

Personal Meaning & Life Satisfaction among Older and Younger Adults

Dr. Mukambika G S

Professor, MSW Department, Alva's College (Autonomous) Moodubidire, Karnataka, India

Abstract:

The pursuit of meaning and attainment of life satisfaction are the key elements of human existence that transcend age. Understanding the variations of these elements among older and younger adults is crucial. It provides insight into the emotional and psychological wellness of an individual in different and stages of their life span. This study will explore the diverse ways of finding purpose and happiness in life as well as identifies the practices which enhances the quality of life of older and younger adults. These components play significant role in constructing the overall well-being and mental health of the people.

Keywords: Personal meaning, Life satisfaction, younger and older adults

Introduction:

Family and personal life are prominent sources of meaning and it is linked to personal growth, wellbeing, harmony and self-actualization (Antonella Delle Fave et.al 2016). Meaningfulness did not significantly predict the satisfaction. Life possesses purpose and coherence. Personal meaning characterizes the factor structure for both young and older adult. There is significance relationship between life satisfaction and several key variables like, social relationships, over all health, etc among older adults. For women self-assessment of health and depressive symptoms are very important and widowhood was a major factor in reducing the quality of life among men. (A.I Berg et.al 2005). Self-efficacy and life satisfaction among young adults are significantly related. Self-efficacy and life satisfaction vary due to income levels. So there is a need to foster self- efficacy in young adults to support their tasks, emphasizing its role in promoting life satisfaction (Firdevs Savi et.al. 2012).

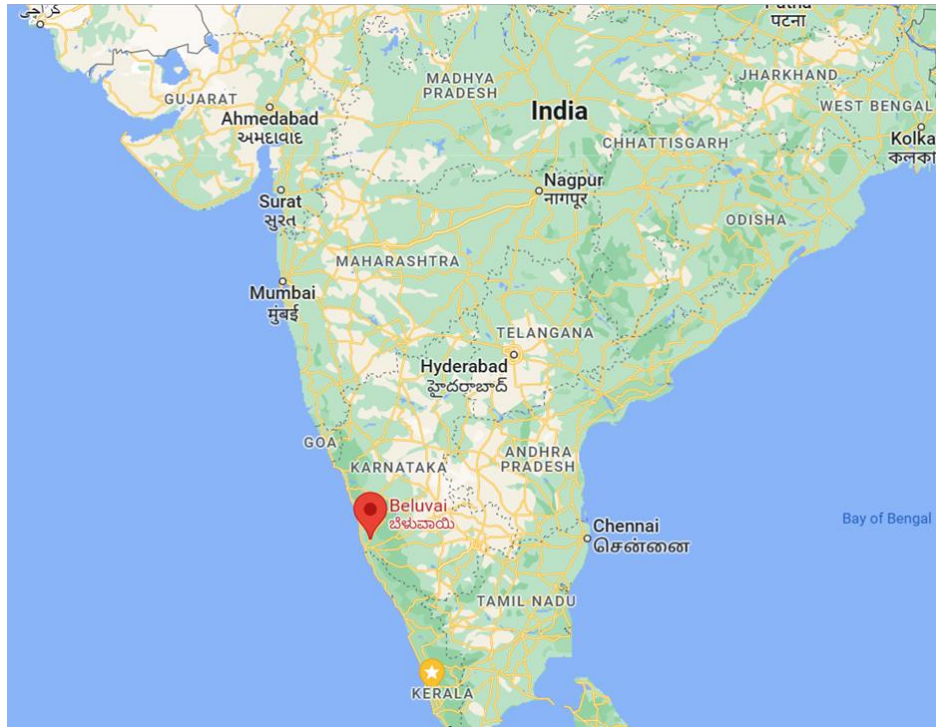
The main factors associated with the life satisfaction among older adults are, daily living activities, ageing, childlessness, cognitive ability, daily life decisions, living arrangements, education, economic status, housing, marital status, perceived discrimination, preferred living arrangement, duration of sleep, social support and social functioning. (Khodabakhsh 2021). There is significant relationship between different aspects of disposition to forgive and life satisfaction. The positive relationship between reduced forgiveness and satisfaction with life with the age group from 31-40. (Kinga Kalea & Justyna Mroz 2018). There is a relationship between age and life satisfaction and wellbeing tends to increase with age. (Hsin Yu An 2020). Understanding personal meaning and life satisfaction through development theories, like, Erikson's Psychosocial development theory, Life span theory of Control and Carstensen's Socioemotional Selectivity theory provides frameworks for examining the changes.

Method:

This study adopted descriptive research design to describe the differences in the personal meaning and life

satisfaction among older and younger adults in rural area of Karnataka. From 31 districts of Karnataka, purposively selected Dakshina Kannada with the highest literacy rate (Census 2011). As per Census 2011, 52.33% of the total population in Dakshina Kannada was rural population (Figure 1).

Figure 1 : Geographical Location of Beluvai Village, Karnataka, India
Source : Beluvai – google Maps



This study opted for rural area of the district. Mangalore Taluk was selected among 5 taluks in the district, considering the highest literacy rate again, Further 74 Gram Panchyats in Mangalore Taluk, Beluvai was selected using the lottery method and 30 younger adults (the age group between 20-35 years) and 30 older adults (the age above 60 years) were selected randomly. The researcher used Personal Meaning Profile - Brief (PMP – B) Scale and Satisfaction with life Scale (SWLS) to assess the personal meaning and life satisfaction among younger and older adults. The tool also included queries to measure the sociodemographic profile of respondents. The tool was piloted with six respondents. After ensuring reliability, it was distributed to all the participants selected. The researcher received 60 duly filled questionnaires for analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS and reported.

Results

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic profile of the respondents.

Variable		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	32	53.33
	Female	28	46.66
Religion	Hindu	27	45
	Christian	22	36.66
	Muslim	12	20
	Prefer not to say	8	13.33

Educational Qualification	Primary	33	55
	Highschool	10	16.66
	Higher secondary	10	16.66
	Other	7	11.66
Marital Status	Married	28	46.66
	Unmarried	17	28.33
	Widow/widower	13	21.66
	Separated	2	3.33

Table 2 Personal meaning and life satisfaction among older and younger adults

	Personal Meaning	Life satisfaction
Personal Meaning 0.461**	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig.(2 – tailed) N 60	001 60
Life satisfaction	Pearson Correlation 0.461** Sig.(2 – tailed) 001 N 60	1

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Correlation of personal meaning and life satisfaction in the table 2 shows that, the obtained values are statistically significant, which shows there is positive correlation noted between personal meaning and life satisfaction ($p < 0.001$). The correlation coefficient between personal meaning and life satisfaction is 0.461 which indicates that, there is only a moderate positive relationship between these two variables.

Table 3 Difference in the personal meaning and life satisfaction among age groups

Variable	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std.. Error
Personal Meaning	20-40	30	112.5667	21.07733	3.84818
	60 & above	30	113.8095	11.86853	2.58992
Life satisfaction	20-40	30	16.0000	5.20610	.95959
	60 & above	30	14.1905	3.81601	.83272

The mean score between the age groups (20-40 & 60 and above) are quite close, suggesting no significant difference in personal meaning based on age. The younger group shows more variability in their scores. For life satisfaction, younger adult report higher score compared to older adults. This suggests that, younger adults are slightly more satisfied with their lives compared to older adults.

Table 4 Lavene’s Test for Equality of Variances

Variables		F	Sig
Personal meaning	Equal Variances assumed	10.409	.002
	Equal Variances not assumed		
Life Satisfaction	Equal Variances assumed	1.130	.293
	Equal Variances not assumed		

T – test Equality of Means

Variables		T	df	Sig (2 – tailed)	Mean difference
Personal Meaning	Equal Variances assumed	-.244	49	.808	-1.24286
	Equal Variances not assumed	-.268	47.184	.790	-1.24286
Life Satisfaction	Equal Variances assumed	1.356	49	.181	1.80952
	Equal Variances not assumed	1.432	48.862	.159	1.80952

95% Confidence interval of Difference

		Std. error Difference	Lower	Upper
Personal Meaning	Equal Variances assumed	5.09302	-11.47765	8.99194
	Equal Variances not assumed	4.63855	-10.57346	8.08775
Life Satisfaction	Equal Variances assumed	1.33405	-.87135	4.49040
	Equal Variances not assumed	1.26367	-.73011	4.34915

In the above table, the mean scores between the two age groups are quite close (112.5667 and 113.80950) for personal meaning. The personal values for both the conditions are greater than 0.05, indicates that the differences in means for personal meaning are not statistically significant. For Life satisfaction, younger adults report higher mean score compared to older adults who report a mean score of 14.1905. The p-values for both conditions (equal variances assumed and equal variances not assumed) are also greater than 0.05, indicating that the differences in means for life satisfaction are not statistically significant. These results suggests that, any observed differences in life satisfaction between the age groups are likely due to random chance rather than a true effect of age. The statistical analysis shows that, age does not significantly influence personal meaning or life satisfaction in this study.

Discussion:

Results from this study indicates that, personal meaning is an important factor that helps to get life satisfaction. the results emphasized that, therapies or counselling should address the strengths, resources, values and hopes instead of limitations and weaknesses. So there could be counselling intervention to enhance the component of well-being as life satisfaction and meaning of life. The research encountered with some limitations, the small sample size and the cultural considerations. The meaning of life and satisfaction are related to cultural context so, further studies should consider cultural concepts and techniques pointing out the effect of hope, happiness, goal setting and optimistic view in the life

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