THE IMPACT OF SELF-ESTEEM, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND FAMILY BONDS ON ELDERLY FEMALE HAPPINESS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of elderly people worldwide for a better understanding of the variables that promote their quality of life. In Nepal, advanced-age women are subjected to unique enumerated socio-cultural and psychological elements that enhance detract from their happiness and life satisfaction. The objective of the present study is to assess self-esteem, social support and family bonding as predictors of happiness among elderly females, to provide information which assists in helping this group. A cross-sectional design was used and 133 elderly women formed the random sample using a structural questionnaire. Results showed that the mean age of the respondents was 68.8, with the majority (61.7%) of the age groups of 60- 69. Other remarkable results were that there was a high literacy level of 96.2 percent but a noteworthy 75.2 percent of the income was insufficiency. The self-esteem and social support levels of the respondents were moderate; however, 56.7 percent of the respondents had chronic illness. The multiple regression analysis showed that self-esteem (Beta=0.477), social support (Beta=0.381), and relations with family (Beta=0.124) proved to be powerful predictors of happiness accounting for 91.4 percent of the variance in life satisfaction. The findings of this study demonstrate the vital impact of self-worth, social network, and family relations on the contentment of older females. This study showed that relationships and social support along with self-esteem have a great impact on elderly women's happiness. Quality of life for them could be increased dramatically by some intervention in these fields.

Keywords: family relationship, happiness, self-esteem, social support, wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

When a woman grows older, she experiences certain age-related problems, both social and emotional. Thus, these aspects are important in enhancing the mental health, as well as the quality of life enjoyed by older women, in particular. They have normal aging which leads to illness and health complications, but they have new challenges which are social changes that lead to other issues and reduce their quality of life.

The proportion of aged persons worldwide is expected to increase from 10.0 percent in 2000 to 14.2 percent in 2025 and 21.0 percent in 2050. According to the United Nations' 2023 report, the number of persons aged 65 and older is expected to reach 1.5 billion by 2050, accounting for almost 16.0 percent of the global population (UN, 2023). It is predicted that there will be more elderly women than men. The Central Bureau of Statistics National Census of 2021 revealed that the percentage of the elderly in Nepal had risen from 6.1 percent in 2001 to 8.1 percent in 2011 and then to 9.3 percent in 2021, with a greater proportion of females than men because of their longer life expectancies (CBS, 2021).

The happiness of people particularly the elderly has a pronounced influence on the state of their health. It is more than just health; it also affects one's quality of life. The knowledge about the factors contributing to happiness can help in creating a supportive environment for all, especially for older people (Stoncikaite, 2019). Modernization and urbanization may disrupt traditional family structures, causing the elderly to lose touch with their communities and leaving them lonely and despondent. In major cities, there may be feelings of isolation with little contact with family among the elderly making them develop anxiety and depression hence low quality of life. By promoting community activities and other kinds of therapy perceived as social support, it is possible to reduce the negative effects of urbanization on older people (Saleh *et al.*, 2021).

Older people can experience considerable economic problems and these are apparent in low income and no savings or pensions in Nepal. Instability at the economic level produces feelings of poverty as well as an unhappy life. Over 85 percent of these people live in rural areas and they greatly depend on their children for their support. However, a large number of young people are leaving the country in search of better prospects, leaving many older people to handle their social, financial, and physical duties on their own with less assistance (Matthews *et al.*, 2023).

Having access to healthcare services is essential to enhancing people's general happiness and sense of well-being. People can access good quality health care they are likely to be attended to in time. They also hedge on the preventative care and mental health the above factors to improved health, lesser sickness and enhanced appreciation of life.

According to some theorists, rather than always being disruptive to men at work, household management might help lessen psychological stress. They emphasize that the burden of chores should be split equally between both sexes (Auspurg *et al.*, 2017). Also, strengthening in the academic literature is the search for how women manage the demands of work and family to obtain well-being (Hernandez & Chunga, 2024).

Several studies have shown that elderly women's happiness is influenced by self-worth, support and ties with a family. Social support proves to be one of the most significant factors enhancing life fulfillment and alleviating depression in older women especially, the emotional and instrumental support rendered by their family and friends (Beygi *et al.*, 2023). Having daughters who live together with older women has been known to enhance their level of happiness, whereas even better results are offered by such daughters who are educated as they reduce the levels of depression and improve health conditions (Sukontamarn *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, self-efficacy appears to act as a mediator in perceived social support and well-being interrelation emphasizing its significance to the enhancement of mental toughness (Ilyas *et al.*, 2020). On the whole, these results point to the need for the provision of more social and familial support to increase the wellbeing of older women, especially, in areas where social changes have affected the family structure (Cao, 2024).

For instance, think about a woman who grows up during a war. The larger context gives birth to her experiences whilst affecting her future in very profound ways. Similarly, family treasures constitute the foundation of family values. Such factors can have far-reaching consequences for important decisions such as marriage and divorce, altering overall satisfaction.

Besides, the type of family together with the surrounding society frequently addresses mental wellness. These aspects heavily influence decisions & behaviors (Karney *et al.*, 2022). The creation of targeted treatments & policies to enhance the quality of life for older women is heavily influenced by this gap in information (Phoosuwan & Lundberg, 2023).

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the well-being of older women in Nepal due to the specific challenges they face as a demographic. Yet, the unique factors contributing to the life satisfaction of senior women in Nepal remain largely unclear, despite this increased focus.

Local organizations provide emotional and spiritual support to older people, but the long-term health and well-being impacts remain unknown. Some people may be supported by their family, whilst others may face financial and emotional pressure (Shrestha & *et al.*,2021).

Compared to the overall population, elderly people are growing at a far higher rate. With a median age of 25, it appears that society is becoming older. Given that many young people are going overseas, the government must address the challenges posed by an aging population by enhancing social security and improving services for this group (Chalise, 2023).

This research aims to explore the different factors affecting life satisfaction among senior women and to help fill that knowledge gap.

The issue at hand is studied through research. It investigates the fundamental factors influencing the life satisfaction of older women. These variables include social support, economic status and mental and physical well-being (Mishra & Bhatt, 2022).

The research intends to delve into the factors that affect the happiness of older women. This, then, gives rise to a vivid picture of their unusual requirements and lives. Therefore, health practitioners, social workers and policy-makers are expected to benefit from these findings. In this way, they can develop better support systems and interventions. Therefore, the ultimate aim is to enhance the quality of life for older women in Nepal.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

Research Design

The research design of this study was cross-sectional and descriptive in which elderly women of Lamki-Chuha Municipality, Kailali district were surveyed. This municipality was chosen because of its diverse population and a large number of elderly females appropriate for the objectives of the study.

Sampling

From a total of municipal wards, 133 elderly women aged 60 years and above were selected through simple random sampling technique. The

sample size was established through power analysis to make sure that there was sufficient representation and statistical validity taking into consideration the total elderly female demographic within the study area while aiming at a 95 percent confidence level and a 5 percent margin of error.

Data Collection Tools

A structured interview questionnaire focused on key dimensions of the participants' lives was administered for data collection. In the provided questionnaire, background information such as age, marital status, income, education, family structure and health status was included. Personality characteristics, level of self-esteem and family relations were evaluated in order to determine individual traits, levels of drawing and family care. Other perspectives such as social support, participation in social activities, views about the social world and happiness in life were assessed too, thus providing a complete picture of the factors related to the happiness in the lives of older women in Lamki-Chuha Municipality.

Data Analysis

The SPSS 20 software was utilized for data analysis. Frequency and percentage analyses were performed to describe the characteristics of the sample while the mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the variables. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed in order to identify the predictors of life happiness. Thus, this analytical approach works for the studies of elderly well-being and creates a framework that can be replicated for other studies in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the socio-demographic profile of older women, the majority (61.7 percent) fell into the 60-69 age group, with an average age of 68.8 years. Only 96.2 percent of them are literate. Only 49.9 percent of respondents claimed to be in great health, 64.7 percent claimed to live with extended family, 75.2 percent reported having a sufficient income and 50.4 percent of respondents were married. 52.9 percent were extroverted, 47.4 percent had average self-esteem and a sizable majority (56.7%) suffered from chronic ailments. Moderate social support was reported by 42.9 percent, moderate family relationships by 40.6 percent and social activity participation by 42.9 percent. Shows that 56.4 percent of respondents thought their social environment was moderate.

Table 1

Socio-demographic profile of the respondent

Characteristics	N	%
Age group		
60-69	82	61.7
70 and above	51	38.3
Mean=68.6 , SD=5.72 , Min=60, Max=80		
Education level		
Literate	128	96.2
Illiterate	5	3.8
Marital status		
Married	67	50.4
Single	3	2.3
Widow/divorced/ separated	63	47.4
Monthly income		
Sufficient	33	24.8
Insufficient	100	75.2
Family Type		
Nuclear	47	35.3
Joint family	86	64.7
Health condition		
Good	65	48.9
Fair	53	39.8
Poor	15	11.3
Chronic Disease/condition		
Yes	77	57.9
No	56	42.1
Personality		
Introvert (16-47)	63	47.4
Extrovert(48-80)	70	52.6
Self-esteem		
Low (20-59)	33	24.8
Moderate (60-79)	63	47.4
High (80-100)	37	27.8
Family relationship		
Low level (15-44)	43	32.2
Moderate(45-59)	64	40.6
High (60-75)	36	27.1
Social support		
Low level (15-44)	40	30.1
Moderate(45-59)	57	42.9
High(60-75)	36	27.1
Participative in social activities		
Low level (8-23)	45	33.8
Moderate(24-31)	57	42.9
High(32-40)	31	23.3
Participative in a social environment		
Low level (8-23)	15	11.3
Moderate(24-31)	75	56.4
High level(32-40)	43	32.4

Table 1 shows that among elderly females, self-esteem was classified as moderate level for 47.4 percent, low at 24.8 percent, and high at 27.8 percent. The data indicate that demonstrates how older women's life satisfaction varies. Indicating a balanced but subpar state of well-being, the largest group is content at a medium level.

The study's demographic data of elderly women provide information on their socioeconomic and health status, which significantly affect their well-being in life. The data indicated that the respondent's average age was 68.8 years, with 61.7 percent falling in the age group of 60-69 years. Social and mental improvements might be advantageous in this connection, considering that 96.2 percent of the elderly women only had primary education or even lower (Table 1). Another vital thing was their health status as 48.9 percent of respondents claimed that they were in good health. This supports recent research that indicates older adults who reported good health had higher levels of life satisfaction (Bramhankar *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, a substantial portion (57.9 percent) had long-term diseases. The place of residence for these aged ladies was also vital; indeed, 64.7 percent of them lived with joint families. This corresponds to the traditional family structures of many nations, which place a strong emphasis on the necessity for older people to receive care from extended relatives. (Kim *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, half of the respondents (50.4 percent) reported being married and 75.2 percent reported having insufficient income factors. Studies show that being married makes people happier because they get emotional and social support which makes them live longer (De & Oates, 2022).

The respondents who had moderate self-esteem levels were 47.4 percent. Self-esteem has been a dominant factor for happiness and living well as many previous studies have indicated. For instance, some researchers observed that there was a positive correlation between self-worth and joy thus these individuals were likely to be satisfied with their lives and emotionally stable (Guasp *et al.*, 2020).

The more plants one owns, the lesser the symptoms of depression or fatigue among non-workers and in general, people reported being happier in their lives (Klein *et al.*, 2022). Also covered in the study were the social as well as psychological aspects of happiness in life. This can lead to satisfaction with life since people who

are social and have greater support from family and friends and thus enjoy life more (Downward *et al.*, 2022).

The respondents considered relationships and support systems moderately. A moderate proportion of people participated in social activities, about 40.6 percent had moderate family relationships and 42.9 percent had moderate social support. Research highlights that togetherness in the community and how people are involved with each other appears important in improving the well-being and quality of life of elderly people (Ferreia, *et al.*, 2021).

Table 2

Life Happiness of the Elderly

Level of life happiness	N	%
Low of level(21-62)	36	27.1
Medium Level	67	50.4
High Level	30	22.6

As shown in Table 2, 50.4 percent of the respondents rated their life satisfaction as moderate, 27.1 percent low, and 22.6 percent high. This demonstrates that there are older women who are content with their lives. This indicates that we might take heart in the fact that some older ladies are happier than others. This agrees with existing literature which highlights how these social networks and engagement help to improve the elderly general happiness and satisfaction in life (Joshanloo & Blasco-Belled, 2023). For example, the equilibrium that older adults maintain when they engage others socially or establish a circle of friends translates to increased levels of contentment in life which means institutions dedicated to such objectives should consider improving their operations towards accomplishing this aspect.

Table 3

Correlation coefficient between personal factors and social factors and life happiness of elderly female

Variable	Coefficient correlation	p-value
Age	-0.008	0.899
personality	0.422	<0.899
Self-esteem	0.938	<0.001
Family relationship	0.920	<0.001
social support	0.928	<0.001
participation in social activities	0.867	<0.001
Perception of the social environment	0.524	<0.001

There are significant positive correlations between elderly women's happiness and self-esteem (r=0.938, p< 0.001), family relationships (r=0.920, p<0.001), social support (r=0.928, p<0.001), participation in social activities (r =0.867, p<0.001) and perception of the social environment (r=0.524, p<0.001). Although age has no significant effect on life satisfaction, there is a tiny connection (r=-0.008, p=0.899) between age and personality; however, because of the potentially erroneous p-value, the importance of this link is unknown. This highlights how important social and psychological factors are in determining this group's degree of life satisfaction.

The way social support acts as a link between serenity to hardiness while illustrating its safeguarding functions against depression is fascinating. Hence, the present study seeks to understand the relationship between personal attitudes and outside help in order to see their impact on different degrees of depression (Chang *et al.*, 2023).

Table 4

Stepwise multiple regression analysis between predictors and life happiness of elderly female

Variable	B	Beta	t	p-value
self-esteem	0.494	0.477	8.408	< 0.001
social support	0.468	0.381	7.093	<0.001
Family relationship	0.157	0.124	1.981	0.049

Note: Bo=4.706   RSquare=0.914   Adj RSquare=0.913

Table 4 shows that stepwise multiple regression analysis identified three key variables self-esteem, social support and relationships. Together, these factors predicted 91 percent of life happiness in elderly females. Notably, self-esteem emerged as the most significant predictor for life satisfaction, with a Beta coefficient of 0.477. The research outcome showed that social support had a Beta of 0.381 while family relationships had a Beta of 0.124 which was less significant in importance.

The analysis identified self-esteem, the working model of interpersonal relationships, and family ties as important predictors of life happiness Self-esteem is the best predictor of life satisfaction (Song & Lee, 2021). According to the findings, certain aspects are known to affect older women's wellbeing across cultures and countries. Some elements that

define humanity include demographics, health status, emotional aspects as well as community features.

For improved feelings among elderly women regarding their lives it is suggested that levels of education be raised alongside quality healthcare delivery systems as well as better social support systems (Singh &Valk, 2023).

In previous studies, it was indicated that self-confidence, social support and family connections greatly affected happiness in life. Self esteem is the main predictor of life satisfaction (Ko & Lee 2022). This study shows that there are some factors that different culture globally women's wellness To enhance their quality of life as elderly women, it is suggested to increase their level of education and offer them good health care services together with better social support systems(Singh and Valk, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to look at the elements that impact happiness among elderly women in Lamki-Chwa Municipality in Nepal's Kailali district. According to the demographic study, the majorities were between the ages of sixty and seventy-nine, had limited education, majority of the elderly females are insufficient income, and lived with traditional joint families. Positive connections, self-esteem and social ties all contribute to older women's pleasure. As a result, if focused interventions are implemented to address these situations, the lives of such people will be significantly enhanced.

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