

# Influence of Gender on Psychological Wellbeing among Elderly Working And Nonworking Respondents

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## Abstract

*Retirement tends to be perceived by society as passivity, social withdrawal, and physical and mental decline. The fact that people in retirement have withdrawn from economic endeavor tends to lower the esteem in which they are held by the community even though the withdrawal may be forced upon the individual by reason of compulsory retirement at a fixed age. These are the negative aspects of the overall picture. Keeping this as background an attempt is made to assess “Influence of Gender on Psychological Wellbeing among Elderly Working And Nonworking Respondents”.*

*For the study purpose 309 elderly persons were included, 199 were male and remaining 110 were female. Among them retired working male were 99 and retired nonworking male were 100 and retired working female were 29 and retired nonworking female 81. Psychological wellbeing scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012) measuring 5 aspects namely life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health and interpersonal relations was used to measure the level of psychological wellbeing among retired working and non-working persons. Two-way ANOVA was employed to find out the impact of gender on psychological well-being. Results revealed that male respondents had better psychological wellbeing than female respondents. However, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be significant indicating male and female respondent differed significantly in total psychological wellbeing irrespective of the group they belong. Thus there is an impact of gender on psychological well-being among elderly working and nonworking persons. Engaging in life, financial benefit and social contacts even after retirement balance the wellbeing in elderly leading to happy and successful aging.*

**Keywords:** Retirement, Psychological Wellbeing, Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental health and Interpersonal relations

**Aging:** Human beings can be proactive and engaged or, alternatively, passive and alienated, depending on the social conditions in which they develop and function. As people abdicate from previous more enticing periods which was a time of “usefulness” or productive period, they enter the period of old age. Aging is an unavoidable phenomenon in all biological species as well as non-life forms.

According to Gorman - The ageing and development report (2017), the number of old age people in India is increasing with the improvement in life expectancy. The issues of the elderly are primarily economic, marked by the loss of independent income. One can't reverse nor stop the aging process; diseases and disability are part of old age, but it does not necessarily mean that we have to take them in negative way.

**Psychological Wellbeing:** Positive mental health involves a sense of psychological wellbeing, which goes hand in hand with a healthy sense of self (Ryff & Singer, 1998). This subjective sense of wellbeing, or happiness, is a person's evaluation of his or her own life.

Psychological wellbeing can be defined as people's evaluations of their own lives. Such evaluations can be both cognitive judgments, such as life satisfaction, and their emotional responses to events, such as feeling positive emotions (Diener 2000). Ryff (1989) indicated psychological wellbeing refers to the extent to which people feel that they have meaningful control over their life and their activities.

Bowling (2014), studies on elderly indicate that evaluations of quality of life are affected by the person's state of health, and the psychological wellbeing is affected by many factors other than health, these include retirement, financial conditions, material conditions, social and family relationships, social roles and activities, factors that also change with age. The prevalence of stress, worry, and unhappiness all rises slightly with age. A study on Subjective wellbeing, health, and ageing by Steptoe, Deaton, and Stone (2015), indicated treatments for life-threatening disease become more effective as life expectancy increases, the importance and the issue of maintaining wellbeing at advanced ages is growing in importance.

**Retirement and its impact on Psychological Well-Being:** Psychological well-being alludes to how people evaluate their existence or lives. Retirement has an adverse effect on the physical and mental health of an individual and has been found stressful for certain retirees under certain circumstances. Apart from this, retirement demands a psycho-social transition, which lowers the well-being of retirees. Desai and Naik, (1997) stated that retirement brings about many changes in the personal and social life of a retired person.

Economic problems, psycho-social and social problems, physical and physiological problems, are some of the specific problems faced by a retired individual. Generally, there is a lowering of income, decreased socialization, loss of status, changes of activity and life style, uncertainty about the future, difficulty in utilization of time and a search for a new identity and status. Bosse, Aldwin and Levenson (1991), studies reported retirement as a stressful life event, due to certain circumstances of the event itself, as well as the specific personal characteristics of the retirees. In many of the research studies socio-demographic variables such as education, employment status, sex, race, income, social resources and health have been evaluated as salient predictors of retirement (Hughes & Waite 2002).

Factors such as personality, attitudes and social behavioral patterns seem to be critical for adjusting to retirement. All these factors tend to affect either positively or negatively the psychological well-being of retirees.

**Retirement and its Effects on Elderly:** For most elderly persons, retiring from their primary career jobs is a milestone, marking passage into the later stages of adulthood. Retirement is not simply an objective life course transition, but is also a social-psychological and subjective developmental transformation that may be related to physical and psychological well-being (Moen, 2001). As workers move out of demanding or stressful career jobs the retirement experience may promote a sense of subjective well-being. On the other hand, the retirement passage may itself lead to diminished well-being, as individuals lose their social network of coworkers, their occupational attachments, and a major anchor for their identities. "Retirement shock" is the new sickness of aged according to Horowitz. It is noted that the effect of retirement shock are most serious immediate

after retirement, especially when the individual has to adjust to changes in routine and to the breaking off of social relationships.

Geriatrics should be a boon and not a curse for our nation. India's large and rising elderly population, concentrated mostly in the rural areas and among the poor, makes it impossible for any agency other than the government to find the will or the resources to implement any programme for geriatric health care at the national level (World Health Organization, 2008). Initiative should be taken to set up senior citizen centers both in rural and urban areas for those who can no longer live alone. Health promotion, education and engaging in income-generating activities are all possible at such centers. To enrich the life of advanced cancer patients in a non-clinical environment, hospices are also essential to provide both hospital day-care and home-care services.

**Aim:** To study the influence Of Gender on Psychological Wellbeing among Elderly Working and Nonworking Respondents.

**Hypothesis:** There is nosignificant influence of gender on Psychological wellbeing among elderly working and nonworking respondents.

**Method:** The methodology to be employed was survey method. Survey is a quite popular method of collecting the data on a large scale.

**Sample:** The sample of the present study consisted of 309 respondents who are sixty years and above (128 individuals working after retirement who are in the pay slot considering 99 male and 29 female and 188 individuals nonworking after retirement considering 100 male and 81 females) of few regions of Karnataka state.

## Variables

### Independent Variable

- Working and nonworking condition
- Gender

### Dependent Variable

- Psychological Wellbeing (satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, interpersonal relations and total wellbeing)

**Assessment Tools:** Psychological wellbeing questionnaire is Psychological wellbeing scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012) measuring five aspects namely life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health and interpersonal relations

**Procedure:** The selected subjects who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were briefed about the study and, then they were made to answer Psychological wellbeing questionnaire. Participants read each item carefully and choose one of five possible responses from five point rating scale as (Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly disagree) to show how much each statement is true about them, how they feel or do in the described situations to all 50 items of all the five areas. Once data were collected, they were scrutinized, scored with the help of the scoring key for each area and the level of psychological wellbeing is measured and interpreted for each area and overall psychological wellbeing of the subject. Higher the score in each area indicates better psychological wellbeing and low score indicates very low psychological wellbeing in that particular area. The master chart was prepared for further statistical calculations.

**PWB – Psychological Wellbeing**

**Table 1 Mean PWB Scores (Satisfaction and Efficiency) of Male and Female Elderly Working and Elderly Nonworking Group and Results of 2-way ANOVA**

Groups (elderly)	Components of Psychological Well being				
	Gender	Satisfaction		Efficiency	
		M	SD	M	SD
Working	Male	43.85	5.11	43.45	5.80
	Female	40.66	6.05	41.14	6.52
	Total	43.13	5.48	42.93	6.03
Non-working	Male	37.49	7.55	38.19	7.65
	Female	37.81	4.36	38.16	4.72
	Total	37.64	6.31	38.18	6.49
Overall	Male	40.65	7.18	40.81	7.27
	Female	38.56	4.99	38.95	5.38
	Total	39.91	6.56	40.15	6.71
F (Group)		F=35.896; p=.001**		F=25.655; p=.001**	
F (Gender)		F=3.490; p=.063 <sup>ns</sup>		F=2.079; p=.150 <sup>ns</sup>	
F (Interaction)		F=5.251; p=.023*		F=1.976; p=.161 <sup>ns</sup>	

Note: \*\* sig at .01 level; \* Sig at .05 level; NS-Non-significant

**Group, gender and Satisfaction:** Male and female respondents did not differ significantly in their level of satisfaction of PWB as revealed by two-way ANOVA (F=3.490; p=.063). The mean scores revealed that both male and female respondents had statistically equal scores (means 40.65 and 38.56 respectively). However, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be significant (F=5.251; p=.023) indicating that among elderly working group, male respondents had better adjustment, which was not the case in elderly non-working group.

**Group, gender and Efficiency:** In the case of efficiency component of PWB, male and female respondents did not differ significantly in their level of efficiency of PWB (F=2.079; p=.150). The mean scores revealed that male and female respondents had equal level of efficiency (mean scores 40.81 and 38.95 respectively). Further, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be non-significant (F=1.976; p=.161) indicating that level of efficiency was the same for male and female respondents irrespective of the group they belong.

**Sociability and Mental health**

**Table 2 Mean PWB Scores (Sociability and Mental Health) of Male and Female Elderly Working and Elderly Nonworking Group and Results of 2-way ANOVA**

Groups (elderly)	Components of Psychological Well being				
	Gender	Sociability		Mental Health	
		M	SD	M	SD
Working	Male	43.05	5.69	43.14	4.96
	Female	38.66	7.38	39.31	6.86
	Total	42.05	6.36	42.27	5.65

Non-working	Male	35.57	7.23	37.50	6.22
	Female	36.05	5.93	35.79	4.82
	Total	35.78	6.67	36.73	5.68
Overall	Male	39.29	7.50	40.31	6.29
	Female	36.74	6.42	36.72	5.61
	Total	38.38	7.23	39.03	6.29
F (Group)		F=36.540; p=.001**		F=40.645; p=.001**	
F (Gender)		F=5.508; p=.020*		F=14.867; p=.001**	
F (Interaction)		F=8.535; p=.004**		F=2.179; p=.141ns	

Note: \*\* sig at .01 level; \* Sig at .05 level; NS-Non-significant

**Group, gender and Sociability:** Male and female respondents differed significantly in their level of sociability of PWB as revealed by two-way ANOVA ( $F=5.508$ ;  $p=.020$ ). The mean scores revealed that male respondents had better sociability (mean 39.29) than female respondents (mean 36.74). Further, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be significant ( $F=8.535$ ;  $p=.004$ ) indicating that among elderly working group male respondents had higher sociability and among elderly non-working group, female respondents had higher sociability. .

**Group, gender and Mental health:** In the case of mental health component, a significant mean difference was observed between male and female respondents ( $F=14.867$ ;  $p=.001$ ). The mean scores revealed that male respondents had better mental health (mean 40.31) than female respondents (mean 36.72). However, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be non-significant ( $F=2.179$ ;  $p=.141$ ) indicating that the pattern of mental health of PWB was same for male and female respondents irrespective of the group they belong.

### Interpersonal Relations and Total PWB

**Table 3 Mean PWB Scores (Interpersonal Relations and Total) of Male and Female Elderly Working and Elderly Nonworking Group and Results of 2-way ANOVA**

Groups (elderly)	Components of Psychological Well being				
	Gender	Interpersonal relations		Total	
		M	SD	M	SD
Working	Male	43.55	4.87	217.04	21.77
	Female	41.31	6.34	201.07	30.13
	Total	43.04	5.30	213.42	24.72
Non-working	Male	38.95	5.81	187.70	29.36
	Female	38.44	4.49	186.26	21.10
	Total	38.72	5.26	187.06	25.93
Overall	Male	41.24	5.83	202.30	29.70
	Female	39.20	5.17	190.16	24.55
	Total	40.51	5.68	197.98	28.54
F (Group)		F=30.147; p=.001**		F=46.060; p=.001**	
F (Gender)		F=4.067; p=.045*		F=7.164; p=.008**	
F (Interaction)		F=1.620; p=.204 <sup>ns</sup>		F=4.989;	

Note: \*\* sig at .01 level; \* Sig at .05 level; NS-Non-significant

**Group, gender and Interpersonal relations:** Male and female respondents differed significantly in their interpersonal relations of PWB as revealed by two-way ANOVA ( $F=4.067$ ;  $p=.045$ ). The mean scores revealed that male respondents had better interpersonal relations (mean 41.24) than female respondents (mean 39.20). Further, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be non-significant ( $F=1.62$ ;  $p=.204$ ) indicating that pattern of interpersonal relations was same for male and female respondents irrespective of the group they belong to.

**Group, gender and total PWB:** Male and female respondents differed significantly in their total ( $F=7.164$ ;  $p=.008$ ). The mean scores revealed that male respondents had better PWB (mean 202.30) than female respondents (mean 190.16). Further, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be significant ( $F=4.989$ ;  $p=.026$ ) indicating that among elderly working group male respondents had higher PWB and among elderly non-working group, female respondents had higher PWB.

Hypothesis formulated as “There is no significant influence of gender on psychological wellbeing among elderly working and nonworking persons” is rejected revealing that male and female respondents differed significantly in their total Psychological wellbeing. The mean scores revealed that male respondents had better psychological wellbeing than female respondents. However, the interaction effect between groups and gender was found to be significant indicating male and female respondent differed significantly in total psychological wellbeing irrespective of the group they belong. Thus there is an impact of gender on psychological well-being among elderly working and nonworking persons. Hypothesis is accepted for satisfaction and efficiency of psychological well-being.

Meire Cachioni, Lais Lopes Delfino et al (2017) analyzed the distribution of measures of subjective and psychological well-being according to demographic criteria. Results revealed that age and gender were the main factors that were significantly associated with overall life satisfaction, life satisfaction in specific domains, and morale among elderly. Pinquart and Sorensen (2001) conducted a study on Gender Differences in Self-Concept and Psychological Well-Being in Old Age. It was analyzed that elder women reported significantly lower Psychological Well-Being and less positive self-concept than men. Previous studies have revealed a wealth of evidence of gender-typed self-descriptions. Men are more likely to describe themselves as active, independent, achievement oriented, financially oriented, and competitive than are women (e.g., Angeleitner 1978; Mutran 1987). Women, on the other hand, describe themselves as submissive, sociable, caring, moral, dependent, and less assertive (e.g., Mutran 1987; Siegler, George, and Okun 1979).

The reasons why older women’s Psychological Well-Being might be lower is their self-concept seen to be more negative compared with men. Previous research has shown that social integration, good health, competence, and a high socio economic status are important predictors of Psychological Well-Being and self-concept in old age (Pinquart and Sorensen 2000). Another reason is older women are more likely to be widowed than older men (Hobbs and Damon 1996) leading to low psychological well-being. Further, gender-specific response stereotype may contribute to older women’s lower psychological well-being. With increasing age, women are considered less attractive, less active and are therefore less valued, whereas men may gain social prestige, pride, and respect with age which might lower the Psychological Well-Being in women suggested by Sontag 1972.

Thus our study reveals that male and female elderly differ in the level of psychological well-being as male possess better psychological well-being compared to female might be because of power, domineering, actively involved in social activities, earning, security, better interpersonal relations etc leads to better psychological well-being.



### Implications of the study

- Development of more efficient intervention programs aimed at helping retirees to maintain good cognitive functioning after post retirement. At the same time reducing unfavorable stereotype regarding elderly.
- Both family support and friends support are significantly related to psychological wellbeing during old age.
- Thus this study implies that working beyond traditional retirement ages may be helpful for mental health in elderly.

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