

ISSN 2063-5346



THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED RESPECT ON LONELINESS AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG SENIOR CITIZEN

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Article History: Received: 10.05.2023

Revised: 29.05.2023

Accepted: 09.06.2023

Abstract

Mental health is essential elements of old age people followed by Physical Health. In India, Families in India are united up with invisible connection, cooperation, togetherness and respect towards elders. The urbanization and modernization have led to drifting changes in Intergenerational relationships among younger generation and older generation. This change has huge impact on mental health of old age. The current study examined on the effect of Perceived respect on Loneliness and Mental Health among Senior Citizen. The research was conducted with 60 senior citizen randomly selected in the area of Salem city. The study used the Perceived Respect from Younger Generation scale, Positive mental health inventory, De Jong GierVeld Loneliness Scale. As Hypothesized, the results revealed that Perceived respect from younger generation is mediating the relationship between loneliness and mental health of Senior citizen. Consequently, to improve Mental Health of the Senior Citizen, positive Intergenerational interaction should be focused.

Keywords: *Perceived Respect, Loneliness, Mental Health, Intergenerational gap, Senior Citizen.*

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DOI:10.48047/ecb/2023.12.9.179

1. Introduction

In today's drifting changes in world, older people's traditional wisdom and culture are declining rapidly and they have little to put forward to the troubles and issues faced by younger people. Especially, In India people are traditionally and emotionally bonded together with relationship, they are adapted to the culture where younger people deliberately shower respect to elderly persons. Older people rate social relationships among the most essential determinants of successful aging (Von Faber et al., 2001).

Intergenerational Relationship

The shifting cultural norms and the lifestyles that transform modern societies are creating wider gap between older and younger generations which substantially devalue older people's contributions to societies. The older people attempts to help were often criticized by their own offspring who were adapted to different lifestyles and ways of doing things. The declining status of older persons is important to consider in present-day societies (Cheng, 2009). The day to day interactions between older people and their children creates general lack of respect and appreciation for their work, within this larger social context. The subjective element of cognitive appraisal is very essential for positive mental health. The respect as perceived by older person matters for the positive mental health as it is the subjective feeling of one's social need has met. The perception of younger generations' attitudes could also influence psychological development in old age (Tabuchi et al., 2015).

Loneliness

Another factor associated with mental health is Loneliness. Loneliness is the negative feeling associated with a disagreement between a people's desired and actual levels of social relations. The Evolutionary theory of Loneliness assumes that feelings of loneliness appear, and are maintained for excess time can affect physiological and mental

health (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018). Loneliness cause physical and mental health issues in some way through mediating variables (Hutten et al., 2021). Many studies have found strong relationship between Loneliness and mental health, this study focus on how perceived respect play a role on the loneliness and mental health of older people. The Disengagement theory states that mutual withdrawal or disengagement, resulting in decreased interaction between the aging person and younger and others in the social system. One of the causes of disengagement is Perceived respect from others. An elderly person who perceives lack of respect from younger people is affected with loneliness. In a study Cheng 2009, reported that feelings of disrespect would lead to subsequent disengagement from generative goals.(Cheng, 2009)

Mental Health

The relationship between old age and mental health has also been reported by a number of researchers (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018). And most of the research carried out on investing the mental illness of the elderly, whereas the present study focuses on the Positive mental health. Positive mental health comprises of Self Acceptance, Ego Strength, and Philosophies of life. These dimensions are well related to the elderly people lifestyle. Elderly people after their great transition of retirement are not meeting the social needs they are adapted to before the retirement. This transition creates a huge impact on the psychological well-being of the older person. Protecting the mental health of Senior citizen is one of the critical part of the society and need for world. It is reported that the experience of being respected by nurses is to be essential for the improvement of patients' health-related quality of life (Koskenniemi et al., 2019) Perceived respect is a protective factor for mental health among Senior citizen.

Objective of the study:

- To examine the relationship between Perceived respect, Loneliness and Mental health.
- To investigate the mediating role of Perceived respect between Loneliness and Mental Health among Senior Citizen.

2. Methodology

Hypothesis

- There will be significant relationship between Perceived respect, Loneliness and Mental health.
- Loneliness has direct effect on Mental Health among Senior Citizen.
- Perceived Respect have direct effect on Mental Health among Senior Citizen.
- Perceived respect is the mediator between Loneliness and Mental Health among Senior Citizen.

Sample:

The data used in the present study were obtained from a cross-sectional study includes Senior Citizens living with Family and in old age home. The final sample size used in the study was N = 60 (30 living with family, 30 living in old age home). The questionnaire and interview method was used to obtain data from the samples. Individuals who agreed to participate in the study were asked to complete the General information Schedule and the Perceived Respect Scale, Loneliness and Positive Mental Health Scale.

Measures:

The Perceived Respect was assessed using the scale of Perceived Respect from Younger Generations developed by Tabuchi et al, 2015, measures on how old age people perceive respect in the form of appreciation from their younger generation. This scale consists of 7 items with 5 point scale from 1 (never applies to me) to 5 (very often applies to me).

Loneliness was assessed using De Jong GierVeld Loneliness Scale (2006) which is based on Weiss (1973) theory of emotional and social loneliness. It has 6 items (3 social loneliness and 6 emotional

loneliness) with 3 point scale Yes, more or less, no.

Mental Health was assessed using Positive mental health inventory developed by Agashe and Helode, 2008. There are 36 items based on three dimensions i.e. self-acceptance, ego strength and philosophy of life 12 items in each respectively. The answers can be marked as yes or no.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were calculated for the variables included in the present study. Regression analysis was used to investigate whether Loneliness and Perceived Respect could predict mental health. Moreover, Structural Equation Model was done to show the prediction of mediator. Data analysis was carried out using the statistical program package SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 26.0. All regression analyses included loneliness as independent variable and perceived respect as mediator.

3. Results

3.1 Relationship among Perceived Respect, Loneliness and Mental Health

Table no 1 correlation results that Loneliness is negatively correlated ($r = -.488$, $P < 0.01$) with Perceived respect. When an elderly person perceives low respect from younger people they have the feeling of Loneliness due to the generational gap. Loneliness has two dimensions emotional loneliness and social loneliness. Emotional Loneliness is negatively correlated ($r = -.670$, $P < 0.01$) with Mental health. Social Loneliness is also negatively correlated ($r = -.525$, $P < 0.01$) with Mental health. It represents that elderly people with high loneliness have low positive mental health. On analyzing the dimensions of loneliness, Emotional loneliness is strongly correlated with mental health than social loneliness. The correlation table shows the Positive correlation ($r = .577$, $P < 0.01$)

between Perceived respect and Mental health. It represents that if the elderly people have high perceived respect from their Younger generation will have high positive mental health. In Contrast, if the elderly have low perceived respect it

affects their positive mental health. Loneliness The results revealed that there is significant relationship between the variables Perceived respect, loneliness and Positive mental health among Senior Citizen.

Table 1: showing the Pearson correlations of the variables included in the present study.

Correlations				
	Perceived Respect	Loneliness		Positive Mental Health
		Emotional	Social	
Perceived Respect	1	-.524**	-.359**	.577**
Emotional Loneliness	-.524**	1	.517**	-.670**
Social Loneliness	-.359**	.517**	1	-.525**
Positive Mental Health	.577**	-.670**	-.525**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.2 The factors predicting mental health among the empty-nest elderly

To analyze the predicting factors of mental health, Regression analysis was used. Perceived Respect and Loneliness were independent variable and Mental Health was dependent variable. A linear regression model with stepwise analysis was used to verify the significant factors that predicted Positive mental health. As a result, Perceived Respect, Loneliness and Mental Health were entered into the

regression equation, and they explained 52% change in the influence of Perceived Respect and Loneliness on the Mental Health.

Table 2, Reveals that the variables Perceived Respect, Emotional Loneliness, Leisure time activities and Sleep time is significantly predicting the Mental Health ($p < 0.05$), Whereas Social Loneliness is not significant predictor of Mental Health of the elderly.

Table 2: Perceived Respect and Loneliness predicted the mental health among the Senior Citizen

Variable	B value	SE value	Beta	t-value	p-value
Perceived Respect	.283	.098	.311	2.887	.005
Emotional Loneliness	-1.874	.525	-.412	-3.570	.001
Social Loneliness	-.859	.432	-.209	-1.988	.052
Leisure time activities	2.843	1.325	.264	2.145	.036
Sleep Quality	4.772	1.450	.472	3.291	.002

3.3 Mediation

3.3.1 Direct and Indirect effect of Perceived respect and Loneliness on Mental health

The study assessed the mediating role of perceived respect on the relationship of loneliness on mental health. Table 3 shows the Mediation Analysis Summary to assess the direct and indirect effect of Perceived respect and Loneliness on Mental health. With our indirect test of loneliness on mental health through Perceived Respect, the lower bound confidence interval is -.712 and the upper bound is -.182. Since there is no zero between the LB and UP Confidence

Level, this shows significant indirect effects. The value of 0.02 at the intersection of Loneliness and Mental health shows the two tailed significance. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of loneliness on mental health was negative and significant ($b = -.393$, $p = 0.02$) which supports the hypothesis. Based on these results, we can conclude that Perceived Respect mediates the relationship between Loneliness and Mental health. As the variable Loneliness has a significant relationship to Mental Health ($b = -1.271$, $p < .000$). This means that the influence of Loneliness on mental health is partially mediated through the construct of perceived respect.

Table 3: Mediation Analysis Summary

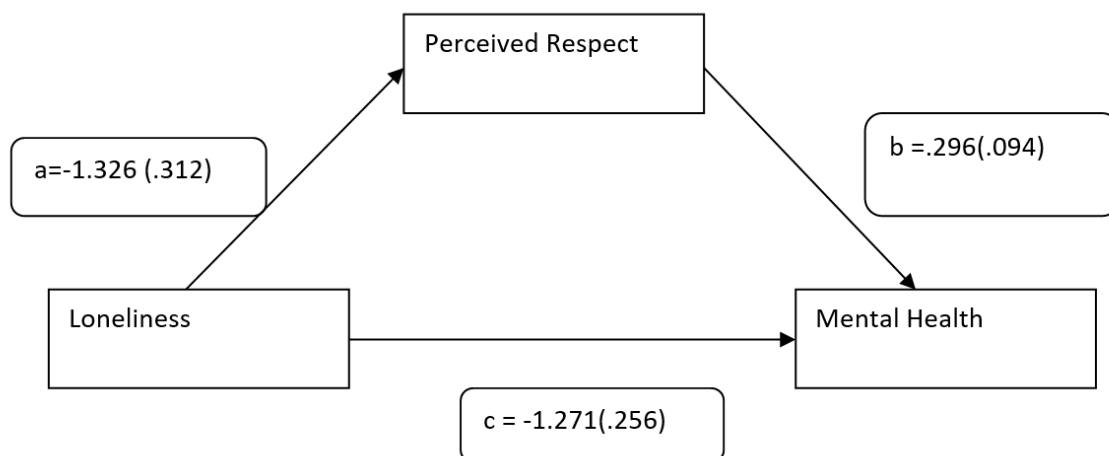
Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		P-value	Conclusion
			Lower bound	Upper bound		
Loneliness- > Perceived Respect- > Mental Health	-1.271 (.000)	-.393	-.712	-.182	0.02	Partial Mediation

3.3.2 Structural Equation Model

A mediation model was developed in order to assess the effects of loneliness on Mental health, and the mediating role of perceived respect between the effects of loneliness on Mental health. The initial model included both direct and indirect effects. Throughout a model was considered to have a good fit if all the path coefficients were significant at the 0.05 level. In this study, the structural equation model of loneliness and perceived respect affecting mental health had $\chi^2/df = 3.913$; Most of the goodness-of-fit estimates yielded in the initial test of these models indicated a good fit of the

model to the data (CFI = 1.000; GFI = 0.979; RMSEA=0.000; AGFI=0.925; NFI=0.968 illustrates the predicted causal connections. According to the structural equation model, the preliminary judgment was that perceived respect mediation path existed, but the mediation effect (path coefficient of the product) needed further verification. Additionally, the Sobel test was conducted to see if these mediating pathways were significant (Sobel, 1982). Sobel test was adopted to verify the mediation effect and the results revealed that perceived respect is mediating the loneliness and mental health.

Fig. 1 Structural Model Depicting the Intervening Role of Perceived Respect in the Relations from Loneliness to Mental Health.



4. Discussion

The Evolutionary Theory of Loneliness (ETL) predicts that loneliness has long-term health consequences (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018). Few previous studies have established that social support might partially explain the relationship between loneliness and mental health. The objective of the present study was to investigate whether perceived respect can explain relationships between loneliness and mental health. The present study found a relationship between loneliness and mental health. These results are in line with previous research that established a positive relationship between loneliness and depression and anxiety (Nuyen et al., 2020). In this study, perceived respect from younger generation has been partially mediated the relationship between loneliness and mental health.

This study showed that emotional loneliness and social loneliness played significantly roles in the mental health of elderly people. Among the dimensions of loneliness, emotional loneliness has major influence on the mental health than the social loneliness. Loneliness in old age, especially emotional loneliness, has previously been found to correlate with self-esteem (Van Baarsen et al., 2001) as well as other psychological factors

including life satisfaction (Ní Mhaoláin et al., 2012).

From the results, it is observed that Emotional loneliness, perceived respect, leisure time activities, and sleep quality are the factors affecting mental health. Social loneliness does not predict mental health in regression analysis. As the older people living in old age home accept the reality social loneliness does not affect the mental health. Leisure time and sleep quality is promoting factor for the mental health. Individuals can easily recover from any distress and re-establish social and physical health by engaging in leisure activities (Pressman et al., 2009). A primary sleep disturbance can be caused by physiological decline which affect the physical and mental health. The People who engage in physical and social activities are at much better mental health comparing to those who prefer solitary activities. Informal social activity like participation in social club or any social activity benefits the well-being of an older adults (Adams et al., 2011). As the ageing starts older people report less and poor sleep comparing to other age groups. This may be due the physical decline of health and the transition of the older people from retirement.

The present study revealed that perceived respect acts as a mediating effect in the

relationship between Loneliness and Mental Health among Senior Citizen. The model fits well through the structural equation model. The perceived respect have positive correlation with mental health. Perceiving respect would lead to higher positive emotional well-being and lower ill-being (Tabuchi et al., 2015). The effect of low perceived respect can hinder the promotion of intergenerational interactions.

5. Conclusion

Although prior researchers have constantly reported associations between loneliness and mental health, less is known about the mechanism through which loneliness is related to mental health. The mediation analyses of the present study suggest that perceived respect is partially explaining the relationship between loneliness and mental health. The findings of this study provide additional highlight to the importance of Perceived respect and intergenerational relationship on the mental health of the Senior citizen.

Declaration

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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