

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF THE ELDERLY IN ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE

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### Abstract

*Every elderly person needs access to quality specialized health care (i.e. relating to their individual health needs), affordable and comfortable shelter, healthy nutrition, social security, family support and a sense of belonging to the society to help them maintain proper well-being. The psychological well-being of the elderly is very important to ensure that they live with a good state of mind as long as they are still alive. A purposive sampling technique was used to select all elderly found in their clinics and pensions office. A questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.87 looking at some variables such as (income earned, relationship with children, marital status, health conditions, social relationships and education) was used. Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages was used in analysing the data. It is recommended that Government should put in place special healthcare provisions for the elderly seeing that good health conditions make a positive impact on the psychological well-being of the elderly.*

**Key words:** *Social factors, economic factors, social well-being, psychological well-being*

### Background to the study

As the elderly get older, living an active and independent life can become more challenging, they may need to find help with everyday activities. Thus, it is ideal that certain basic structures be put in place to ensure that they can continue with their everyday life with minimum disturbances and for the well-being of the elderly. In ensuring this, government, family and relatives, medical professionals, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders should all be involved in providing and maintaining these structures for them. Basically, every elderly person needs access to quality specialized health care (i.e. relating to their individual health needs), affordable and comfortable shelter, healthy nutrition, social security, family support and a sense of belonging to the society to help them maintain proper well-being.

Ibitoye and Sanuade (2015) showed that elderly who received financial support from their children had better psychological well-being than those who did not. An explanation for this is that the financial assistance received from children may go a long way in meeting the health, financial and other needs of the elderly. This may therefore enhance their psychological well-being. For instance, the study of Zeng Yi (2008) carried out to explore the relationship between intergenerational social support and the psychological well-being of older Chinese parents found that intergenerational financial support had positive impact on the self-reported health status of the elderly.

Over the past two decades, education has been a theme throughout the research on psychological well-being. The study of Ibitoye and Sanuade (2015) showed that good psychological well-being increased with level of education. That is, the experience of good psychological well-being was higher among those with higher level of education. The odds of having good psychological well-being was lower among those with no education and primary education compared with their counterparts with secondary and higher education. This pattern is expected because those with higher level of education may likely adopt good lifestyle and have access to better nutrition than their counterparts who were less educated. This is consistent with the study of Sherina, Nor and Shamsul (2003) that those with higher education had better well-being. The reason for this may be that education provides access to better information on health and this can enhance psychological well-being.

Marmot, Fuhrer, Ettner, Marks, Bumpass and Ryff(1998) analyzed data and found that individuals with more education experienced higher overall psychological well-being. Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff, (2002) reported similar findings on psychological well-being scores and education. For instance, higher education levels predicted high total psychological well-being scores; lower levels predicted low total psychological well-being scores.

Also, existing research highlights the influence of marital status on psychological well-being. Bierman, Fazio, and Milkie (2006) in his study which treated marital status was treated as a nominal variable, addressed only a single dimension of psychological well-being, Purpose in Life. These investigators found that individuals reporting themselves as married, scored significantly higher on this subscale than those who reported not being married. Participants were classified as either consistently married, remarried, separated or divorced, widowed, or never married. More research is warranted in order to understand not just the influence of marital status on overall psychological well-being, but on other individual dimensions of psychological well-being (Autonomy, Positive Relations with Others, Personal Growth, Environmental Mastery, and Self-Acceptance). Clarke et al. (2000) also found that marital status influenced psychological wellbeing in Canadian seniors (age 65 and older). Marital status was treated as a

nominal variable: married, widowed, divorced/separated, and never married. Married seniors scored significantly higher than non-married groups on a number of psychological well being subscales. Married individuals scored significantly higher on the Purpose in Life subscale (compared to the widowed and never married), the Self-Acceptance subscale (compared to the divorced and separated), and Positive Relations with Others (compared to the divorced, separated, and never married groups).

Another important factor that can impact the psychological well-being of the elderly is the relationship with children. Antonucci, Birditt and Webster (2010) opined that social interaction and support with family can provide one with an acceptance of self and lend to a decrease in mortality. Thus, positive relationships with children are a significant factor in the overall well-being of the elderly person. Shaw, Krause, Liang and Bennett (2007) suggest that as one ages, their family ties often remain intact as opposed to other relationships since family are thought to be a greater source of support, care, and emotional well-being than a social relationship. In addition, there may be a gradual decrease in social relationships due to limited mobility and death of peers. This limits the relationships of the aged to that of the family, especially with their children. A positive relationship with one's children may help to eradicate loneliness, thereby leading to psychological well-being. Studies by Shiovitz and Leitsch (2010) have also shown that loneliness and isolation lead to health disparities and depressive symptoms. Harvard Women's Health Watch (2010) reports that premature death was found to increase by 50% in those without social or family ties. They also point out interestingly that some of those that experience loneliness do not live alone.

Furthermore, for the elderly without children, no filial relationships exist at all. Hansen Thomas, Slagsvold Britt and Moum Torbjorn (2010) show that childlessness has a negative effect on psychological well-being. This is because childless women reported significantly lower life satisfaction and self-esteem than both mothers with residential children and empty nest mothers.

The health conditions of the elderly is another important factor that affects the psychological well-being of the elderly. In general, physical health is recognized as one of the most important indicators of quality of life in later life. The importance of physical health for psychological well-being has been reported in a number of studies. Revicki and Mitchell (1990) found that physical health problems were the most important source of life strain among older adults. Physical health can have a major impact on subjective well-being. For instance, Bishop, Epstein, Keitner and Stroke (1986) found that poor health was a significant factor associated with lower morale. According to Steptoe, Deaton and Stone (2015), psychological wellbeing and health are closely related, and the link may become more important at older ages, if only because the prevalence of chronic illness increases with advancing age. As life expectancy increases and treatments for life-threatening disease become

more effective, the issue of maintaining well-being at advanced ages is growing in importance. Studies of older people indicate that evaluations of quality of life are affected by the person's state of health, but the frequent finding that average self-reported life evaluation in the population increases with age suggests that psychological wellbeing is affected by many factors other than health. These include material conditions, social and family relationships, social roles and activities, factors that also change with age. There is a growing suggestion that psychological well-being may even be a protective factor in health, reducing the risk of chronic physical illness and promoting longevity. It also states that other studies have argued that psychological wellbeing should be addressed in measures of health valuation, and be considered in health care resource allocation. The study summarises the current state of evidence linking psychological wellbeing with health in an ageing population.

Another important factor affecting the psychological well-being is the existence of social relationship in the lives of the elderly. The existence of social relationships probably among peers of the same age group, in the neighbourhood or former colleagues help to alleviate loneliness, which in turn may grant psychological well-being. According Lim and Kua (2011), loneliness can be viewed as a subjective measure of one's state of mind and the negative feelings about one's level of social contact, often involving an unwanted discrepancy between existing and desired relationships. Loneliness is a universal phenomenon embedded in the human experience and is closely associated with changing life circumstances. Old age is a period that is often seen to be marked by loneliness, escalating with approaching death. Studies have shown that loneliness is linked to depression and lower quality of life and increased vulnerability to both physical and mental health problems of the elderly.

### **Statement of the problem**

A lot of research has been done on enumerating the challenges the elderly in our society face and how the efforts government is making to ameliorate their situations. In other studies, factors contributing to the social well-being of the elderly had been examined. However, the psychological well-being of the elderly is also very important to ensure that they live with a good state of mind as long as they are still alive. To this end, this study intends to examine the impact that social economic factors such as income, relationship with children, education, health condition, marital status and social relationships will have on the psychological well-being of the elderly of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun state.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study includes the following:

- (I.) To examine the impact of education on the psychological well-being of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun State.
- (ii.) To examine the impact of social interaction with children on the psychological well-being of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun State.
- (iii.) To examine the impact of health conditions on the psychological well-being of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun State.
- (iv.) To examine the impact of social relationships on the psychological well-being of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

### **Significance of the study**

The findings of this study would be of great benefit to a lot of people, from the government: as an eye opener to the state of the psychological well-being of elderly Nigerians and an encouragement to make and implement policies that would cater to the welfare of the elderly, thereby positively impacting their psychological well-being; to the health care providers: as evidence for the need to pay better attention to the health of the aged; to the family unit of the society: the knowledge that social support provides more emotional stability to the aged and probably has a significant contribution to their psychological well-being; and to the young generation themselves: for encouragement to prepare for old age. The findings would also be useful for training the various stakeholders socio-economic factors which impact on the psychological well-being of the elderly.

### **Scope of the study**

The study is focused mainly on elderly people (65 years and above) who are residing in Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria. The researcher hopes to visit clinics such as Geriatric Centre, Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Abeokuta and Cardiology Clinic, Federal Medical Centre, Abeokuta attended by the aged and then, Bureau of State Pensions as these are places where the elderly can be strategically interviewed. Other random places like market places, banks etc. may not provide good results because people might be in a hurry or be busy. Those selected places will represent the whole of Abeokuta, Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

- RQ1:** What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition) on Psychological Well-being?
- RQ2:** What is the joint effect of the independent variables (Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition) on Psychological Well-being?

## Methodology

The study adopted the discipline research design, to carry out factors on the impact of socio economic factors on the psychological well-being of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The target population of this study include both male and female, of the age 65 years and above. A purposive sampling technique was used to select all elderly found in the Geriatric Centre, Neuropsychiatric Hospital Abeokuta; Cardiology Clinic, Federal Medical Centre, Abeokuta; and Bureau of State Pensions, Abeokuta

The researchers sought the opinion of respondents with the aid of questionnaires based on certain variables such as income earned, relationship with children, marital status, health conditions, social relationships and education. The Reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method to give a reliability co-efficient of 0.87.

Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages was used in analysing the demographic data while person product moment correlation coefficient was also used to test the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable at  $< 0.05$ .

## Results

What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition) on Psychological Well-being

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
(Constant)	6.128	2.316		2.647	.010
Social Interaction with Children	.128	.135	.088	.952	.343
Existence of Social Relationships	.491	.116	.405	4.227	.000
Good health condition	.248	.111	.220	2.238	.028

The relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, viz:

- Social Interaction with Children, ( $\beta = .088$ ,  $P > .05$ ), no significant relationship existed;
- Existence of Social Relationships, ( $\beta = .405$ ,  $P < .05$ ), significant relationship existed and lastly
- Good health condition, ( $\beta = .220$ ,  $P < .05$ ), significant relationship existed.

What is the joint effect of the independent variables (Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition) on Psychological Well-Being?

R	RSquare		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.548	.341		.320	3.0581		
ANOVA						
Model	SumofSquares	DF	MeanSquare	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	455.385	3	151.795	16.231	.000	Sig.
Residual	879.105	94	9.352			
Total	1334.490	97				

The joint effect of the independent variables (Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition) to the prediction of the dependent variable .i.ePsychological Well-being was significant. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation  $R = .548$  and a multiple  $R^2$  of .341. This means that 34.1% of the variance was accounted for by the predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at  $P < .05$ . The table also shows that the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the regression yielded a F -ratio of 16.231 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

### Discussion of the findings

The outcome of the research is in agreement with Udoh (2006) who says that management of the elderly goes beyond medical care, which is the responsibility of the medical personnel. Taking care of the elderly by their children would, as the study reveals, make the aged happier and live longer. However, the finding is contrary to studies that of Ibitoye and Sanuade (2015) which showed that there was no significant difference in the psychological well-being of those who had children and those who did not. In addition, the analysis of the joint effect on the three independent dependents: existence of social relationships, social interaction with children and good health conditions have significant impact on the psychological well-being of the elderly.

Thus, this study is consistent with previous others that have shown significant impact of these socio-economic factors on psychological well-being of the elderly.

### **Conclusion**

The study shows that the social factors: Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition examined here indeed have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of the elderly in Abeokuta, Ogun State. This also translates to the fact that absence of these factors may negatively affect the psychological well-being of the elderly. The joint effect of the independent variables (Social Interaction with Children, Existence of Social Relationships and Good health condition) to the prediction of the dependent variable. i.e Psychological Well-being was also significant.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- i. Government should put in place special healthcare provisions for the elderly seeing that good health conditions make a positive impact on the psychological well-being of the elderly.
- ii. Public awareness be drawn to the importance of social relationships and the vital role it plays in the psychological well-being of the elderly, thus encouraging their children and the society at large to provide a conducive environment for the elderly to age gracefully. This will help identify how to enhance and strengthen the social support system for elderly in this community.

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