variable of resilience.
- H2: Pensioners will score more than Non-Pensioners on the variable of life satisfaction.
- H3: Pensioners will score more than Non-Pensioners on the variable of wellbeing.
- H4: There will be a significant positive correlation between resilience and wellbeing in pensioners.
- H5: There will be a significant positive correlation between resilience and wellbeing in non-pensioners.
- H6: There will be a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and well-being in the pensioners.
- H7: There will be a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and well-being in the non-pensioners.
- H8: Resilience and life satisfaction will predict well-being in the pensioners and non-pensioners.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

The normal pension age for earnings-related pension benefits from the Employees' Pension Scheme is 58 years with a minimum of ten years of contributions (OECD, 2019), however, the majority of institutions, private and public, consider 60 years as the retirement age. Therefore, in the present study, the minimum age is that of 60 years. The data was collected through purposive sampling and a total of 139 participants aged 60 years and above, pensioners ( $N=70$ ), and non-pensioners ( $N=69$ ), participated in the study. The inclusion criteria for the sample was that they must be at least 60 years old and must have worked as salaried individuals before this age. The criteria for pensioners was that they must receive a pension from the organizations that they were previously associated with. On the other hand, the criterion for non-pensioners was that they must not receive a pension, especially from the organizations that they had worked previously before retirement.

### *Tools*

- **The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS):** It was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin in 1985. This scale evaluates an individual's global judgment regarding their life satisfaction. A seven-point Likert scale was used to indicate an individual's agreement with the statements. A higher score indicated higher life satisfaction (Lorenza-seva, et.al., 2019). Silva, et.al., (2018) results showed good internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.804$ ) and a statistically significant correlation between all items ( $p<0.05$ )
- **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS):** The scale was developed by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard in 2008. It is a 6-item measure of resilience, focusing on the ability to recover from stress and adversity. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The higher the mean BRS score the more resilient the respondent is. The BRS showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .80 - .91 (Smith, et.al., 2008)

- **Psychological well-being Questionnaire (PWBQ):** It was developed by Bhogle and Prakash in 1995. It is used to measure psychological well-being. The questionnaire contains 28 items. The test-retest reliability coefficient and internal consistency are 0.72 and 0.84 respectively (Ashok, 2017).

**Procedure**

The participants were debriefed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained by each subject. The data was collected using a set of standardized tools administered individually by establishing rapport with each participant, and any subsequent queries were clarified.

**RESULTS**

Prior to analyzing the data, the assumptions for normality of the data were tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The data was found to be not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk = <0.001), suggesting strong evidence of non-normality. Hence, we transformed the data using the two-step approach (Templeton, 2011). In the first step, we transformed the variables into a percentile rank in order to obtain uniformly distributed probabilities. In the second step, we applied the inverse-normal transformation. Also, there were no significant outliers in the data set. The data was analyzed using an independent t-test, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression.

*Table 1 Mean comparisons of pensioners and non-pensioners on resilience, life satisfaction and wellbeing*

Variables	Pensioners n= 70		Non-pensioners n=69		t	Sig.	Cohen's D
	M	SD	M	SD			
Life satisfaction	26.61	5.31	20.81	5.38	6.39	0.001	1.08
Resilience	3.46	0.55	3.04	0.51	4.74	0.001	0.79
Well being	22.85	4.53	18.82	4.32	5.36	0.001	0.91

Table 1 revealed significant mean differences for all the three variables, life satisfaction (t=6.39, p= <0.001), resilience (t=4.74, p= <0.001) and wellbeing (t= 5.36, p=<0.001) in the pensioners and non-pensioners. Pensioners reported higher levels of life satisfaction (M = 26.61, SD = 5.31), resilience (M = 3.46, SD = 0.55) and wellbeing (M = 22.85, SD = 4.53) as compared to the non-pensioners, who scored comparatively lower in three domains, life satisfaction (M = 20.81, SD = 5.38), resilience (M = 3.04, SD = 0.51) and wellbeing (M = 18.82, SD = 4.32). The value of Cohen's D came out to be 1.08 for life satisfaction, and 0.91 for well-being, indicating a large effect size. Cohen's D for resilience came out to be 0.79, indicating a medium effect size. Thus, our first three hypotheses are accepted, that is, the pensioners have higher levels of resilience, life satisfaction, and well-being compared to non-pensioners.

*Table 2 Bivariate correlations of resilience and life satisfaction with well-being*

Variables	Well-being		
	Pensioners	Non-pensioners	Total
Resilience	.12	.52**	.41**
Life satisfaction	.54**	.60**	.65**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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Table 2 represents the Pearson correlation coefficients of resilience and life satisfaction with wellbeing for pensioners and non-pensioners. The results revealed that there was a significant positive association between resilience and well-being in non-pensioners ( $r(67) = .52, p = <0.001$ ), hence hypothesis 5 is accepted. However, there was a non-significant association between resilience and well-being in pensioners ( $r(68) = .12, p = .29$ ), hence hypothesis 4 stands rejected. A significant positive association between life satisfaction and well-being was also found in pensioners ( $r(68) = .54, p = <0.001$ ) and non-pensioners ( $r(67) = .65, p = <0.001$ ). Therefore, we accept the hypotheses 6 and 7.

**Table 3 Regression coefficients of resilience and life satisfaction in relation to well-being**

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
Constant	3.60	1.87	1.92	0.056	-.091-7.30
resilience	.46	0.05	8.79	0.001	.36-.57
life satisfaction	1.91	.56	3.38	0.001	.79-3.03

Table 3 shows the impact of resilience and life satisfaction on well-being. The  $R^2$  value of .47 revealed that the predictors explained 47% of the variance in the outcome variable with  $F(2, 136) = 61.28, P = <0.001$ . The findings revealed that both the variables, life satisfaction ( $\beta = .58, p = <0.001$ ) and resilience ( $\beta = .22, p = 0.001$ ) positively and significantly predicted well-being. Therefore, hypothesis 8 is accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The advent of modernization of family structures as well as financial stressors has challenged the well-being of the elderly population in India (Whitehead & Torossian, 2021). We incorporated this observation into a sample of pensioners and non-pensioners above the age of 60 years, which suggested that resilience and life satisfaction predict well-being in pensioners and non-pensioners. The results are in line with the previously done researches suggesting that resilience (Kim & Knight, 2018; Smith & Hollinger-Smith, 2015; da Silva-Sauer, et.al., 2021) and life satisfaction (Kardas Zekeriya Eskisu & Gelibolu, 2019) are good predictors of well-being. The results also revealed significant mean differences for all the three variables in the pensioners and non-pensioners wherein pensioners reported higher levels of resilience, well-being, and life satisfaction. Existing literature exhibit similar differences between the two groups across resilience (Schwartz, et.al., 2019), well-being (Whang & Zheng, 2021; Etinzock & Kollamparambil, 2019), and life satisfaction (Calvo, 2016; Choi & Hwang, 2016; Zhang & Liu, 2007). The findings of the current study also indicate correlations between the aforementioned variables. In line with previous studies (Mguni, et.al., 2012; Nalin & Franca, 2015), it was found that there was a significant positive association between resilience and well-being in non-pensioners.

Moreover, the present study revealed a non-significant correlation between resilience and well-being in pensioners, as opposed to existing literature (Resende et.al. 2010; Nalin & Franca, 2015; Rees et.al., 2015; Chai, et.al., 2018). Although there is a significant positive impact of resilience on well-being, there exists a multitude of variables that can affect well-being in pensioners. Most old-age quality-of-life metrics may have focused on tangible indicators like income and financial security. Social comparison, personal expectations, health and mobility, and feeling safe in the community are all factors that influence well-being in old age. The current study revealed a significant positive relationship between life satisfaction and well-being in both pensioners and non-pensioners, which was found to be consistent with previous studies (Bidzan et al. 2020; Charle & Kulandai, 2020). The difference between pensioner's and non-pensioner's well-being can be explained by the fact

that receiving pension allows for better financial security, better healthcare outcomes, and reduction of overall stress (Brenes-Camacho, 2011)

### CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship of resilience and life satisfaction with well-being in pensioners and non-pensioners. The finding of the current research provides critical insights into the present situation concerning well-being in older adults and pension policies. As has been observed through the results of this study, pensioners experience higher levels of resilience and life satisfaction which in turn impacts their well-being, hence provisions must be made by the authorities to ensure that the non-pensioners also receive suitable financial assistance as opposed to the current INR 2500 subsidy provided by Delhi Old Age Assistance Scheme (Shankar, 2019) to help raise income and improve mental wellbeing. The government must also work on providing appropriate mental health services to older adults to alleviate negative emotional states in the population.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

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