

Resilience, Contentment, and Purpose in Life as Psychological Predictors of Healthy Aging among Older Adults

Ms. Sona Mishra^{1*}, Dr. Priyanka Agarwal²

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the psychological foundations of healthy aging, focusing on the interrelationship among psychological resilience, purpose in life, and contentment in older adults. A total of 200 participants aged 60 years and above were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS; Smith et al., 2008), the Life Engagement Test (LET; Scheier et al., 2006), and the Contentment with Life Assessment Scale (CLAS; Lavalley et al., 2007). Descriptive statistics revealed moderate to high mean scores for resilience ($M = 20.95$, $SD = 5.27$), purpose in life ($M = 22.22$, $SD = 3.98$), and contentment ($M = 24.98$, $SD = 6.42$). Pearson's correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships among the three variables—contentment with resilience ($r = .531$, $p < .01$) and purpose in life ($r = .586$, $p < .01$). Multiple regression analysis showed that psychological resilience ($\beta = .312$, $p < .001$) and purpose in life ($\beta = .425$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted contentment, explaining 41.5% of the variance ($R^2 = .415$). These findings suggest that higher levels of resilience and purpose contribute to greater life contentment, thereby promoting healthy psychological aging. The study highlights the need to strengthen resilience and purposeful engagement among older adults to enhance overall well-being.

Keywords: *Psychological Resilience, Contentment, Purpose in Life, Old Age, Healthy Aging*

Healthy aging is understood as a broad and multidimensional process shaped by psychological strengths that help maintain well-being in later adulthood. According to Ryff and Singer (2018), factors such as resilience, contentment, and purpose in life play a central role in supporting emotional balance and overall functioning in older adults. Jeste et al. (2013) further emphasize that these psychological capacities are essential for adapting to age-related changes. Wagnild and Young (2017) describe resilience as a key resource that enables individuals to cope effectively with physical, emotional, and social challenges in old age. Diener and Chan (2011) explain that contentment reflects a sustained level of emotional satisfaction that contributes to overall well-being. Hill and Turiano (2014) report that having a sense of purpose is associated with longer life expectancy and healthier lifestyle patterns. Building on this evidence, the present study explores how psychological resilience, contentment, and purpose in life are interrelated among older adults.

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, IIS Deemed to be University

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, IIS Deemed to be University

*Corresponding Author

Received: March 09, 2026; Revision Received: May 13, 2026; Accepted: May 17, 2026

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Contentment

Baltes & Smith has rightly said that “Aging is an inevitable and natural process that brings with it a wide spectrum of experiences, challenges, and transformations.” As individuals advance in age, they often face shifts in physical abilities, social roles, financial resources, and personal relationships. Despite these changes, many older adults report high levels of life satisfaction and emotional stability. This psychological state, commonly referred to as contentment, plays a critical role in the overall well-being of elderly individuals.

In 2014 Ryff explained that Contentment is not merely the absence of distress or dissatisfaction but a deeper sense of acceptance, inner peace, and fulfillment derived from life experiences, relationships, and personal values.

According to Joshanloo (2014) Contentment is generally understood as a mental state characterized by satisfaction and acceptance, in which a person experiences a sense of peace and fulfillment with their present life situation. Importance of Studying Contentment in Older Adults.

Psychological Resilience

With increasing age, individuals often experience physical decline, retirement, bereavement, and social isolation. However, these changes do not uniformly lead to psychological deterioration. Many older adults demonstrate an impressive ability to cope with adversity, maintain emotional stability, and find meaning in life despite increasing challenges. This phenomenon, broadly referred to as psychological resilience, reflects a vital capacity for adaptation and growth in later life.

According to Masten, Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker (2011) Psychological resilience can be described as the capacity of an individual to maintain or regain emotional well-being in the face of challenging, stressful, or traumatic life experiences.

Purpose in Life

While increased longevity is a remarkable achievement of modern healthcare and technological advancements, it brings with it a set of challenges that significantly affect the quality of life in older adulthood. One such critical aspect is the sense of "Purpose in Life," which is a psychological construct referring to the extent to which individuals perceive their lives as having meaning, direction, and goals. In the context of older adults, the presence or absence of life purpose can influence mental and physical health outcomes, emotional well-being, and overall life satisfaction.

Purpose in life refers to the sense of direction, meaning, and intentionality that individuals perceive in their lives. It is closely linked to one's beliefs about the significance of life's experiences, as well as the ability to set and pursue meaningful goals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Contentment reflects a state of satisfaction, inner peace, and acceptance of one's life circumstances, serving as an essential indicator of happiness and quality of life among older adults. Complementing this, psychological resilience—the capacity to adapt positively and recover from life's adversities—acts as a protective factor that promotes mental stability, optimism, and effective coping in the face of age-related challenges. Equally important, a sense of purpose in life provides meaning, direction, and motivation, encouraging

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individuals to remain engaged, goal-oriented, and emotionally balanced. Together, these variables form an interrelated framework of psychological strength, wherein resilience helps individuals withstand difficulties, purpose offers direction and fulfillment, and contentment emerges as the ultimate expression of psychological harmony and satisfaction in older adulthood.

Contentment is a vital component of psychological well-being, reflecting satisfaction and peace with one's life circumstances. Studies have shown that contentment among older adults is influenced by health, social support, and emotional stability. Rajagopal (2025) found that retirees reported higher life satisfaction than young adults, while Sharif, Sadaf, and Sohail (2023) highlighted that fulfillment of basic needs, family bonds, and financial security enhance happiness. Similarly, Pandya (2021) reported that meditation practices increased well-being and contentment among older adults. Eckland et al. (2021) emphasized that recognizing positive emotions such as contentment helps prevent depression, and Halaweh et al. (2018) associated aging well with happiness, independence, and social engagement. Esliker (2015) found that higher social support increased life satisfaction, and Berenbaum and Howard (2013) noted that older adults experienced greater joy and contentment than younger ones.

Psychological resilience, the ability to adapt and recover from stress, has been shown to play a crucial role in promoting well-being among older adults. Tan, Li, and Zhang (2025) found that resilience reduces the negative effects of self-neglect on frailty, while Hou et al. (2025) and Shi et al. (2025) observed that resilience supports healthy ageing and social participation. Jiang et al. (2024) and Mohammadi, Kazemi, and Yousefi (2024) reported that resilience enhances cognitive functioning and psychological well-being, often serving as a mediator between religiosity, social activity, and happiness. Zhang et al. (2024) and Liao, Zhou, and He (2022) found that resilience links social activity and physical engagement to greater life satisfaction. Studies by Sardella et al. (2022) and Çetingök and Irmak (2022) highlighted that resilience lowers stress, anxiety, and adaptation difficulties in aging. Taylor and Carr (2021) confirmed resilience as the strongest predictor of later-life health, while Zheng, Huang, and Fu (2020) and Yang and Wen (2015) showed that it enhances life satisfaction and protects against disability.

A sense of purpose in life provides direction and meaning, contributing significantly to psychological health. Lewis et al. (2025) and Boyle et al. (2022) found that purpose protects against cognitive decline and improves longevity. Similarly, Sutin et al. (2025) and Gudmundsdottir et al. (2024) revealed that purpose is linked to physical activity, memory, and life satisfaction. Pak and Bae (2015) noted that purpose reduces depression and loneliness, while Bakhshandeh, Bavarsad, and Stephens (2024) showed that strong social networks foster a sense of purpose.

Overall, the reviewed studies suggest that psychological resilience and purpose in life are key factors enhancing contentment and well-being among older adults. Resilience enables individuals to cope with challenges, while purpose provides a sense of direction and meaning, together fostering emotional stability and satisfaction in later life.

Objectives

1. To investigate the relationship among Psychological Resilience, Purpose in Life, and Contentment in older adults.

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2. To determine the overall contribution of Psychological Resilience and Purpose in Life in Contentment in older adults.

Hypotheses

- **H₁:** There is a Positive Relationship among Psychological Resilience and Purpose in Life in enhancing Contentment in older adults.
- **H₂:** Psychological Resilience and Purpose in Life predicts Contentment in older adults.

METHOD

Participants

The study contains mixed sample of 200 older adults between 60-74 years of age (As per WHO). Sample was taken from Rajasthan. Purposive Sampling technique is used.

Tools

1. Psychological Resilience

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) is a 6-item self-report tool developed by Smith et al. (2008) to measure an individual's ability to recover or "bounce back" from adverse situation.

Respondents rate items on a 5-point Likert scale with three items reverse-scored.

2. Purpose in Life

The Life Engagement Test (LET) is a psychological scale developed by Scheier et al. (2006) to measure purpose in life, specifically the degree to which a person engages in activities that are personally meaningful.

3. Contentment

The Contentment with Life Assessment Scale (CLAS) was developed by Lavalley, Hatch, Michalos, and McKinley (2007) to measure an individual's life satisfaction based on daily lived experiences, offering a more behaviorally grounded alternative to traditional life satisfaction scales. The CLAS consists of 5 items, rated on a 7-point Likert scale.

Procedure

It would start with the sample collection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, then an informed consent would be taken from the participants. Further, with the help of the study tools namely, Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), Life Engagement Test (LET) and Contentment with Life Assessment Scale (CLAS) would be administered on the random population. Once the questionnaire is filled by the participants then the scoring would be done accordingly.

Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS Version 27 is used to calculate descriptive statistics, correlation and regression.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the study variables—Contentment, Psychological Resilience, and Purpose in Life—are presented in Table 1. The mean, standard deviation, and variance values indicate the central tendency and variability of the scores obtained from the participants.

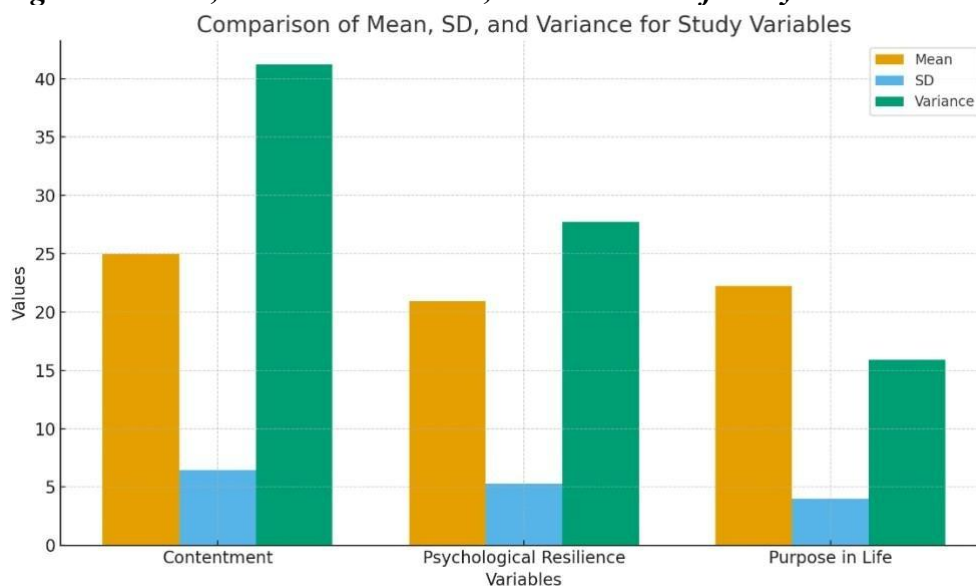
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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Variance
Contentment	24.98	6.420	41.220
Psychological Resilience	20.95	5.267	27.736
Purpose in Life	22.22	3.986	15.888

The results indicate that older adults in the sample reported a moderate level of contentment ($M = 24.98$, $SD = 6.42$), psychological resilience ($M = 20.95$, $SD = 5.27$), and purpose in life ($M = 22.22$, $SD = 3.99$). Among the three variables, contentment showed the highest variability (Variance = 41.22), suggesting greater individual differences in satisfaction levels among participants. In contrast, purpose in life exhibited the least variability (Variance = 15.89), more consistency in participants' sense of purpose.

Figure 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance of Study Variables



The inter-correlations among Contentment, Psychological Resilience, and Purpose in Life were examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variables	Contentment	Psychological Resilience	Purpose in Life
Contentment	1	.531**	.586**
Psychological Resilience	.531**	1	.515**
Purpose in Life	.586**	.515**	1

$N = 200$. $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

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

The results reveal that contentment has a significant positive correlation with both psychological resilience ($r = .531$, $p < .01$) and purpose in life ($r = .586$, $p < .01$). Similarly, psychological resilience is positively correlated with purpose in life ($r = .515$, $p < .01$).

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A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which psychological resilience and purpose in life predict contentment among older adults. The model summary is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.644 ^a	.415	.409	4.935

a. Predictors: (Constant), Purpose in Life, Psychological Resilience

The results indicate that psychological resilience and purpose in life together account for 41.5% of the variance in contentment ($R^2 = .415$). Purpose in Life uniquely accounted for approximately 27% of the variance, while Psychological Resilience accounted for around 15%, indicating that both predictors significantly contribute to the outcome, with Purpose in Life having the stronger influence.

The adjusted R^2 value (.409) suggests that after adjusting for the number of predictors, approximately 40.9% of the variance in contentment can be explained by the combined influence of psychological resilience and purpose in life.

The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .644$) indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between the predictor variables (psychological resilience and purpose in life) and the outcome variable (contentment). The standard error of estimate (4.935) shows a moderate level of prediction error, suggesting that the model fits the data reasonably well.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the regression model significantly predicts contentment from psychological resilience and purpose in life. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3405.125	2	1702.563	69.909	.000 ^b
Residual	4797.750	197	24.354		
Total	8202.875	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Contentment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Purpose in Life, Psychological Resilience

The ANOVA results reveal that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 197) = 69.909$, $p < .001$. This indicates that the combined effect of psychological resilience and purpose in life significantly predicts contentment among older adults.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the contribution of psychological resilience and purpose in life in predicting contentment among older adults. The coefficients of the regression model are presented in Table 5.

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Table 5: Coefficients of Regression Model

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	P
Constant	1.782	2.032	-	0.877	.382
Psychological Resilience	0.380	0.077	.312	4.909	.000
Purpose in Life	0.685	0.102	.425	6.694	.000

B = unstandardized coefficients; SE B = standard error; β = standardized coefficients.

a. Dependent Variable: Contentment

The regression results indicate that both psychological resilience ($\beta = 0.312$, $t = 4.909$, $p < .001$) and purpose in life ($\beta = 0.425$, $t = 6.694$, $p < .001$) significantly predict contentment. Purpose in Life uniquely accounted for approximately 27% of the variance, while Psychological Resilience accounted for around 15%. Among the two predictors, purpose in life emerged as a stronger predictor of contentment than psychological resilience, as indicated by its higher standardized beta value.

The constant ($B = 1.782$, $p = .382$) was not statistically significant, suggesting that when both predictors are zero, the level of contentment would not differ significantly from zero.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The present study aimed to explore the *psychological foundations of healthy aging* by examining the interrelationships among psychological resilience, purpose in life, and contentment in older adults. The findings of this research provide strong empirical support for the positive association between these psychological constructs and their collective role in promoting wellbeing in later life.

Descriptive statistics indicated moderate and relatively balanced mean scores across all variables, with contentment ($M = 24.98$, $SD = 6.42$), psychological resilience ($M = 20.95$, $SD = 5.26$), and purpose in life ($M = 22.22$, $SD = 3.98$). These findings reflect that the participants exhibited fairly consistent levels of emotional well-being, adaptability, and meaning. The comparable standard deviations also suggest minimal variability among the respondents, indicating homogeneity in their psychological strengths.

Older adults in the sample demonstrated stable and interconnected psychological functioning. The results are consistent with prior research emphasizing that emotional stability, life satisfaction, and happiness remain relatively steady in later adulthood. The current study also finds support in Rajagopal (2025), who reported substantial differences in contentment and happiness between older and younger adults, implying that age and life experiences may deepen one's appreciation for life, fostering higher contentment levels. Sharif, Sadaf, and Sohail (2023) emphasized the importance of health, family support, and economic security in fostering contentment among older populations. Similarly, Berenbaum et al. (2013) observed that older adults tend to experience higher levels of contentment and cheerfulness compared to younger individuals, suggesting a developmental strengthening of emotional well-being with age.

Correlation analysis revealed significant and positive associations among all variables: resilience and contentment ($r = .531$, $p < .01$), purpose in life and contentment ($r = .586$, $p < .01$), and resilience and purpose in life ($r = .515$, $p < .01$). These findings indicate that greater resilience and a stronger sense of life purpose are closely linked to higher contentment among older adults, thereby confirming H_1 .

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These results align with prior studies highlighting the interrelated nature of resilience, meaning, and well-being. Tan et al. (2025) and Hou et al. (2025) demonstrated that psychological resilience mitigates the negative effects of self-neglect and frailty among older populations. Likewise, Shi et al. (2025) reported that resilience contributes to social engagement and healthy aging, while Zheng et al. (2025) found that it mediates the relationship between social isolation and well-being through increased physical activity.

Furthermore, the relationship between purpose in life and contentment is supported by a growing body of evidence. Sutin et al. (2025) found that purpose in life is positively related to physical activity, episodic memory, and general vitality in older adults. Kashdan et al. (2024) and Boyle et al. (2022) both identified purpose as a key predictor of cognitive health, longevity, and reduced risk of dementia. These studies collectively emphasize that having a sense of meaning and direction in life not only enriches mental health but also fosters a sense of peace and satisfaction.

Regression analysis revealed that both psychological resilience ($\beta = .312, p < .001$) and purpose in life ($\beta = .425, p < .001$) significantly predicted contentment, explaining 41.5% of the variance ($R^2 = .415, F(2,197) = 69.909, p < .001$). These findings confirm H₂, suggesting that resilience and purpose jointly serve as strong predictors of contentment among older adults.

This outcome is consistent with Pandya (2021), who reported that mindfulness and meditation interventions enhance contentment, well-being, and resilience in retired individuals. Similarly, Mohammadi et al. (2024) demonstrated that resilience mediates the relationship between religiosity and well-being, further establishing resilience as a core psychological strength in aging populations.

The predictive power of purpose in life is corroborated by several studies. Sutin et al. (2025) observed that purposeful individuals display healthier physical activity patterns, while Kashdan et al. (2024) showed that purpose improves cognitive performance and emotional regulation. Moreover, Boyle et al. (2022) concluded that purpose in life delays dementia onset and reduces mortality risk. These findings collectively reinforce the notion that a clear life purpose enhances psychological well-being and life satisfaction, serving as a buffer against the emotional challenges of aging.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the present study confirmed all two hypotheses, establishing that psychological resilience and purpose in life are significant predictors and correlates of contentment in older adults. The findings align with international research emphasizing that mental strength, adaptability, and meaning are crucial for healthy aging. Strengthening these psychological resources can help older adults navigate life's challenges, maintain happiness, and achieve a sense of peace and satisfaction in later years.

Implication

The positive link between psychological resilience, purpose in life and contentment highlights the value of emotional adaptability and coping strength in maintaining life satisfaction during later years. Interventions such as mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral training, group support, and social participation can help strengthen these traits. Programs promoting mindfulness, meditation, volunteerism, and social engagement may serve as

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effective strategies for enhancing both purpose and psychological resilience. By encouraging older adults to pursue meaningful activities and maintain a sense of direction, policymakers and practitioners can help improve their overall quality of life and contentment. At the policy level, the results emphasize the need for age-friendly programs that integrate mental health promotion with physical care. Incorporating resilience-building and meaning-focused approaches into counseling and community initiatives can improve the overall quality of life for the aging population.

Limitation and Future Directions

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has certain limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design restricts conclusions about the causal direction of relationships among resilience, purpose in life, and contentment. Future longitudinal research could better capture how these factors influence one another over time. The study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias; therefore, multi-method approaches such as interviews or informant ratings are recommended.

Additionally, the sample was geographically limited, restricting generalizability. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples to capture cultural variations in resilience and purpose. Other influential factors such as physical health, social connectedness, or spirituality were not examined. Future research could explore these as mediators or moderators to better understand pathways to contentment in later life

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Mishra, S. & Agarwal, P. (2026). Resilience, Contentment, and Purpose in Life as Psychological Predictors of Healthy Aging among Older Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 14*(2), 1215-1225. DIP:18.01.114.20261402, DOI:10.25215/1402.114