

Research Paper

Strength and Stability: The Impact of Resilience on Psychological Well-Being in Elderly People

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ABSTRACT

Resilience is the process and result of successfully adjusting to harsh or challenging life situations, particularly through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility. Psychological well-being refers to a person's overall mental and emotional state, which reflects their psychological health and life satisfaction. Well-being and Resilience play a crucial role in preventing the onset of mental health issues in elderly people and reducing the severity of those mental health issues that currently exist. The present paper focuses mainly on resilience and Psychological well-being in elderly persons because it is important for maintaining a high quality of life in old age. The adaptation to changes, maintaining a positive outlook, and experiencing a fulfilling life are the key determinants of wellbeing in elderly people. Within the main topic, the researchers have discussed components of resilience, elements of well-being and significance of Psychological well-being in old age.

Keywords: Resilience, Psychological well-being, Elderly, Life satisfactions

Old age is often accompanied by a myriad of challenges, including physical decline, social isolation, and the loss of loved ones. These stressors can significantly impact the psychological well-being of elderly individuals, increasing their vulnerability to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Amidst these challenges, resilience emerges as a critical factor in determining the quality of life for older adults. Psychological resilience is an adjustment in a person's psychological characteristics and experiences that enables him/her to maintain or regain a healthy mental state through crises or chaos without suffering long-term negative effects. The American Psychological Association (2014) defines resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress. According to Southwick et al. (2014), a person's level of resilience is influenced by several things. Self-control, self-esteem, and a positive view of life are examples of internal forces. External influences include social support networks, such as ties with one's family, friends, and neighborhood, as well as the availability of opportunities and resources. Bonanno (2004) in a study of psychological resilience has demonstrated that it is essential for fostering mental health and

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well-being. People who are resilient are more capable of handling life's trials, keeping an optimistic attitude, and rebounding from setbacks.

Resilience is one's ability to “bounce back” (Smith et al., 2008). Resilience is a relatively recent psychological concept in geriatrics that helps older people enhance their capacity for constructive adaptation in the face of difficulty. According to Resnick et al. (2011), resilience is crucial for overcoming adversity and achieving greater physical and mental health in later life. Living with chronic diseases can have a number of negative repercussions, including decreased physical function, decreased pain tolerance, a potential reduction in life expectancy, and psychological risks like feeling isolated, losing confidence, and changing social roles. It is essential to have a clear understanding of what resilience is because, in addition to the difficulties caused by chronic conditions, the elderly frequently experience mental strain, like losing their spouses and loved ones.

According to Williams (2020), there are three fundamental ways that individuals may respond in a trying situation-

- Respond with anger or aggression.
- Become overwhelmed and shut down.
- Feel the emotion about the situation and appropriately handle the emotion.

Only the third technique promotes wellbeing. Resilient people use this technique because they are agitated by the disruptive conditions and alter their usual behavior to deal with it. Both the first and second strategies encourage people to take on the victim role by blaming others and rejecting all coping mechanisms, even after the crisis has passed. Instead of responding to circumstances, some people would prefer to react automatically. People who adapt to the bad circumstances have a tendency to cope, bounce back, and stop the crisis.

Components of Resilience

- **Self-Awareness:** The core component of resilience and personal development is self-awareness. Understanding one's own feelings, ideas, behaviors, strengths, flaws, and values is necessary.
- **Self-care:** It is the conscious action of preserving and enhancing one's physical, emotional, and mental health. It involves routines like getting adequate sleep, eating a balanced diet, exercising frequently, managing stress, setting boundaries, and taking part in enjoyable and relaxing activities.
- **Resourceful ideas:** A crucial component of resilience is the ability to maintain resourceful or optimistic ideas. It entails identifying and questioning unfavorable or unreasonable thought habits as well as substituting them with more positive and flexible ways of thinking.
- **Keeping a Bigger Perspective:** Keeping a bigger perspective entails considering obstacles and failures in the context of one's complete life path. It entails realizing that difficulties are a natural part of life and that they might present chances for learning and growth. People may overcome challenges with greater resilience and keep a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

Health and psychological well-being are intimately related, and as people grow in age, the relationship may become even more significant with the rise in chronic illnesses. The topic of maintaining wellbeing in older age is becoming more and more important as a result of rise in life expectancy and increasing control over the treatments of life-threatening diseases.

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Research on elderly individuals indicates that assessments of their quality of life are influenced by their health, but the common observation that the average population's self-reported life evaluation rises with age raises the possibility that psychological well-being is influenced by a variety of factors other than health. These include things like financial circumstances, interpersonal and familial relationships, social roles and activities, and factors that change for people with their growing age (Andrew, Angus, Arthur, & Stone, 2015).

Perma Theory of Well-Being

Dr. Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, in his book *Flourish* (2011), divides "Well-being" in following five categories.

1. **Positive emotions:** These include a variety of emotions other than just joy and happiness. These feelings include excitement, satisfaction, pride, and surprise, among others.
2. **Engagement:** A person's level of engagement is subjectively judged on basis of whether they are passionate about and focused on the activity at hand, losing any sense of self-awareness.
3. **Relationships:** Relationships that are close, meaningful, and intimate are intrinsically tied to happiness and psychological wellness.
4. **Meaning:** Finding meaning in life involves having a sense of purpose or a belief that life has value and contributes to a greater good. It often relates to values, ethics, and personal goals.
5. **Achievement:** Accomplishment pertains to setting and achieving goals, whether they are big or small. Achieving a sense of accomplishment is associated with higher self-esteem and a sense of mastery.

SIX-FACTOR MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:

Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being is based on the idea that well-being is a multidimensional concept. She proposed that psychological well-being consists of six core dimensions or factors described below.

- **Self-Acceptance:** Having a positive outlook on oneself, accepting one's own strengths and limitations, and being content with one's past life experiences are all aspects of this dimension.
- **Positive Relations with Others:** It includes the capacity to give and receive love and affection as well as the ability to have fulfilling and helpful interactions with others.
- **Autonomy:** A sense of independence, self-determination, and the capacity to make decisions that reflect one's own values and interests are all related to one's sense of autonomy.
- **Environmental Mastery:** This dimension deals with a person's sense of competence and capability in managing their surroundings, including their capacity to face and conquer problems in life.
- **Purpose in Life:** Having a sense of purpose and meaning in life frequently entails having distinct goals, a sense of direction, and the conviction that one's life is meaningful.
- **Personal growth:** It is the ongoing development of one's potential, self-improvement, and a sense of becoming the best version of oneself.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following studies collectively explore the complex relationship between psychological well-being, resilience, and quality of life among older adults. Research has shown that resilience plays a crucial role in how the elderly cope with life's challenges, including stress, loss, and health deterioration.

Sharaf et al. (2019) conducted a study to investigate how psychological wellness helps older persons develop resilience. A sample of 150 elderly people who lived in the community was gathered from Alexandria, Egypt's elder groups. The results of this study revealed that resilience and psychological well-being had a high positive correlation. Five aspects of psychological wellness were shown to be highly correlated with resilience, and psychological well-being and resilience continued to be significantly correlated.

Couto et al. (2011) tried to investigate which stressful life situations older people encounter most frequently as well as which ones are the most distressing. 111 individuals who were living freely in the community and had ages ranging from 56 to 85 were included in the study. Divorce or separation from spouse, institutionalization of parents, and death of a child, spouse, or parent were the most distressing situations. The results found resilience to have main influence, with higher well-being being correlated with stronger resilience.

Lopez et al. (2020) examined relationship between psychological well-being (personal development and life purpose) and age. Spanish residents of the community who were 60–70 years old and 71–80 years old (N = 878) filled out a survey on their socio-demographic traits, health, COVID-19 stress levels, appraisal, and personal resources. There was no indication that the elderly had worse psychological health than the young. The findings also imply that the impact of COVID-19, aside from the death of a loved one, might not be as important to the wellbeing of older persons as their assessments and personal resources for dealing with COVID-related issues.

Gerino et al. (2017) examined the relationship between psychological characteristics and older people's reported quality of life (QoL), including loneliness, resilience, and mental states related to symptoms of anxiety and depression. In order to clarify the relationship between loneliness and psychophysical quality of life, data from 290 senior Italian individuals were used to investigate the mediation effects of resilience and mental health. These findings demonstrate that there are two ways in which loneliness affects mental and physical quality of life, with resilience and mental health factors acting as mediators.

Kordan et al. (2019) conducted a study to ascertain how cancer patients' social capital and psychological well-being related to resilience. 163 cancer patients who were sent to the Touba Specialized Clinic in Sari were the subjects of this descriptive correlational study. The Demographics Questionnaire, Riff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (2002), Onyx-Bullen's Social Capital Questionnaire (2000), and Connor-Davidson's Resilience Scale (2003) were among the instruments used to collect the data. The SPSS 20 was used, along with descriptive and inferential statistical techniques for data analysis. The results of the study demonstrated a strong and positive relationship between resilience and social capital as well as psychological well-being.

Mohseni et al. (2019) examined the relationship between meaning in life and resilience in older adults using the multistage sample approach in Kerman in 2018. 300 older persons (over 60 years of age) were included in this cross-sectional study. IBM SPSS V21 was used

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to analyze the data using Pearson correlation, chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, and linear regression. Gender ($p = .021$), educational attainment ($p = .032$), and self-reported health state ($p = .003$) all significantly impacted resilience status. Resilience and purpose in life were significantly positively correlated ($r = .38$, $p = .012$). 31% of the variance in resilience was explained by independent variables (gender, self-reported health condition, and purpose in life) ($p \leq .001$).

Nalin et al. (2015) investigated the significance of resilience, financial contentment, retirement duration, and preparation for the well-being of 270 individuals in retirement. The sample mean age ($SD = 5.7$) was 65 years, with men making up the majority (64%). Ten Rio de Janeiro-based public and commercial organizations' retired members made up the participants. The studies used hierarchical regression and factor analysis. The results imply a strong correlation between retirement well-being, resilience and socioeconomic satisfaction.

Nighat et al. (2024) conducted a study to assess how institutionalization affected older adults' levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem. There were 120 people in the sample, 60 of whom were senior people living in institutions and the other 60 of whom were elderly people living at home. Using SPSS, version 23, descriptive statistics and linear regression were used for statistical analysis. According to the results of a linear regression analysis, among older people living in institutions, self-esteem is a significant predictor of life satisfaction ($R^2 = .78$, $F = 417.02$, $p < .01$).

In summary, the body of research underscores the vital connection between resilience, psychological well-being, and the overall quality of life in older adults. Studies such as those by Couto et al. (2011) and Nalin et al. (2015) demonstrate that resilience not only helps individuals navigate stressful situations but also enhances their emotional and financial satisfaction in later life. Meanwhile, findings from Mohseni et al. (2019) and Nighat et al. (2024) indicate that factors like purpose in life, self-esteem, and institutional living significantly influence resilience and life satisfaction.

Significance of Psychological Well-Being in Old Age

Human ageing is a physiological and dynamic process that goes on continuously with time. Stieglitz (1954) claims that ageing is a part of living, which starts at conception and concludes with death. Ageing is a normal stage of life that everyone experiences (Sethi et al. 1980). The most important stage of a person's life is his/her old age. Physical and mental capacity declines at this time, and attitudes towards life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing are impacted. It is the stage of life when people experience a variety of common issues, such as physical helplessness, financial uncertainty, loneliness, increased free time, a loss of social support, and health complaints, which have a direct impact on mental health and psychological well-being. Psychological wellness is crucial in later stage of human development. Personal, cognitive, communicative, and other psychological and non-psychological elements all play a role in the formation of a person's well-being.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study emphasize the importance of psychological resilience as a pivotal factor in maintaining and enhancing the psychological well-being of older adults. As people age, they are faced with numerous stressors, including physical decline, social isolation, and the loss of loved ones. These challenges can have profound effects on mental health, leading to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Internal factors such as self-esteem, self-control, and a positive outlook are essential in helping older adults

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manage the psychological stressors they encounter. External factors, including social support networks, family ties, and community involvement, are equally crucial. Studies like those by Bonanno (2004) and Southwick et al. (2014) support this notion, highlighting that individuals with strong social support are better equipped to handle adversity. The literature reviewed in this study consistently points to the positive relationship between resilience and psychological well-being. For instance, Sharaf et al. (2019) found a strong correlation between resilience and psychological health among older adults, while De Paula Couto et al. (2011) highlighted that higher levels of resilience were associated with better mental health outcomes, even in the face of distressing life events. These findings suggest that fostering resilience is not only crucial for managing the psychological challenges of aging but also for improving overall mental health and quality of life. Another key finding of this study is the role of **social and community support** in enhancing resilience. Older adults who remain integrated into their communities, maintain strong family ties, and have access to social resources are more likely to exhibit resilience. This suggests that programs aimed at reducing social isolation and promoting social engagement could have a significant impact on the well-being of older adults.

CONCLUSION

In this research paper, researchers have explored the vital concepts of resilience and psychological well-being in elderly people, highlighting their significance for maintaining a high quality of life in old age. Resilience is the ability to adapt positively to adversity and challenges, and it plays a crucial role in promoting mental health and well-being in later life. It empowers individuals to cope with chronic diseases, the loss of loved ones, and the various difficulties that come with aging, ultimately helping them maintain a positive outlook and adapt to life changes. Psychological well-being, on the other hand, is a dynamic state that reflects an individual's overall mental and emotional health. Researchers have discussed various models that describe its multifaceted nature, such as the Seligman's PERMA theory of well-being and Ryff's six-factor model. In conclusion, this research paper underlines the importance of resilience and psychological well-being in the lives of elderly people. By understanding and promoting these aspects, we can enhance the quality of life for older adults, help them navigate the challenges of aging, and ultimately foster their mental health and well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

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