

Social Disconnectedness and Psychological Well-Being of Retired College Teachers

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Abstract

Retirement has become an increasingly prominent research topic in the literature of psychology. Employee retirement has been considered of significant importance in areas such as socioeconomic, politics and human resource due to rapid aging of the population and labor force. Current study evaluates psychological constructs i.e. social disconnectedness and psychological well-being in retired college teachers. For that purpose sample of 200 retired college teachers was taken from Lahore and Faisalabad. Social Disconnectedness Scale (Cornwell & Waite, 2009) and Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being (1989) were applied on the participants to collect the data. Correlational research design was used with purposive sampling strategy. The results revealed that there was no significant gender difference in the level of social disconnectedness. As for psychological well-being and its dimensions results revealed that men were more autonomous and had environmental mastery as compared to women; personal growth was higher in men as compared to women. Men were more purposeful in their lives as compared to women; Men had more self-acceptance than women. However women scored more on positive relations as compared to men. Correlational analysis revealed that social disconnectedness had negative relationship with psychological wellbeing. Regression analysis was revealed that social disconnectedness negatively predicted psychological wellbeing.

Introduction

Human being experiences different stages of development. In order to comprehend change over time in patterns of individual development, two important constructs are: the life stages and the life course. The life stages refers to m developmental stages i.e early stages, youth, adulthood, and old age with each stage having its own physiological, psychological, and social characteristics, through which individuals pass over the course of their lives. The life cycle refers to the way of individuals through which major life transitions occur, such as getting married, having family and retirement (Wang & Schultz, 2012).

According to Denton & Spencer (2009), retirement has been in various ways by different researchers, largely depending on the research questions being addressed and the researcher's disciplinary background. The psychological perspective laid out by Shultz & Wang (2011), explained retirement as an individual's exit from the workforce, which accompanies decreased psychological commitment to and behavioral withdrawal from work. This definition is also consistent with the argument made by life-stage developmental

theorists (e.g., Levinson & Levinson 1996) that retirement is a life stage that not only corresponds to decreased levels of physical activities and productivities but also involves lowered stress and less responsibility to others in day-to-day life.

Retirement has been viewed as one of the later life status transitions though the knowledge of its psychological consequences is fragmentary (Kim & Moen, 2002). It is an objective development and social-psychological transformation that is related to physical and psychological well-being (Moen, 2001). The concept of retirement could not be generalized to all the populations due to its highly dependency on the social, cultural, and economic factors, therefore the process of retirement is highly considered as individualized and subjective (Richardson & Kilty, 1991).

One of the main factors that may affect the individuals after retirement is social disconnectedness which can be regarded as having less communication with others. Having small social networks, rare social interactions and less involvement in social events and groups are situational indicators of social disconnectedness (Cornwell & Waite, 2009). Social disconnectedness can be characterised as a scarcity of contact with others.

According to theories of perceived isolation, the need for social connectedness is a deeply ingrained human characteristic that has evolved hand in hand with neural, hormonal, and genetic mechanisms directly associated with bonding, companionship, and herd behaviour as a crucial means for ensuring survival and reproduction (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). Study has reported that mental health can also be influenced by the quality and meaning of individuals' social relationships (Santini et al., 2020). Another study reported that being socially disconnectedness can contribute to the development of perceived isolation, which could in turn have deleterious effects on health and wellbeing (Santini et al., 2020).

Wissing and Van Eeden (1997) identified psychological well-being and described it as a combination of specific qualities, such as a sense of coherence, satisfaction with life, affect balance, and a general attitude of optimism or positive life orientation. According by to them PwB also indicated those qualities that characterise general well-being including having an interest in the world and the motivation to carry out activities on a behavioural level.

Literature Review

Although retirement has been considered one of the most important later life status transitions (Szinovacz 1980), knowledge regarding its psychological consequences is fragmentary. This transition is not simply an objective life course transition, but is also a subjective developmental and social-psychological transformation that might be related to physical and psychological well-being (Moen 2001). A retiree's psychological well-being can

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be defined as the extent to which the person is generally content with his/her psychological states and enjoys effective psychological functioning (Wang & Schultz, 2012).

Experience of retirement might promote a sense of well-being, as workers move out of demanding and/or stressful career jobs. But literature shows mixed findings. Retirees who strongly identify themselves with their work roles are often more likely to experience decreases in psychological well-being when entering retirement. Further, people who retire from jobs that involve high levels of work stress, psychological and physical demands, job challenges, and job dissatisfaction are more likely to enter retirement with low levels of psychological well-being (Quick & Moen 1998, van Solinge & Henkens 2008, Wang 2007). Finally, people who experienced unemployment right before retirement are also more likely to enter retirement with low levels of psychological well-being (Marshall et al. 2001, Pinquart & Schindler 2007).

Another study reported that retirement might promote a sense of well-being among workers moving out of demanding and /or stressful career jobs (Salami, 2010). On the other hand, the retirement passage itself may lead to diminished well-being, as individuals lose their occupational attachments, their social network of coworkers, and a major anchor for their identities (Kim & Moen, 2002). Some researchers have found significant negative relationship between retirement and life satisfaction or morale (Kim & Moen, 2002; Taylor, Goldberg, Shore & Lipka, 2008) and positive association with psychological distress (Kim & Moen, 2002; Okatahi, 2007; Onyewotu, 2005; Salami & Oduntan, 2001). Other researchers found no negative psychological effects such as psychological distress associated with retirement (Gall, Evans & Howard, 1997; Ross & Drentea, 1988). Gall et al., (1997) found no relationship between retirement and life satisfaction while a positive effect of retirement on health or reduced stress level was found by Midanik, Soghikian, Ramson and Tekawa (1995).

In relative with the world, social connectedness is a long-lasting and inclusive experience of the self. The feeling to be linked or belong to someone is very important feeling as human beings spent a great deal of time in making relationships and sustaining it, retaining the friendships, contributing in the occasions, to avoid the social stigmas and become dejected over the death of important one. After retirement, individuals are suddenly disconnected from the environment where they spent most of the time of their life It showed that they daily put their efforts to satisfy and endure one of the most essential psychological needs, which was belonging need. From this perspective, one of the distinct features of the self that exposes subjective perception of relational closeness with the social world is regarded as social connectedness which can no longer be seen in retired individuals and it

affects their overall psychological well-being (Karnick, 2005). Like other forms, perceptiveness in society and personal insight of uniqueness would be obtained from the social connectedness but after retirement social disconnectedness can shatter all aspects of personality (Schaler, 2000). Social disconnectedness and isolation both found to affect the health in similar ways. Such as, if someone is socially connected and the care is available, it protects from the detrimental effects of stressful experience (Thoits, 1995).

Rationale

The current investigation aims to explore psychological well-being and social disconnectedness in retired college teachers. For most of retired person, the most essential emotional trial ensuing from retirement is leaving the job life and constructs a life after the retirement to replace the earlier life (VanSolinge & Henkens, 2008).

Literature showed that mental health of retired college teachers significantly affected by both factors. The further aim of the study is to discover whether psychological well-being in retired college teachers can be anticipated by social disconnectedness. The above review of literature indicates how retirement brings changes in an individual's life and the psychological health of an individual influenced by which factors.

Retirement from full-time paid employment brings new changes in life that involves regulations in identity, thinking, emotions, mood and act. The alterations that result from retirement could be positive and negative. It depends on the perception and the attitude of retired teachers (Nwizu, 1997).

One of the main factors that may affect the individuals after retirement is social disconnectedness can be regarded as having less communication with others. Having small social networks, rare social interactions and less involvement in social events and groups are situational indicators of social disconnectedness (Cornwell & Waite, 2009). Someone's feelings of personal worth could be threatened by isolation and the confidence to develop and sustain interactive relations could be deteriorating. Aloneness has been defined as inescapable, disappointing, incapacitating situation from which the one's quality of life may affect harmfully. Intense feelings of bareness and rejection exhibit the isolation (VanSolinge & Henkens, 2008).

There is another perspective that the procedure of retirement may also bring positive effects for the well-being as the individuals moved from the demanding work and stressful jobs. It is like a side of coin one side is positive and negative. It may also lessened well-being, lost their identities, work related attachments and social networks. Negative relationship was found between giving up work and life contentment and positive link with

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mental anguish. Under the shadow of all the previous findings current investigation intends to examine relationship of social disconnectedness with psychological wellbeing after retirement in retired college teachers. The reason of selecting this topic entails that there have been very few studies related to the process of aging and on the life of elder adults in reference to Pakistan. The current study would be helpful in understanding the factors of well-being that most likely to effect the retired individuals in the context of their retirement (Atchley, 1977).

Objectives

Following are the objectives:

- 1.To evaluate the level of social disconnectedness and psychological well-being among retired college teachers.
- 2.To determine the association between social disconnectedness and psychological well-being among retired college teachers.
- 3.To find out the gender differences in the levels of social disconnectedness on psychological well-being of retired college teachers.

Research Design and Sample

The cross sectional correlational research design was used in the present study. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data for the study. A sample of (n=200) including (n=125) men and (n=75) women was taken from two cities of Punjab (Lahore, Faisalabad). Age range of the participants was 62-73 years. Those retired Government teachers were included whose duration of retirement was more than two years (62 years or above). Private college teachers were excluded from the study.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=200)

Variables	Categories	f	%
Age	62-66	65	32.5
	67 and onwards	135	67.5
Gender	Men	125	62.5
	Women	75	37.5
Last Designation	Lecturer	20	10
	Assistant Professor	15	7.5
	Professor	50	25
	Associate Professor	100	50
	Principal	15	7.5

Instruments**Social Disconnectedness Scale**

Social disconnectedness scale (Cornwell & Waite, 2009) measures the individuals lack of connection with others and social groups. It is comprised of 8 items. It measures the two domains of social disconnectedness, social network and social participation. Social network size and range intends to measure the extent to which a person network involves different types of relationships. The internal consistency of the instrument is .73 as reported by authors (Cornwell & Waite, 2009).

Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being (1989)

The Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (RSPWB) measures the psychological well-being of a person. The scale is comprised of 42 items. It focuses on the six dimensions of psychological well-being. The dimensions are self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery and autonomy. It is a 6 point Likert scale; score ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Following items are reverse scored 3, 5, 10, 13,14,15,16,17,18,19, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 39 and 41.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of current research are:

1- Social disconnectedness would be negative predictor of psychological well-being and it's sub-scales.

3- There would be negative relationship between social disconnectedness and psychological well-being and its sub scales.

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4- There would be gender differences in the levels of social disconnectedness, and psychological well-being of retired college teachers.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, list of retired college teachers was obtained from the colleges of Lahore and Faisalabad. The contact numbers and address of retired teachers was obtained from the DPI office of colleges. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Consent was sought from the retired teachers after explaining the nature and purpose of the study. Before administering the questionnaire, they were informed about the objective of the study. They were assured that all the information would be kept confidential.

Results

Gender Differences on Social Disconnectedness and Psychological Well-being and its Dimensions (N=200).

Variables	Retired College teachers				t(198)	P	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Men (n=125)		Women(n=75)				LL	UL	
	M	SD	M	SD					
Psychological Well-being	3.79	.199	3.86	.18	-2.45	.015	-.13	-.01	.37
Autonomy	28.6	2.4	24.34	3.9	8.54	.000	3.32	5.32	1.3
Environmental mastery	30.12	2.13	25.94	2.88	10.87	.000	3.41	4.93	1.6
Personal Growth	26.32	2.22	25.04	3.17	3.35	.001	.52	2.03	.46
Positive Relations	25.56	2.89	28.41	3.16	-6.51	.000	3.71	-1.98	.94
Purpose in life	25.19	2.16	23.64	3.08	4.17	.000	.818	2.28	.58
Self-acceptance	27.54	2.16	24.54	2.96	7.38	.000	2.19	3.79	1.1
Social disconnectedness	4.54	.35	4.65	.22	-.08	.93	-.08	.07	.34

The findings of independent sample t-test reported that there was no significant mean difference was found between men and women in social disconnectedness. However for psychological well-being and its subscale the results, reported that men scored higher on the autonomy as compared to women. Environmental mastery and personal development were greater in men. Having a goal or purpose in the life, result revealed that retired male persons tend to have a scored better on this dimension. Self-acceptance was better in men and to make relations was higher among women.

According to Cohen (1988) the effect size is is either: small (0.2; medium (0.5) or large (0.8). The significant values show high effect size.

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Relationship of Social Disconnectedness with Psychological well-being (N=200)

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Social disconnectedness	-.04	-.13	.17*	.06	-.23**	-.19**	-.22**	-.46**
2. Autonomy		.5**	.39**		-.11	.41**	.51**	-.21**
3. Environmental Mastery				-.03	-.31**	.02	.33**	-.35**
4. Personal Growth					-.09	.16*	.28**	-.14*
5. Positive Relations						-.03	-.18**	.41**
6. Purpose in life							.29**	.03
7. Self-acceptance								.043
8. Psychological Wellbeing								1

*p< .05.**p< .01.***p< .001

Table shows the relationship between the social disconnectedness and psychological well-being. According to the results, social disconnectedness showed medium negative association with psychological well-being. It also had negative but weak relationship with purpose in life. Social disconnectedness had a weak but negative relationship with positive relations and self-acceptance.

Social Disconnectedness as Predictors of Psychological Wellbeing (N=200)

Variable	PWB			Aut-PWB			EM-PWB			PG-PWB			PR-PWB			PiL-PWB			SA-PWB		
	β	R ²	F	B	R ²	F	β	R ²	F	β	R ²	F	β	R ²	F	β	R ²	F	β	R ²	F
SD	-	.22**	52.84**	-.13*	.017	3.45	.17	.02	5.8	.06	.00	.97	-	.051	10.71	-	.036	7.3	-	.04	10.08
	.46**	*	*		*	*	*	9*	8*	5	4		.23*	**	**	.18	*	0*	.220	8*	*
	*												*			*			*		

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The above table shows how social disconnectedness predicted psychological well-being and its sub-scales the study showed that social disconnectedness explained significant variance in psychological well-being $\{\Delta R^2 = .46^{***}, F = 58.24^{***}, p < .001\}$. Also social disconnectedness predicted variance in following psychological well-being sub-scales, i.e in autonomy $\{\Delta R^2 = .017^*, F = 3.45^*, p < .05\}$, environmental mastery $\{\Delta R^2 = .29^*, F = 5.88^*, p < .05\}$, positive relation $\{\Delta R^2 = .051^{**}, F = 10.71^{**}, p < .01\}$, purpose in life $\{\Delta R^2 = .036^*, F = 7.30^*, p < .01\}$, and social acceptance $\{\Delta R^2 = .048^*, F = 10.08^*, p < .05\}$. Social disconnectedness failed to predict variance in personal growth.

Discussion

Current research focuses on investigating the association between social disconnectedness, and psychological well-being of the retired Govt. college teachers. The research also examined whether social disconnectedness predicted psychological well-being.

The main assumption of the study was that social disconnectedness is likely to be negatively correlated with psychological well-being. A retired individual psychological well-being refers to as the extent to which an individual is satisfied with its mental states and effectively enjoys the psychological working (Wang & Shultz, 2012). The outcomes of the present research showed that social disconnectedness had a negative connection with psychological well-being. The findings are in averse m accordance with previous study. Study showed that the lack of meaningful engagement results in poor psychological well-being (Victor, Scambler, Bowling & Bond, 2005). Also, it was revealed that social disconnectedness and perceived loneliness are negative predictors of quality of life in retired individuals (Ahmed & Kausar, 2013).

Another study revealed that the individual whose work-related attachments, social individualities and networks are lost, their health is reduced as a result of retirement (Kim & Moen, 2002).

Secondly it was hypothesized that social disconnectedness would be negative predictor of psychological well-being. The study found that social disconnectedness was a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being among retired college teachers. While arguing from the role theory, postulates that employment is central to one's identity; loss of his important work role, and/ or the environmental loss accompanying retirement produces deterioration in morale or life satisfaction and increase in depressive symptoms (Salami, 2010).

After retirement if the older persons are segregated from the society or social groups their mental health would likely decrease. While looking at the previous findings, it was revealed that lonesomeness and isolation from the society activities negatively affects the psychological and mental health of Individuals (Sharma et al., 2015). Physical health of the individuals also lessen due to the social disconnectedness and perceived loneliness (Cornewell & Waite, 2009).

Another main goal of the research was to examine the gender differences at all levels of social disconnectedness and psychological well-being. The findings showed that men obtained higher score on psychological well-being and all its six dimensions such as autonomy, accept one self, having a skills to excel in the situation or environment in which to live and individual development. Men are high on Psychological well-being in the present study because the transition to retirement is more difficult for women as compared to men

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because significant aspects of their life characteristics are made by their occupations. It has been reported that the subjective well-being (included life contentment and positive emotional effect on the health) negatively related with adverse happenings for women as compared to men. The current study also purports to measure the gender differences across all the study variables. It is evident from the literature that women have more negative attitudes toward retirement than men do, and retirement is more disruptive and more likely to be linked with greater depression and loneliness for women than it is for men (Kim & Moen, 2002). It was due to the fact that at the work commitment gender based differences exist because women primary role was in the home, retired women are expected to have fewer adjustment problems (Slevin & Wingrove, 1995).

Another important factor which plays a vital role in enhancing one's health is purpose in life. Elderly women seemed to experience a sense of personal time ahead of them in comparison to those who were chronically ill. Retirees who were optimistic and had some purpose in their life even after the retirement were quite healthy to those who had a pessimistic view about life after retirement which ultimately worsened their overall psychological well-being. Women's emotional well-being was more contingent on the maintenance of social contacts outside the family. On the other hand, women participate in domestic activities and also keep busy themselves in social activities and religious activities and hence get more social support which enhances their well-being (Sharma, 1995).

The male retirees on the other hand scored significantly higher on purpose in life which shows that males are more achievement oriented, optimistic and are hardy in their approach towards life. They are more committed, take the challenge willingly and control their emotions which strengthen their physical and mental power thereby improving overall psychological well-being (Sharma & Malhotra, 2007).

It is social contacts that appear to stand out as the key defining factor in the retirement experiences of women. A study on retired individuals revealed that, for women, social linkages help them enjoy a more balanced life through the support of strong friendships and allow them to make meaningful social contributions (Sharma & Malhotra, 2007).

Conclusion

One of the most important decisions of life is retirement through which every individual has to go through, who did job. As the individuals grow older many changes occur among them is the retirement decision that an individual has to make during his or her life. Although retirement occurs late in life but it had very significant effects on the well-

being of older people. Therefore in this study, relationship and prediction was investigated between social disconnectedness and psychological well-being among retired Govt. college teachers. Results showed negative relationship among social disconnectedness and psychological well-being. Social disconnectedness is negative predictor of psychological well-being. By increasing the social network size and range, the mental health of older adults could be increased. Therefore, when a teacher enhances their interaction, develops the better relationship, improves the quality of relationships, more friends, they are more likely to develop the better sense of self-determination and self-control. Thus, in order to improve the mental health of retired individuals, counselors and healthy practitioners should take into account these factors and incorporate in their services.