

EXPERIENCING LIFE SATISFACTION BY KUMAUNI WOMEN: GLIMPSES FROM TRIBAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

This study was a piece of a major project funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and it was aimed to ascertain the impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on life satisfaction in kumari women. It was contended that variations in the magnitude of life satisfaction would be influenced by varying types of culture, levels of chronological age, and types of marital circumstances. 240 women hailing from various regions of Kumaun participated in this study and were arranged in accordance with the requirements of 3-way factorial design with 3 variations of culture (Bhotia, Buxa, and general Kumauni), 2 levels of chronological age (25-30 years and 55-60 years) and 2 types of marital circumstances (wives accompanied by the husbands and wives living far from husbands) ie: 20 participants per cell. The Life Satisfaction Scale by Alam and Srivastava was used.

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Introduction

Data analysis was made by 3-way analysis of variance and it was noted that the main effects of cultural variations and marital circumstances were significant but age-related changes were unable to yield their impact on life satisfaction. All interactions were significant. Correlational analysis revealed that all dimensions of the scale were closely knitted.

Findings were discussed in terms of cultural variations, chronological age, and marital circumstances as effectors of life satisfaction. At last, suggestions were given to raise the mental health of the needful people.

Life satisfaction is the way a person tries to understand how his/her life has been and how he/she feels about where the life is going in the future (Medley, 1980). Life satisfaction is a criterion of well-being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfaction, relation with others, achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with daily life.

Life satisfaction can be assessed globally or by a specific domain such as, safety after marriage and health. It is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative and positive. (Kousna & Mohseni, 2005; Kuppens, Realo and Diener, 2008). An increase in life satisfaction, positive affect, and a decrease in negative affect are three major indicators of well being. Research studies on satisfaction with current life circumstances include the following- Desire to change one's life satisfaction with past and satisfaction with future and significant other's views of one's life. A related term for satisfaction in the literature includes happiness, quality of life, and well-being. So, while making a study on satisfaction one should also understand the concept, structure, and process of happiness (Alfred, 2003; Rode, 2006).

Life satisfaction is considered to be a controlled aspect of human welfare (Peter & Sevend, 2004; Prakash, 1990; Rode, 2006). It is the ultimate goal of human beings who strive to achieve this goal throughout their life. Satisfaction with one's life implies acceptance of the circumstances and the fulfillment of wants and needs for life as a whole. It generally indicates an assessment of the condition of existence as derived from a comparison of one's aspirations to one's achievement and thereafter to one's actual achievement. Such assessment and comparison can also be defined as having a favorable attitude towards life.

Satisfaction could also be divided into two parts. There are two types of satisfaction. Global or whole-life satisfaction and life domain safety (Argyle 2001). Life domain satisfaction refers to the satisfaction within specific areas of an individual's

life such as marriage, education, job, income, etc. whereas global life satisfaction includes one's judgment of life as a whole. People share the domain satisfaction information when they evaluate their whole life events. A feeling of being satisfied with his life is an important factor for a general sense of well being (Harrington & Laffredo, 2001). Life satisfaction often refers to the attitude that an individual realizes about his past present as well as future in relation to their psychological well-being.

Studies on life satisfaction give a separate view on the subject (Adams, 1971; Alston, Lowe, and Wrigley, 1974; Kakkar & Shukla, 2011; Joshi & Shukla, 2011). This indicates that the concept of life satisfaction is elusive and can be highly susceptible to one's own social values or judgment about important aspects of life.

Life satisfaction and well being are generally used interchangeably (Argyal, 2001). Happiness is admitted as a quality of life satisfaction.

Keeping these views in consideration this study was planned and it was aimed to find out the impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on life satisfaction. The objectives and hypotheses were as follows:

- The first objectives of the study were found out the impact of cultural variation on life satisfaction. It was contended that cultural variation would show variation in the level of life satisfaction.
- The second objective of this investigation was to find out the relative efficacy of chronological age on life satisfaction. It was noted that young and old participants would reveal variation in their scores on life satisfaction.
- The third objective of the study was to find out the impact of marital circumstances in on life satisfaction. It was assumed that there would be difference in the scores of life satisfaction in the women living with their husbands and women living far from their husbands.
- The fourth objective of the study was to explorer the dimensional relationship of life satisfaction on the basis of the obtained scores. It was noted that all dimensions will be knitted.

In order to check these objectives and hypotheses, this study was planned.

Method

Sample

This study was a part of our major project sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research so, a small part of the was taken into consideration. 240 women hailing from Kumaun Himalaya were taken into consideration. They were arranged according to the requirements of 3-way factorial design with 3 levels of cultural variations (Bhatia, Buxa, General Kumaun)

two-level of chronological age (25-30 years, 55-60 years) and 2 types of marital circumstances (wives accompanying with husband, wives far from husband's) i.e; 20 participants per cell. The schematic presentation of experimental design is as follows:

Table 1 Schematic presentation of experimental design used in the study

A					
A1		A2		A3	
B1	B2	B1	B2	B1	B2
C1					
C2					

Legends:

A=Cultural Variation

A1=Bhotia

A2=Buxa

A3=General Kumauni

C=Marital Circumstances

C1=Wives living with husband

C2=Wives living apart from husband

B=Chronological Age

B1=25-30Yrs

B2=55-60Yrs

Material

In this study, only one measure was taken into consideration and it was Life Satisfaction Scale. This scale is developed by Alam and Srivastava (2005) and consists of 60 two-point items dealing with six areas in which life satisfaction can be seen or at least felt. They are: health satisfaction, personal satisfaction, economic satisfaction, social satisfaction, mental satisfaction, and job satisfaction, with a score, ranges between 0-60. A high score indicates high satisfaction of life and a low score vice versa. Test-retest reliability is 0.84. The validity of the scale was obtained by correlating it with the Screens Adjustment Inventory. The validity quotient was 0.74 and 0.84 respectively. Further, the scale has face validity also as all items are closely knitted and relevant for the concept of life satisfaction.

Procedure

At first the investigator targeted the places from where the data collection had to be taken place, The Bhotia sample was taken from Dharchula, and Pithoragarh

and Buxas were taken near of Ram Nagar Uttarakhand. So far as the matter of general Kumauni population was concerned data were collected from Almora Uttarakhand. The researcher took the help of Gram Pradhans and for Mukhiyas while collecting the data of tribal women. Data collection was done individually in group as per convenience and availability of the participants and best efforts were made to avoid external distractions.

Results

Obtained data were analyzed in two sections and they are reported accordingly.

Section I

(i) Impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on life satisfaction

obtained data were analyzed by 3-way analysis of variance and they are reported in table 2.

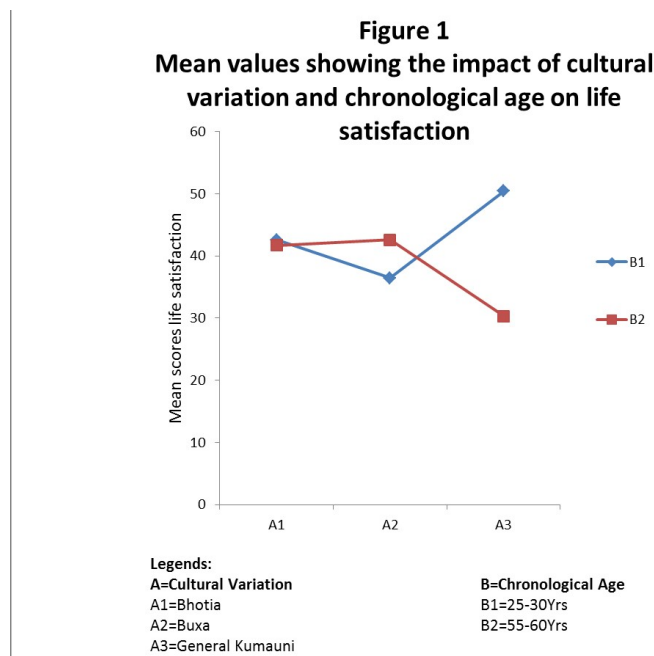
Table 2
Summary table of analysis of variance showing the impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on life satisfaction.

S.N	Sources of variation	Ss	dt	ms	f
1.	A	0.66	2	3.33	3.97
2.	B	0.61	1	0.61	.72
3.	C	6.52	1	6.52	7.76
4.	AB	16.20	2	8.10	9.64
5.	AC	15.92	2	7.96	6.69
6.	BC	8.07	1	8.07	9.61
7.	ABC	17.12	2	8.56	10.19
8.	Error	271.32	228	1.19	
	Within		239		

A close perusal of the table indicates that the main effect of cultural variation was significant ($F, 2.239 = 3.97 P < .05$). It revealed that variation in satisfaction of life was caused by variation in culture. Mean values pooled across chronological age and marital circumstances were : 35.11, 39.51, and 40.31, respectively for Bhatia, Buxa, and General Kumauni samples. The second main effect of chronological age was insignificant ($F, 1, 239 = 0.72 P > .05$) and it was noted that the magnitude of life

satisfaction was more or less equal in the young ($X=39.95$) and old group ($X=41.40$). The third main effect of marital circumstances was highly significant ($F, 1, 229 = 776 P < .01$), and it was found that wives living with their husbands were more satisfied with their lives ($X=51.36$) as compared with those who were living far apart from their husbands ($X = 29.99$).

The two-way interaction of cultural variation and chronological age was significant ($F, 2, 239 = 9.64 P < .01$), and it is appeared in figure 1. The figure clearly shows that the interaction, occurred in figure 1 appeared due to the drastic age-related changes in the General Kumauni population. The cultural variation and marital circumstances interaction was also significant ($F, 2, 239 = 6.64 P < .01$), and it is mentioned in figure 1.

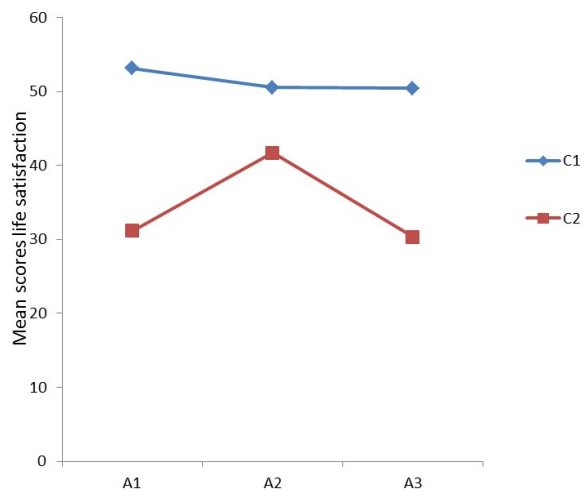


The figure reveals that the cultural variation related discrepancy was relatively high in varying marital circumstances. It was appeared high for wives living far from the husbands. So far as the matter of wives accompanied by their husbands was concerned it was nominal.

The chronological age and marital circumstances as interaction were also significant ($F, 1, 239 = 7.61$) and it is reported in figure 2. The figure reveals that the magnitude of age-related discrepancy was higher for wives accompanied by husbands

as compared to those who were living for from their husbands.

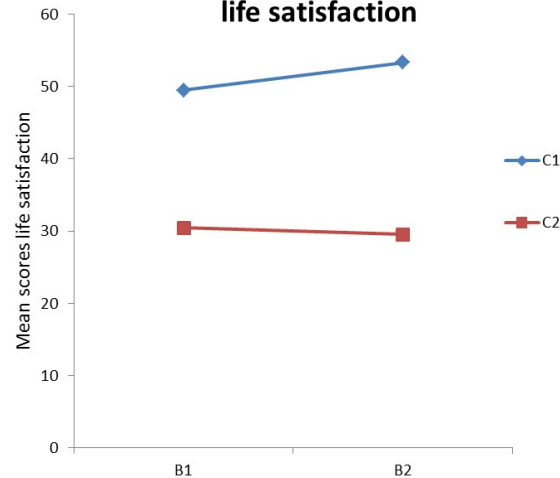
Figure 2
Mean values showing the impact of cultural variation and marital circumstances on life satisfaction



Legends:
A=Cultural Variation
A1=Bhotia
A2=Buxa
A3=General Kumauni
C=Marital Circumstances
C1=Wives living with husband
C2=Wives living apart from husband

The chronological age and marital circumstances interaction were also significant ($F_{1, 235} = 9.61$ $P < .01$) and it revealed that the magnitude of age-related discrepancy was higher for wives accompanied by husbands as compared to those who were living far from their husbands. The interaction is appeared in figure 3.

Figure 3
Mean values showing the impact of
chronological age and marital circumstances on
life satisfaction



Legends:
B=Chronological Age
 B1=25-30Yrs
 B2=55-60Yrs
C=Marital Circumstances
 C1=Wives living with husband
 C2=Wives living apart from husband

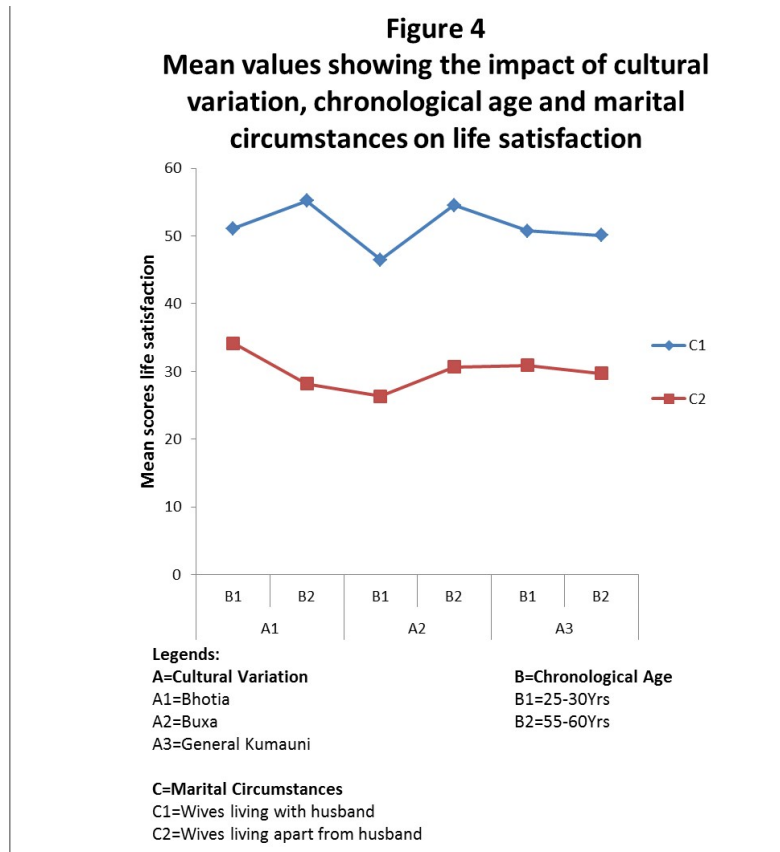
The three-way interaction of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances was also significant ($F_{2, 239} = 10.19$ $P < .01$) and it is mentioned in figure 4. The figure clearly reveals that All variables laid their impact on the scores of life satisfaction.

(ii) Area wise analysis

In order to find out the relation, wise analysis was made out it is mentioned in table 3. The table shows a good knit of dimensions.

Table 3
Inter correlation analysis of Life Satisfaction Scale Scores

S.N	Name of the areas	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Health Satisfaction	-	.69	.66	.59	.56	.56
2.	Personal Satisfaction		-	.52	.61	.68	.79
3.	Economic Satisfaction			-	.64	.71	.70
4.	Social Satisfaction				-	.69	.53
5.	Marital Satisfaction					-	.56
6.	Job Satisfaction						



All coefficient values are significant. They, therefore, reveal that all dimensions of the life satisfaction scale here were similarly impacted.

Findings in sum revealed that life satisfaction was influenced by cultural variation and marital circumstances in the developmental perspective. In addition, the correlation coefficients were also significant. It showed the fact that life satisfaction is comprised of these components.

Discussion

Obtained data were analyzed by three-way analysis of variance and interpreted in terms of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances as effectors of life satisfaction, Prior to the inception of this study some hypotheses were formulated and the findings will be discussed accordingly.

(i) **Variation in culture would cause variation in life satisfaction** : Our first

and foremost concern was related to the impact of cultural variation on life satisfaction. It was contended that variation in culture would evince its impact on the level of life satisfaction and participants hailing from various cultural segments would show differences in relation to their scores on life satisfaction. Our findings confirmed our hypothesis and it was noted that the magnitude of life satisfaction was higher in the General Kumauni population followed by Buxus and Bhotias.

It appears from the findings that people living in the civilized and privileged area feel more comfortable and they are more satisfied with their lives as compared to others because such places provide many amenities of life. The participants of tribal societies were taken from the rooted areas of their places where they are deprived of such facilities which they should have. They listen about them from the other societies but lack it. The importance of work, family, religion, and interpersonal trust also play an important role in deciding the magnitude of life satisfaction (Lange, 2009). While going through the study of life satisfaction from a cross-national perspective Oishi (2006) noted that the Chinese were less satisfied with their lives as compared to Americans. Our findings support their notion and it can be said varying cultural produce variation in life satisfaction.

In India, a bulk of researches has also been done and they have stressed on the relative efficacy of culture on life satisfaction. Joshi & Shukla (2018) and Joshi, (2018) revealed the relative impact of cultural variation on the magnitude of life satisfaction of Kumauni women. Moreover, Dubey and Tripathi (2016) also found a significant impact of varying status of women on life satisfaction. Bharadwaj (2013) has also stated that women as a disadvantaged category have faced discrimination and maltreatment as human individuals and it contributed to making them rebellious and agents of social change.

(ii) Variation in chronological age would lay its impact on life satisfaction: Our second notion was related to the impact of chronological age on life satisfaction. It was hypothesized that variation in chronological age would lay its impact on life satisfaction and it was noted that our young and old participants yielded their difference in life satisfaction.

Our findings are in close consonance with Medley (1980) who focused on the pattern of life satisfaction in adulthood. The changes in life satisfaction during adulthood were also noted by Mroczek and Sapiro (2005), Huang, Ziaomin, Tengnaio, and Buxin (2011). If we see dimension-wise results we find that health, economic, social satisfaction of young aged participants was higher than old aged participants. Moreover, it was also noticed that participants living with husbands were more satisfied

than the participants, living far from husbands. The category of their satisfaction is average but they are on the lower side of this category. The dimensions are concerned with physical and mental health, struggle in life, being active availability of basic facilities, recreation, interest in social problems, good adjustments with family members, respect for custom, etc. Their being on the lower side means that in these areas their position was in average category but the level of all the amenities and adjustments etc is not so high.

(iii) Variation in life satisfaction would be influenced by variation in marital circumstances : Last but not least was the hypothesis in which it was assumed that variation in life satisfaction would be caused by variation in life satisfaction. Our hypothesis was confirmed and it was found that the pattern of life satisfaction was varied with variation in marital circumstances.

It is a common fact that a women, in spite of her marital relation feels secured and satisfied because a lot of responsibilities are showed by her husband while on the other hand the woman living without and far from her husband feels insecure and helpless. Moreover, he feels children's welfare and financial management out of her control and feels herself at a crossroads, and thinks her life in vain. The women living with husbands find themselves elated and happy while the reverse side of the life comes in the parts of women living alone with the children and far from the husbands.

Findings, in the general reveal, the status of women in respect to life satisfaction. Better attempts are required to reuse the satisfaction level of women who required it.

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