

Impact of Empty Nest Syndrome on Developmental Crisis and Satisfaction with Life among Housewives: A Comparative Study of Housewives Experiencing Empty nest and those living with Children

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the link between Empty Nest Syndrome (ENS), developmental crisis, and satisfaction with life among Indian housewives aged 40-80. The study included 80 housewives, split into two groups: those staying with kids (n=40) and those not living with their kids (n=40). Participants had a moderate association between ENS and developmental crisis for housewives not living with children ($r=0.334$, $p<0.05$), and a strong connection for those living with children ($r=0.533$, $p<0.001$), showing higher ENS linked with increased developmental crisis. Relationships with life satisfaction demonstrated a significant negative connection with ENS for both groups (not living with children: $r=-0.330$, $p<0.05$; living with children: $r=-0.391$, $p<0.05$), indicating higher ENS related to reduced life satisfaction. Housewives without kids saw noticeably higher ENS levels ($p=0.008$), but no significant difference in satisfaction with life between groups ($p=0.603$). The results underscore the detrimental impact of ENS on Indian housewives' developmental challenges and decreased life satisfaction, even pre-empty nest transition. Implications emphasize the necessity for supportive interventions to alleviate negative outcomes during this significant life stage.

Keywords: *empty nest syndrome, developmental crisis, life satisfaction, Indian housewives, well-being, empty nest transition*

Empty nest syndrome is a combination of symptoms elderly or middle-aged parents may experience when their child/children leave the house for work or studies or even after marriage. This change in parental roles and relationships wide range of emotions like sadness, emptiness, loss, and unhappiness, and many times these emotions, and thoughts can lead to depression, and anxiety. Many may see the negative effects on parents of children moving out of their parent's houses but researchers have shown the positive effect of this situation. It is seen that this situation provides parents with more income for consumption and enjoy leisure time with their spouse and friends.

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In societies like ours, joint families are very common, and this transition can affect the parents a lot. This leads to changing family dynamics, emotional well-being, understanding, acceptance, and adaptation on the parents' end. The extent to which an empty nest will affect the parent varies from culture to culture like that of China and Iran. It is important to check on parents, provide support, and understanding, and help them cope with this phase.

Role Identity Theory

According to this theory, as an individual, we tend to derive our sense of self and well-being from the role we play in our society. Having multiple role identities helps in the psychological well-being of an individual. When these roles diminish an individual may encounter challenges that can contribute to psychological disturbance, hence throwing light on the importance of role identities in life. When we relate this to the situation of empty nesters this theory believes that it can lead to a decrease in their psychological well-being by affecting their psychological and physical health. This theory also talks about how this transitional period can have emotional effects on them. Empty nest syndrome and role identity theory are closely related as this theory tells us how the shift in the role of parents affects them. The theory talks about the emotional challenges and feelings of grief as parents try to adjust. They try to redefine themselves which is different from parental roles which were an important part of their lives.

The theory has also highlighted the importance of cognitive flexibility and self-regulation that can help parents better adjust to these changes and transitions. Cognitive flexibility can be defined as an individual's ability to change his/her way of thinking or cognitive patterns to changing circumstances. As an individual grows old their cognitive flexibility decreases meaning that it becomes difficult for them to adapt to the changing circumstances effectively. People who suffer from empty nest syndrome are more likely to face this challenge. Those who lack cognitive flexibility tend to give great importance to improving their adaptation abilities which leads to maladaptation. These can lead to maladaptive responses like anxiety, anger, physical symptoms, resentment, frustration, etc.

On the other hand, People who have cognitive flexibility are better at adapting to changing situations and positively reframing their thinking to adapt to these situations. They take greater importance to outer and inner experiences and look for new and challenging circumstances that help them avoid difficult situations.

Emotional self-regulation is the ability of an individual to regulate and manage emotions effectively. Unconscious and conscious social, biological, behavioral, and cognitive processes help an individual in doing so. This ability can be very effective for an individual to cope with empty nest syndrome effectively as it helps them adapt to pressure and threats. Studies have shown that those who possess this ability have positive self-esteem and emotional experiences whereas those who lack this suffer from self-doubt and loss of failure.

Stressful life events theory

This theory talks about how chief life events can have an impact on the mental health and well-being of an individual. These life events can be the death of a loved one, marriage, divorce, illness, etc can trigger stress and negative emotions. The theory proposes how negative the impact of an event is not only determined by the event but also by the perception of an individual of the event and the ability to cope with it.

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The theory also says that those who experience an increasing number of negative life events within a stretch are more likely to go through psychological distress and develop a disorder. Likewise, the theory gives importance to past events and how they can affect present events. Many factors can affect an individual's ability to effectively cope with these events, these factors are social support, coping strategies, personality traits, and access to resources. Social support from those around can provide an individual with practical support, defending the negative effects of life events. When it comes to personality traits like self-efficacy, optimism can help with coping the life events effectively. Coping strategies like looking for social support, problem-solving, or relaxation techniques can be very helpful in managing the negative effects. Financial stability, healthcare, and other needs, also tend to play an important role in helping an individual with coping with stressful life events.

Unlike empty nest syndrome, this theory suggests that the transitional period will be emotionally challenging for the parents not only because the event itself is big but it also depends on how parents perceive the event and how they cope with it. Every individual has their way of perceiving the event and coping mechanisms. Theory suggests that support of any kind can be very helpful for those suffering from empty nest syndrome as it helps in navigating this changing route effectively.

Social learning theory

Social learning theory suggests that people learn and shape their beliefs, values, and behaviors by observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. This theory is relevant to empty nest syndrome because theory sheds light on the how parents may learn from those in their environment about how to cope with challenges associated with the syndrome. For example, parents can see and learn from their friends how they coped with this phase in a healthy way like engaging in activities they like, traveling, etc.

A study was done by Kim and her colleagues on how social support can affect empty nest syndrome and depression among Korean parents. The study found that those who received social support reported low depression even when they had scored high on empty nest syndrome.

Gender Difference in empty nest syndrome

The phase of an empty nest is different for each gender. Studies have shown that women who have prioritized their children's needs over their own are more likely to feel lonely, stressed, and depressed about the loss of their close bond with their children as well as a maternal role. Widows and divorced women face greater difficulties because of lack of support. Men also get affected by this change but compensate for the emotional distress with more personal space and positive thoughts about the child becoming successful. Women who are going through menopause or any other health problem like cardiovascular disease are more susceptible to having higher empty nest syndrome.

Cultural and empty nest syndrome

Empty nest is the stage that every parent experiences but the way it is perceived varies from culture to culture. In Western societies children moving out of their houses is considered to be normal and parents are already prepared for it because they see this situation as something to be a sign of success and personal growth for their children. In Eastern

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societies, which a collectivistic society this situation is perceived disruption of familial bonds and a failure to ingrain values. Parents in these societies expect their children to live with them but these children are moving out of their house for studies or jobs and this can be challenging for them to accept.

In Western societies moving out is considered something very important for children as it helps them learn how to navigate adulthood and also how to be independent. Opposite to this in Eastern societies when a child moves out of the house parents feel lonely, depressed, and difficult to accept the shift in role identities.

Empty nest syndrome not only affects parents but can also affect society as a whole therefore it becomes important to not only take care of the elderly but also measures should be taken to help them navigate this difficult situation effectively.

Developmental crisis

The developmental crisis questionnaire was designed to measure crisis experienced by adults across different age groups. Erickson's theory of lifespan development states that change is not a continuous process and crisis is important for achieving complete integration. Levinson's theory of adult development talks about the importance of crisis for healthy growth. The theory also emphasized the need to reform life structure to enhance life satisfaction. Every age has a different developmental crisis with emphasis on different aspects. Crisis can include experiencing a transitional time, getting overwhelmed by environmental demands, asking questions and seeking meaning, changes in identity and self, and experiencing strong emotions. However, the existing measures are limited to the emotional, environmental, and cognitive crisis. Life span development theories are mostly divided into two categories that are functional and sociological and emphasis is placed on interpersonal mechanisms and personal processes.

Middle adulthood crisis

Individuals aged around 40-60 may experience emotional and psychological turmoil. This is the phase when an individual reflects and questions their life choices, goals, and values. They experience changes in their internal and external life. This transition is a time of significant changes which can make the person question. This transition can be changed in relationships, personal beliefs, career paths, etc.

A person can feel disconnected from oneself or purpose in life during this crisis phase. This state can be challenging and disorienting for the person because this can make the person feel uncertain and lack clarity about their life paths and identity.

Rebuilding life structure is the main goal of navigating the middle adulthood crisis. As individuals challenge these uncertainties they reassess and reconstruct their life's framework. This rebuilding can be done by experimenting, adjusting, and exploring new commitments to establish a new equilibrium.

Late adulthood crisis

During this phase, a person may question their lifestyle, values, sense of identity, and goals they choose in their early stages of life. However, this period can be seen as an opportunity for development and personal growth. Psychologists have proposed various theories that talk

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about the importance of accepting past and present circumstances and reforming the structure of life for greater satisfaction and authenticity.

As an individual enters the ages of 70-80 they may face different psychological difficulties whose base is different from that in middle adulthood. Some choose to work even after retirement for extra money. Others fulfill their responsibilities of taking care of their families in different ways. Erickson postulates that as we age it becomes important to maintain a balance between feeling good about life and regrets. He laid importance on feeling good about past, present, and future and accepting that we are getting old. Regrets or despair is about thinking about mistakes we have made in our lives, wishing that we could go back, and worrying about getting old.

Satisfaction with life

An individual may assess or judge their own life by taking into account their accomplishments, relationships, and overall well-being. Satisfaction with life is the extent to which an individual feels fulfilled and happy with their life. This is a subjective experience that does not only depend on external factors like wealth but also internal factors like a person's values, expectations, and goals. This means that an individual with the same circumstances may have different satisfaction with life based on their perception and understanding. High satisfaction with life means an individual is mentally and physically healthy and doing well overall whereas low life satisfaction may indicate an individual is depressed or anxious about life.

Emotional Regulation and Self-Esteem

Emotional regulation, which is a super important aspect of human psychology, has a huge impact on people's feelings of happiness and general satisfaction with life. It's a complicated process that involves keeping an eye on, figuring out, and changing how you feel in response to things happening outside and inside you. When we focus on women and what they go through, emotional regulation becomes a key thing that affects how happy they are with their lives.

The whole idea of emotional regulation is made up of different smaller parts that all play a role in how we feel. From things that make us more likely to get upset to how we show our emotions, each part is very important in shaping how we experience emotions. Along with this, emotional regulation is connected to what society expects and thinks is normal, especially when it comes to what women are supposed to do.

In the past, women were mostly seen as individuals who took care of the house and the family, putting other people's well-being before their feelings. Because of this, being able to control how you feel becomes important in understanding how to handle the ups and downs of daily life while still keeping a sense of balance and well-being.

In emotional regulation, two main strategies stand out: trying to hide how you feel and changing how you think about things. Hiding your feelings means you make an effort to not show what you're feeling, especially when you're with other people. Although hiding your emotions might help at the moment to avoid problems or arguments, however, it can make you feel worse in the long run. Studies show that keeping your emotions to yourself for a long time can lead to higher stress levels, less connection in relationships, and more feelings

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of being alone. On the other hand, changing how you see things means trying to look at what's bothering you differently to make it seem less bad. This helps an individual see tricky situations in a more positive light, which can reduce how strong your negative feelings are. Women who change how they think about things tend to feel more happy with their lives and their well-being. By looking at tough situations from a different angle and concentrating on the good things in their lives, women can boost their inner strength and feel more satisfied.

The way emotional regulation and life satisfaction fit together is also influenced by what society thinks and expects from men and women. For women who follow what's seen as typical roles for their gender, handling housework and taking care of the family can be super hard. Doing the same tasks over and over, along with not having many chances for personal happiness, can lead to feeling like everything's the same. Furthermore, women who focus on their careers or want to be independent by making money could face their own set of challenges in balancing work and family life. Managing different roles and dealing with issues at work can drain emotional energy, so women must figure out how to manage their feelings.

In recent times, people have realized how important it is to feel good about yourself in shaping how good or bad your life feels. Self-esteem, which is about how you see your worth and value, plays a big part in deciding how people see problems in life and how they deal with them. For women, self-esteem is often shaped by what society expects from them and the norms around being feminine and a mother. Traditional gender roles might make it seem like women are only valuable for how they care for others and nurture, instead of what they achieve or dream about doing. This might lead to women believing they're not worth much and aren't good at things, so they feel less good about themselves and are less happy.

Feeling good about yourself and how happy you are with life might not be the same thing. Even if someone thinks highly of themselves, their happiness isn't just about what they believe about themselves; it also depends on things like how much support they have from others, how secure they are financially, and what they've been able to achieve. Although feeling good about yourself is important in deciding how you see things, it's not the only thing that decides how satisfied you are with life.

Living Arrangements and Life Satisfaction

Living arrangements significantly impact an individual's subjective well-being and overall satisfaction with life, shaping their experiences and perceptions of happiness. Within the context of societal expectations and cultural norms, different living arrangements can exert varying influences on individuals' life satisfaction, particularly among older adults. Historically, societal norms have often dictated certain living arrangements for older adults, with living alone or with a spouse being common options. However, recent research suggests that living arrangements play a crucial role in determining older adults' life satisfaction and well-being, with particular attention to factors such as social support, companionship, and autonomy.

Older adults living alone are considered an "at-risk" group for reporting poor health outcomes and disability, with nearly 30% of Americans aged 65 years or older living alone. This finding underscores the importance of examining how different living arrangements

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impact older adults' subjective well-being and life satisfaction. Research indicates that living with a spouse or adult children can offer protective health benefits compared to living alone. For example, one study found that individuals who lived with a spouse experienced higher life satisfaction than those who lived alone or with other family members. This suggests that social support and companionship provided by living with a spouse can contribute to greater life satisfaction among older adults.

Women, who are more likely to live alone than men, may experience different outcomes depending on their living arrangements. For example, older women living alone may be at greater risk of social isolation and loneliness, which can negatively impact their life satisfaction and overall well-being. The association between living arrangements and life satisfaction may vary by gender due to differential health effects and social dynamics. Living arrangements play a critical role in shaping older adults' subjective well-being and overall satisfaction with life. Social support, companionship, and autonomy influence how different living arrangements impact individuals' life satisfaction. By examining the link between living arrangements and life satisfaction, researchers and policymakers can develop strategies to support older adults and promote their well-being in various living situations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Mahmoudpour et.al. 2023) conducted a study in Tehran to test the effectiveness of ACT for empty nest syndrome (ENS) in the elderly. The number of participants for this study was 30 who were aged 60-70 with ENS but no significant health troubles were arranged into treatment and control groups. The ACT group displayed substantial improvement in aiding rigidity and handling emotions compared to the controls. This maintains prior investigations on the effectiveness of ACT.

(Mansoor et.al. 2019) took a fresh look at Empty Nest Syndrome (ENS) among the Pakistani elderly by questioning previous existing assumptions. The results were unexpected, the findings suggested that there was no clear connection between ENS and mental wellness. The study also revealed that the reason for a child's departure, whether due to marriage or a profession, didn't significantly affect ENS. The study presents a more intricate view of ENS among Pakistani parents, showing that education plays an unexpected role.

(Piper et.al. 2021) did research in Germany and looked at how parents' well-being is impacted when their children leave home and the reason behind their departure. The research analyzed data and found that parents' life satisfaction generally decreased when their children moved out, no matter if the parents were married or not. Interestingly, the reason behind the child's departure had a major impact on the parent's well-being.

(Chattopadhyay, et.al 2022) investigated the Empty Nest Syndrome (ENS) in middle-aged parents using a phone app named LENS to detect it. The research found that half of the sample population faced ENS which is the feeling parents experience when their offspring leave for further studies or employment. The results showed that both mothers and fathers were equally impacted, challenging the notion that mothers are more prone or affected in this situation.

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(Su, et.al 2018) explored elderly empty-nesters in China beyond years of sixty. The study discovered that the concept of well-being wasn't the same for all participants. The study, with 365 sample size from Chifeng City, emphasized that people's worthiness impacted happiness greatly. Interestingly enough, feeling good about oneself (self-respect) emerged as a significant factor. Health's influence on well-being wasn't direct yet, it did lighten the negative effects of low self-worth.

(Bongyoga, et.al. 2021) investigated the effect of empty nest syndrome on families by questioning parents who experiencing it. The parents shared that they were undergoing emotions of loneliness and missing the day-to-day interactions they had with their kids before their children left home. On the other hand, the investigation discovered that every pair adjusted differently to this change. The investigation brought to light that the experience of an empty nest depends on the personal circumstances of the family.

(Mehrabi, et.al. 2020) researched Iranian happiness levels among postmenopausal females experiencing empty nest syndrome. The research revealed that those who received problem-focused guidance reported more joy than the control group. The investigation indicates that the empty nest might unfavorably influence individual well-being.

(Randhawa, et.al. 2020) This research studied the empty nest syndrome throughout Eastern and Western traditions. It uncovered the cultural contrasts in the causes behind this event. In the East, urbanization and financial elements drive children to depart, while Western societies highlight freedom at an early age. Despite these disparities both traditions face similar dilemmas i.e. physical, emotional, and social which can result in hopelessness, particularly for mothers in the East.

(Bougea, et.al. 2020) said that losing the paternal role can lead to negative emotions. Research indicates that parental adaptation in these situations is possible. The empty nest syndrome's impact varies, while women could endure added strain from maternal roles, and specific familial interactions (like stepkids, rare communication) might worsen it. Investigating the precise influence is challenging as personality, communal elements, and personal parenting style all play a part.

(Ezeh, et.al. 2021) conducted a study in Nigeria and inquired into how the elderly mainly females) in Enugu handle the empty nest situation. It appeared that gender was not a factor, maybe because duties were not gender defined in the area.

(Mbaeze, et.al. 2011) In a study conducted on those with empty nests left aged from 45-87 in Nigeria, it was discovered that social support plays an important part in adapting to this situation. Support from children who have is also an important element. Differences in sexes were not apparent in the study. The study indicated that empty nests can influence families of various sizes in various ways, probably because of contrasting tiers of social support.

(Eyetsemitan, et.al. 2002) As a child takes on duties in childhood, the fundamentals for nurturing are set up in both non-Western and Western communities. Yet, the dynamics are different. In non-Western societies, an adult child affects parents' retirement, and nurturing is viewed as a privilege. Retirement is a personal decision in Western societies. Nurturing is a dual street, with both generations providing support, irrespective of culture. The

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significance of mental exercise for cognitive wellness across life is then emphasized in the research.

(Barrett, et.al. 2016) The research contemplates how the US community's ideas of aging influence women's mental well-being. Data was collected from across the country from females ranging between the ages of 25 and 74. It's an interesting point to mention that older women responded to having better emotional well-being than younger women. However, there's hardly a contrast among middle-aged and older ladies.

(Giuntella, et.al. 2023) Research was done in England to study mid-life crisis and mental health. The Annual Population Survey (APMS) data was used for the study. Findings suggest that adults in their middle years were twice more likely to experience these difficulties than folks in youth or elderly age groups. Similarly, there were many individuals who reported that they were having sleep problems and headaches which points towards mental health issues. Such research, though, shows proof of a repetitive midlife crisis, however, restricted by the total absence of detailed participant data for drawing long-term effects conclusions.

(Necka, et.al. 2020) found that living fully and feeling lonely are massive factors that impact around 25% of elderly Americans. Diminished mental health, including depression and even taking their own life, is tied to this disconnect. To enhance the mental health of the elderly, their efforts aim to craft interventions that tackle both object isolation (being on your own) and subjective loneliness (feeling isolated).

(Kaplan, V. 2022) aimed to look at and understand the mental health of 371 housewives with respect to their amounts of dependency and self-image. Research findings suggested that there is dependency and self-image are strong predictors of housewives' mental health.

(Mittal, et.al. 2020) aimed at exploring the impact of emotional regulation on housewives' life satisfaction was conducted. The outcomes indicated a markedly positive influence of cognitive restructuring (ability to reinterpret scenarios positively) on life satisfaction and a negative influence of emotional suppression on life satisfaction among housewives. The research emphasizes the importance of emotional regulation skills for mental well-being in this group.

(Dixit, et.al. 2013) studied 60 women (30 working professionals, and 30 housewives) by exploring their self-esteem and satisfaction in life. Professional women (doctors, lawyers, etc.) had higher self-esteem, but the discrepancies weren't so significant. Although, they had more life satisfaction in comparison with housewives. The study found that this difference is due to career women's independence in fulfilling their own needs, while housewives depend on family. In general, the study observed a connection between self-esteem and life satisfaction, with working professionals expressing both in higher degrees.

(Basu, et.al. 2022) conducted a study in the US using Health and Retirement Study data and looked into the impact of living situations on the happiness of individuals aged 50 and above. Those living alone or with adult children other than a spouse revealed less satisfaction with life in comparison to those with a wife/companion. The study emphasizes the need for regulations and aid initiatives that take into account diverse living conditions to

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enhance satisfaction in aging communities. Even though males appear to be more affected by living without a spouse, generally, economic status and health also significantly impact satisfaction with life.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

- Analyze the relationship between empty nest syndrome and developmental crisis of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't.
- Analyze the relationship between empty nest syndrome and satisfaction with the life of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't.
- How much does empty nest syndrome affect the developmental crisis of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't?
- How much does empty nest syndrome affect satisfaction with the life of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't?
- What is the difference between the developmental crisis of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't?
- What is the difference between the empty nest syndrome of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't?
- What is the difference between satisfaction with the life of housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't?

Hypothesis

- There is a relationship between Empty nest syndrome and developmental crisis of housewives who do not live with their child/children.
- There is a relationship between Empty nest syndrome and developmental crisis of housewives who live with their child/children.
- There is a relationship between empty nest syndrome and satisfaction with the life of housewives who are living with their child/children.
- There is a relationship between empty nest syndrome and satisfaction with the life of housewives who are not living with their children.
- Effect of Empty Nest Syndrome on developmental crisis of housewives who are not living with their child/children.
- Effect of empty nest syndrome on developmental crisis of housewives who are living with their child/children.
- Effect of empty nest syndrome on satisfaction with life of housewives who are living with their child/children.
- Effect of empty nest syndrome and satisfaction with life of housewives who are not living with their child/children.
- There is a significant difference in the level of developmental crisis between housewives who live with their child/children and those who do not.
- There is a significant difference in the level of empty nest syndrome between housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't.
- There is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction with life between housewives who live with their child/children and those who don't.

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Participants

The sample size was kept at 80 with 40 in each group i.e. housewives living with their children and housewives not living with their children. These samples/ study populations were middle-class and upper-middle-class housewives aged from 40-80 living in Urban parts of India.

Instruments

- **Empty Nest Syndrome Scale - Indian Form (ENS-IF)**
It is a tool used for measuring the level of emptiness parents are experiencing after the departure of their child from home. The scale consisted of 50 items including positive and negative items. A 5-point Likert scale is used on a scale with a range for negative items 0-5 and for positive items 5-0.
- **Developmental Crisis Questionnaire-12**
The scale is divided into 3 factors i.e. disconnect and distress, lack of clarity and control, and transition and turning point. Each of these factors has 4 items each making the scale have 12 items in total. There are 4 negative items for whom the scoring is done reverse and the positive items are scored on 5-1 based on a 5-point Likert Scale. Responses are given based on their experience from the last 6 months.
- **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWL)**
This scale is a solid construct, tried, and reliable tool for assessing life satisfaction, an essential aspect of subjective well-being. The scale comprises five items rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagreed) to 7 (strongly agreed), SWL focuses on the assessment of cognitive-judgmental of life satisfaction.

Procedure

Cross-sectional and snowball sampling was conducted to find samples. Firstly, the sample was identified to see whether they fit the criteria or not, this was done especially for the group who were not living with their children. Finding samples who were living with their children was very easy. Hard copies of Questionnaires were distributed as well as Google forms were circulated. Valid and reliable questionnaires were used. These questionnaires were empty nest syndrome (ENS-IF), developmental crisis (DCQ-12), and satisfaction with life (SWLS). Statistical analysis techniques used for interpreting the scores were correlation, regression, and T-test. Correlation is used to see relation between the three variables, regression i.e. to study how the independent variable is empty nest syndrome affects the other two dependent variables and lastly T-test to see differences between the two groups based on the averages of these three variables.

RESULTS

The Pearson correlation values came out to be $r=0.334$ between ENS and developmental crisis with a significant level of 0.30. These values postulate that there is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This suggests that the developmental crisis is not the result of empty nest syndrome in housewives who are not living with their child/children.

Strong Positive correlation of $r = 0.533$ and a significant level of <0.001 between empty nest syndrome and developmental crisis of housewives who were living with their children. These results suggest that there is a strong relation between these two variables. The scores of this group on both variables were low that is according to the interpretation of the scores

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they were not experiencing a crisis or empty nest syndrome but it is important to see and understand that this correlation shows that there were few of the respondents who were feeling lonely as well as experiencing a crisis.

A statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -0.391$, $p < 0.05$) was like totally observed between empty nest syndrome, and satisfaction with Life. This finding suggests that higher levels of empty nest syndrome are associated with lower levels of life satisfaction among housewives living with their child/children. Although the correlation of -0.391 is statistically significant, indicating a moderate negative relationship, it implies that factors beyond empty nest syndrome may also influence the overall life satisfaction of these housewives.

The assessment found a statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -0.330$, p , that's less than 0.05) between ENS and SWL scores of housewives not living with their children. This negative correlation coefficient of -0.330 indicates a moderate inverse link between these two variables. While the correlation is moderately robust, the statistical importance suggests that the pattern of ENS numbers being tangled with lower SWL totals, and vice versa, is a steady finding and not just due to casual fluctuations in the data.

Table 1. Correlation of ENS with DCQ and SWL in both groups.

Hypothesis	Group	Correlation r	Significance
H1	Not living with child/children	ENS & DCQ $r = 0.334$	Not significant
H2	Living with child/children	ENS & DCQ $r = 0.533$	$p < 0.001$ (Significant)
H3	Living with Child/children	ENS & SWL $r = -0.391$	$p < 0.05$ (Significant)
H4	Not living with child/children	ENS & SWL $r = -0.330$	$p < 0.05$ (Significant)

The unstandardized coefficient for ENS is 0.067 , hinting that for every single-factor rise in ENS, DCQ increases by 0.067 factors. This alliance is statistically notable. The normalized coefficient (Beta = 0.344) indicates that a one-standard-deviation increase in ENS correlates with a 0.344 standard deviation increase in DCQ, preserving other stuff as constant. Consequently, the findings indicate that the ENS experienced by housewives living alone maintains a statistically significant positive connection with the DCQ. Yet, due to the comparatively low R-squared values, it hints that there are likely other factors not pondered in this study that likewise sway DCQ scores.

The unstandardized coefficient for ENS narrates to us that for every one-unit increase in Empty Nest Syndrome, DCQ also increases by 0.097 units. This alliance is also statistically vital. The standardized coefficient (beta) for ENS signifies the power of the correlation between Empty Nest Syndrome and DCQ. It's 0.533 , hinting at a reasonably strong affirmative rapport. Hence analysis indicates that Empty Nest Syndrome has a significant positive effect on the Developmental Crisis experienced by housewives living with their children.

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R-squared measures the degree to which the independent variable i.e. ENS can predict SWL. This value was found to be 15.3% which means that there is this difference in housewives' satisfaction with life living with their children could have been caused by the feeling of loneliness, unmet expectations, and transition in roles even when the child is living with them. In simpler words, as ENS climbs, SWL tends to decline. Yet, it's important to highlight that there could be additional factors not taken into account in this examination that also impact contentment with existence.

Regression analysis was used to see the extent to which empty nest syndrome affects satisfaction with the life of housewives who are not living with their children. It was found that there was a statistically significant negative association between the two variables. This means that as EMS increases the satisfaction with life will decrease. $F = 4.651$ and $p = 0.037$ proved that the relation between the two variables is not by chance but has an actual effect on each other.

Table 2 Regression analysis

Hypothesis	Predictor	Outcome	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Sig.
H5	ENS	DCQ (not living with children)	0.118	0.095	0.030
H6	ENS	DCQ (living with children)	0.284	0.265	<0.001
H7	ENS	SWL (living with children)	0.153	0.131	0.011
H8	ENS	SWL (not living with children)	0.086	0.086	0.037

Independent sample T-test was used to see whether the hypothesis was correct or not which was there would be a significant difference in the level of developmental crisis in both groups. The mean difference between the two groups on the developmental crisis was 0.3250, the p-value was 0.802 and the t-value was 0.252. The p-value was found to be greater than the significance level of 0.05 signifying that the hypothesis can not be rejected. The mean difference was not found to be much and the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference included 0 signifying that there is no difference.

It was hypothesized whether there would be a significant difference between empty nest syndrome scores of both groups. A T-test was used to find this difference which showed the mean value of those living with their children (YES) was 109.625 and the standard deviation was 34.6230. Mean - 128.575 and SD - 26.6082 were the values found for those who are not living with their children (NO). The t-value was -2.745 with a p-value of 0.008. A negative mean difference of -18.9500 was found, this means that housewives who are not living with their children are experiencing high empty nest syndrome compared to those who are living with their children. The t-value also supports this hypothesis with a significant value. The p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, supporting alternate hypothesis that there is a difference between.

This hypothesis examined the satisfaction levels of housewives, wondering about the impact of living together with kids on such satisfaction. T-test scores revealed no noteworthy

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variation in life satisfaction scores among housewives residing with their child/children (M = 25.53, SD = 5.46) and those with an empty nest (M = 24.90, SD = 5.25). The p-value (0.603) exceeded the chosen significance plane (0.05), and the 95% confidence interval for mean difference incorporated zero (-1.76 to 3.01). In other words, living with children or no children did not hugely affect their happiness levels, according to the findings.

Table 3. T-test results

Hypothesis	Groups	Variables	t-value	df	p-value	Mean Difference	95% Confidence
H9	YES vs. NO	DCQ	0.252	78	0.802	0.325	-2.244, 2.894
H10	YES vs. NO	ENS	-2.745	73.154	0.008	-18.950	-32.709, -5.190
H11	YES vs. NO	SWL	0.522	78	0.603	0.625	-1.759, 3.010

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to see how the empty nest has been affecting housewives. To study this data was collected from housewives living with their child/children and those who were living alone. The effect of an empty nest was investigated on the developmental crisis and satisfaction with life of these housewives. The study found that although there were differences between the empty nest syndrome of these two groups there were many similarities which were found between these groups and found unexpected effects of ENS on DCQ AND SWL.

As we discussed earlier empty nest syndrome is an emotional and psychological experience parents experience when their child/children leave the home or studies, job, or after marriage. These psychological and emotional challenges can be feelings of sadness, emptiness, loss of identity, purpose, stress, etc. While the developmental crisis is about questioning oneself and the choices they have made and questioning their identity which are triggered by the changes happening around an individual. Satisfaction with life is around the idea of feeling fulfilled and happy with their life.

Results showed a striking difference between the two groups in their ENS scores and DCQ scores. The correlation of ENS and DCQ for the group who were not living with their children was relatively weak compared to those who were living with their children. This suggests that although developmental crisis can be because of an empty nest it is not necessarily the only reason behind the crisis other factors might affect the housewives which is also supported by the findings in regression analysis.

The correlation of the group who were living with their children showed a statistical significance i.e. a strong correlation. This role of a caregiver and motherhood is a central part of their identity so these scores suggest that if their children/child move out of their house they may experience this shift in the role could make them feel disconnected from themselves and distressed about the transition because role identities are central to an individual as we derive our sense of self and well-being from them. So, when this role is no longer active as it used to it can affect psychological well-being. Regression analysis also

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showed that as the level of ENS increases, the likelihood of experiencing a developmental crisis will also increase.

Correlation and regression analysis between empty nest syndrome and satisfaction with life for both the groups that is the ones living with their child/children and the ones not living with them was negative and statistically significant. This implies that when housewives experience this transitional period it can be stressful for them. The role of a mother is central to these housewives so when they experience the change which is the child getting old and moving out of their houses they see it i.e. perceive it as a negative situation that triggers stress, and dissatisfaction with life.

They may feel that as a mother the child leaving home is a result of them not being a good mother. Here, the cultural perspective i.e. collectivistic also plays a role that can lead them to judge themselves harshly. While regression analysis and correlation showed a negative relation between ENS and SWL in both the groups the degrees of this relationship were different. Housewives who were living with their children showed stronger and higher correlation and regression respectively. These differences in scores indicate that housewives who are living with their children have a stronger sense of purpose and feeling of fulfillment than those who live alone. The presence of child/children can be seen as a main source behind this.

When the scores of housewives who were living with their children and those who were not living with their children in each test were compared it was found that while there was no significant difference in DCQ levels. This means that crisis can be experienced with or without living with the child/children. Crisis may be influenced by their personal experiences/circumstances and how they are navigating through it. Although there can be disconnect or distress housewives may see this stressful situation as an opportunity to do something for themselves to cope with it effectively.

Just as the stressful life events theory says it is the perception that makes the situation more difficult. They may be interacting more with their friends which not only provides them with an opportunity to share their emotions but also to learn from other empty nesters which could have been the reason behind low development in those who were not living with their children. This can also encourage them to develop alternative sources of meaning and purpose resulting in a decrease in the effect of the crisis experienced. There was no difference in satisfaction with life level between the two groups which can be because of the same reason which was behind empty nest level. The social support and the type of coping mechanism they are using that counterbalances the situation. Support from spouses particularly males who see this as a positive situation. They may see it as an opportunity for the child to become independent and successful which might also encourage housewives to change their perception as well.

There are many ways in which those who are empty nesters can effectively cope with this transactional situation. These coping mechanisms can also be useful for those who are not empty nesters to deal with difficult situations and personal difficulties effectively. As stated in role identity theory cognitive flexibility and emotional regulation skills can be very useful for reframing the perspective and adjusting better to the changing family dynamics. Effort has to be made to maintain and strengthen existing connections or even establish new ones

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to help them move away from the feeling of isolation and disconnection for aggravating the negative effects of empty nest syndrome.

Therapy and counseling can be effective in increasing awareness about empty nest syndrome but also how it can affect the overall sense of self of an individual eventually leading to dissatisfaction with life. It can also be beneficial for housewives who are still living with their kids to understand the cause of their dissatisfaction with life and resolve it. Counseling can provide these housewives with an opportunity to share and explore their emotions, and fears about their changing identities and roles in a supportive and safe environment.

CBT and acceptance and commitment therapy have been found beneficial in challenging these negative thoughts. Group therapy has also been found beneficial opportunity to share their story with those experiencing the same thing, receiving validation and support from others. This can also help them learn different coping mechanisms and this can lighten the feeling of isolation and endorse a sense of meaning and purpose. It is also important to reconstruct the narrative that says housewives' primary role is caregiving and domestic responsibilities which have led them to think that this is their identity and purpose, and beyond this, they don't have an identity that can be a contributing factor behind development crisis and low satisfaction with life.

Limitations

Although the findings of the study were striking the size of the sample being small may affect the generalization of these findings. Study findings of middle-class and upper-middle housewives can't be generalized to lower economic background housewives. The level of education, and available financial resources can impact how a housewife navigates through the transactional period. The range of age in the study is also very broad i.e. the way of thinking may be different which can eventually affect how a housewife perceives the situation and cope with it. The study was done in the urban population of India which can't be generalized to housewives living in semi-urban and rural areas. The expectations, norms, and values may be different in different cultures which can affect how they perceive the situation and cope with it which makes it difficult to generalize it in other cultures. The cross-sectional study design may have failed to explain the causal relationship and how variables might change and interact with other Variables. A longitudinal study may have explained this causal relationship between ENS, developmental crisis, and satisfaction with life. The responses were self-reported which made the reach prone to biases. The respondents may have given socially desirable answers, especially the questions that were about memories or questioned the morally right and wrong concepts. This could have distorted the data leading to measurement error.

CONCLUSION

A comparative study was done between two groups of housewives who are living with their children and those who are not living with their children. It was done to see how empty nest syndrome affects the developmental Crisis and satisfaction with life. While the ones living alone scored high on ENS and those who live with their children scored low. The comparison of ENS with satisfaction with life showed that there is a negative association between the two. The relationship between the empty nest syndrome scale. and developmental Crisis questionnaire showed a strong positive relationship in housewives who were living with their child/children stating that they are likely to experience developmental

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crisis. For the group living alone, it was seen that the developmental crisis might not be solely because of ENS there might be other factors that are affecting these housewives leading to the crisis. It is important to know the importance of social support which can help these housewives to cope with empty nest syndrome and other factors that can affect their sense of self and identity. Counseling services and other coping strategies can help them navigate the transitional period efficiently leading them to find meaning and purpose in life again.

In summary, the findings of the study emphasize the importance of addressing the challenges housewives experience during the transitional period as well as highlighting the techniques and strategies that can help them and empower them.

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Conflict of Interest

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