



Perceived Social Support among Retired Elderly and its Relationship to Sociodemographic Characteristics

الدعم الاجتماعي المدرك بين كبار السن المتقاعدين وعلاقته بالخصائص
الاجتماعية والديموغرافية

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المستخلص:

الهدف: لتقييم الدعم الاجتماعي المدرك بين كبار السن وعلاقته بالخصائص الاجتماعية والديموغرافية

المنهجية: أجريت دراسة وصفية ارتباطية في دائرة التقاعد العامة في مدينة ديالى على عينة مكونة من (١٣٠) من كبار السن المتقاعدين. وتم التحقق من صدق الاستبانة من خلال عرضها على الخبراء، كما تم التحقق من ثباتها من خلال الدراسة التجريبية. تم جمع بيانات هذه الدراسة باستخدام استبيان يتكون من (أ) الخصائص الاجتماعية والديموغرافية وتشمل العمر، الجنس، الحالة الاجتماعية، المستوى التعليمي، الدخل الشهري للأسرة، الحالة الصحية، هل تعيش مع أفراد عائلتك، (ب) مقياس الدعم الاجتماعي المدرك.

النتائج: تشير النتائج إلى أن متوسط عمر أفراد العينة هو 65.5 ± 6 ، (٧٢،٣%) من المشاركين ذكور، (٢٧،٧%) إناث، (٧٩،٢%) متزوجون، و(٢٥،٤%) متخرجون من المدرسة الثانوية، (٤٣،١%) من كبار السن المتقاعدين بالكاد يحصلون على دخل كاف، (٦١،٥%) من كبار السن المتقاعدين أفادوا بأن لديهم مستوى صحي معتدل، (٩٦،٩%) من كبار السن المتقاعدين أفادوا أنهم يعيشون مع أسرهم. أظهرت النتائج أن كبار السن يرون دعمًا اجتماعيًا مرتفعًا كما ورد بين (٥٩،٢% . $M \pm SD = 29.94 \pm 4.289$) لكن ٤٠،٨% منهم يرون دعمًا اجتماعيًا معتدلاً

التوصيات: ينبغي زيادة الوعي للأسرة ومقدمي الرعاية لكبار السن فيما يتعلق بدور الدعم الاجتماعي في رفاهيتهم، المشاركة في الأنشطة الترفيهية لتقليل مستوى الوحدة والاكتئاب الذي يعانون منه بعد التقاعد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدعم الاجتماعي المدرك، كبار السن المتقاعدين.

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Abstract:

Objective: To assess the perceived social support among elderly retired and assess its relationship to sociodemographic characteristics

Methods: A descriptive correlational study conducted at general retirement department in the diyala city on a sample of (130) elderly retired people. The validity of the questionnaire was verified by presenting it to experts, and its reliability was verified through a pilot study. The data for this study were collected by using questionnaire which consist (a) sociodemographic characteristics' included age, gender, marital status, educational level, family monthly income, health status, do you live with your family members, (b)Multidimensional Scale of perceived Social Support(MSPSS) and analyzed by applying descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

Results: The results indicate that the average age of the respondents is 65.5 ± 6 , (72.3%) of the participants are males, (27.7%) are female, (79.2%) are married, and (25.4%) were graduated from secondary school, (43.1%) of retired elderly people perceive barely sufficient income, (61.5%) of retired elderly people reporting that they have moderate level of health status, (96.9%) of retired elderly people reported that they living with their families. The results showed that elderly people perceive high social support as reported among 59.2% of them ($M \pm SD = 29.94 \pm 4.289$) but 40.8% of them perceive moderate social support.

Conclusions: Aging is an inevitable process in human life and identifying the factors that improve successful aging benefit both the individual and the society, the feeling of loneliness, one of the most common complaints emotions by the elderly, will decrease with the changes in their social circle that increase in the level of communication with other. and Social support has a significant impact on the lives of the elderly, especially after retirement, whether from family or friends. The results show that the majority of the elderly in this research are aware of a high level of social support.

Recommendation: More awareness should be given to the family and care givers of the elderly regarding the role of social support in their well-being. Participating in recreational activities to reduce the level of loneliness and depression they suffer from after retirement.

Keywords: Perceived Social Support, Elderly Retired

Introduction

Old age is a time when people require more care in all areas than young folks do, especially when they retire^{(1) (2) (3)}. population aging has been a worldwide phenomenon there has been a sharp increase in the number of older persons worldwide and more old people are alive nowadays than at any time in history⁽⁴⁾. For most people, retirement is a life course transition, marking a shift in daily activities and social roles, early gerontological research assumed retirement would contribute to negative outcomes through losing a primary role structuring activity⁽⁵⁾. other hand, retirement is sometimes seen as an unpleasant reality, particularly by those who have become accustomed to corporate life. This is because they will be experiencing changes during their retirement period, which will affect their daily activities, social roles, and income level⁽⁶⁾. Most people experience a change in their daily routines and social responsibilities when they retire, which is a natural transition in life. Because retirement would involve giving up a major role-shaping activity, early erotological research predicted retirement would have negative effects. However, later studies highlighted contextual elements that influence how people adjust to retirement and came to the conclusion that retirement is neither inherently good nor harmful⁽⁷⁾.

Social support is a multidimensional concept referring to the social and psychological support an individual receives or perceives as available to them from family, friends and their community^{(8) (9)}. Higher levels of social support from family and friends have been found to be correlated with greater life satisfaction⁽¹⁰⁾.

The importance of social support increases in old age, as it is a life stage in which the help of other people is needed more. Social support in old age is associated with many issues, from chronic diseases to low stress, two concepts in which social support are life satisfaction and successful aging. Studies are showing that social support is a prerequisite for both life satisfaction and successful aging. However, no study addresses the mediating role of social

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support in the relationship between life satisfaction and successful aging^{(11) (12)}.

Methodology

Design

Correlational descriptive study: this kind of design involves using a questionnaire to collect data on the presence or quantity of one or more variables of interest. The questionnaires include questions about demographic characteristics, the perceived social support scale (MSPSS) (12 items), and the psychological well-being scale (18 items).

Study Sitting

This study was conducted at General Retirement Authority in Diyala, Iraq.

Study sample

The sample of this study comprised elderly retired in General Retirement Authority of Diyala. The minimum sample size is 130 participants. They were selected on the basis of the following inclusion criteria: 1) who agreed to participate in the study, 2) who were read and write.

Study Instrument

The data for this study were collected using questionnaire (see appendix) which consist three parts (a) socio-demographic characteristics' included age, gender, marital status, educational level, income, family monthly income, health status, do you live with your family members, (b) Multidimensional Scale of perceived Social Support(MSPSS) (c) psychological well-being scale.

Data Collection

Participants were informed by the researcher that their information will be kept private and secure. Additionally, participants in the sample were told that their identities would be kept private. The researcher claims that the participants were also told that their identity would remain confidential at the start of the study, when it was published, and/or after it was published. Each participant provided consent for the researcher to record their

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responses, which are then saved for data analysis. The period of data gathering was December 2023–February 2024.

Statistical Analysis

The IBM SPSS 20.0 program was used for all the analyses that follow. Numbers and percentages (No. and %) were used to categorize the variables, while the mean and standard deviation were used to characterize the continuous variables (mean and SD). Correlation statistics were used to association among study variables. Statistical significance was defined as a two-tailed $p .05$.

Results

Distribution of Elderly People According to their Socio-demographic Characteristics

List	Characteristics	f	%
1	55 – less than 65	54	41.5
	Age (year)		
	65 – less than 75	68	52.3
	M±SD= 65.5 ± 6		
	75 and more	8	6.2
	Total	130	100
2	Male	94	72.3
	Sex		
	Female	36	27.7
	Total	130	100
3	Unmarried	4	3.1
	Married	103	79.2
	Divorced	3	2.3
	Widowed/er	20	15.4
	Total	130	100

f: Frequency, %: Percentage, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

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Table (3-1): Continued

List	Characteristics		f	%
4	Level of education	Primary school	19	14.6
		Intermediate school	27	20.8
		Secondary school	33	25.4
		Diploma	24	18.5
		Bachelor	25	19.2
		Postgraduate	2	1.5
		Total	130	100
5	Monthly income	Insufficient	36	27.7
		Barely sufficient	56	43.1
		Sufficient	38	29.2
		Total	130	100
6	How you evaluate your health?	Poor	20	15.4
		Moderate	80	61.5
		Good	28	21.5
		Very good	2	1.5
		Total	130	100
7	Living with family	No	4	3.1
		Yes	128	96.9
		Total	130	100

f: Frequency, %: Percentage, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

The table 3-1 shows that average age of elderly people is 65.5 ± 6 years and 52% of them are seen with age group of 65 – less than 75 years.

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The sex of elderly people in this study refers to male among 72.3% of them and female among 27.7% of them.

The marital status refers that 79.2% of elderly people are married while 15.4% of them are widowed and widower.

Regarding level of education, the highest percentage among elderly people refers that they graduated from secondary school as reported by 25.4% of them and 20.8% are graduated from intermediate schools.

The monthly income reveals that 43.1% of retired elderly people perceive barely sufficient income.

Regarding evaluation of health, 61.5% of retired elderly people reporting that they have moderate level of health status while 21.5% reporting good health.

Relative to living with family, the majority of retired elderly people reported that they living with their families.

Overall Assessment of Perceived Social Support among Retired Elderly People

Social support	F	%	M	SD	Ass.
Low	0	0	29.94	4.289	High
Moderate	53	40.8			
High	77	59.2			
<i>Total</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>100</i>			

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score, Ass: Assessment

Low= 12 – 20, Moderate= 21 – 28, High= 29 – 36

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This table indicates that elderly people perceive high social support as reported among 59.2% of them ($M \pm SD = 29.94 \pm 4.289$) but 40.8% of them perceive moderate social support.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Age (N=130)

Age Variable	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social support	Between Groups	15.118	2	7.559	.407	.666
	Within Groups	2358.390	127	18.570		
	Total	2373.508	129			

df: Degree of freedom, F: F-statistic, Sig: Significance

This table depicts that there is no significant difference in social support among elderly people with regard to their age group.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Sex (N=130)

Sex Variable		M	SD	t	Df	$p \leq 0.05$	Sig
Social Support	Male	30.51	4.196	2.507	128	.013	S
	Female	28.44	4.225				

M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, t: t-test, df: Degree of freedom, Sig: Significance, p: Probability value, N.S: Not significant, S: Significant, H.S: High significant

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This table indicates that there is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their male sex at $p\text{-value} = .013$.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Marital Status (N=130)

Marital Variable	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social support	Between Groups	213.834	3	71.278	4.159	.008*
	Within Groups	2159.674	126	17.140		
	Total	2373.508	129			

df: Degree of freedom, F: F-statistic, Sig: Significance

*Significant with married at $p\text{-value} = .022$ (Multiple comparison test)

This table reveals that there is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their marital status at $p\text{-value} = .008$ with married elderly as indicated by significant difference in multiple comparison test at $p\text{-value} = .022$.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Level of Education (N=130)

Education Variable	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social support	Between Groups	172.340	5	34.468	1.942	.092
	Within Groups	2201.168	124	17.751		

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	Total	2373.508	129			
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df: Degree of freedom, F: F-statistic, Sig: Significance

This table depicts that there is no significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their level of education.

Discussion:

The data analysis finding showed the distribution of the sample according to socio-demographic characteristics, which revealed that the mean age of study sample was 65.5 ± 6 years and 52% of them are seen with age group of 65 – less than 75 years. This results were consisted with ⁽¹³⁾ who indicated in their results that the majority of elderly were 65.8 ± 5.1 years. Because the legal age for retirement in Iraq is this age.

According to the results of the current study, there were roughly 72.3% male participants and 27.7% female participants. This finding is consistent with ⁽¹⁴⁾ in order to assess the impact of pre-retirement guidance, social support, and psychological wellbeing on the retirement adjustment of Osun State teacher retirees, a male participant (72.7%) was chosen for the study. other study conducted by ⁽¹⁵⁾ was consisted with finding. while the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽¹⁶⁾ findings which was (17.2%) of male participants and 82.8% of female participants.

Concerning marital status, that majority of elderly retired are married as seen among 79.2% while 15.4% of them are widowed and widower. This result consistent with ⁽¹⁷⁾ which was (72%) of the study samples participants were married. other study conducted by ⁽¹⁸⁾ was 57.3% also consisted with current study finding. This result can be interpreted as saying that in Iraqi society, most young people marry after obtaining a job. While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽¹⁶⁾ that studied the Relationship between the Perceived Psychological Wellbeing and Social Engagement among Older Residents, that showed 2.6% of elderly are married.

Regarding level of education, the highest percentage among elderly people refers that they graduated from secondary school as

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reported by 25.4% of them and 20.8% are graduated from intermediate schools. This finding supported by ⁽¹⁹⁾ 30.4% elderly people graduated from secondary school. current study results can be explained by the fact that, due to living conditions, most people resort to work instead of completing their studies (college, institute). While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽²⁰⁾ 59.8% of elderly people graduated from primary school and below who participated in the study.

The monthly income reveals that 43.1% of retired elderly people perceive barely sufficient income. This finding supported by ⁽²¹⁾ Effect of perceived social support on self-care agency and loneliness among elderly Muslim people, the results of the study showed 74.2% of elderly people perceive barely sufficient income. other study consisted with ⁽²²⁾ was also consisted with current study finding was 68%. This result can be interpreted by saying that most of the elderly live with their children and are not in dire need of a salary. While the finding of study conducted by ⁽¹⁶⁾ (73.3%) of elderly people perceive not sufficient income, were not consistent with the results of the current study.

Regarding evaluation of health, 61.5% of retired elderly people reporting that they have moderate level of health status while 21.5% reporting good health. This finding supported by ⁽²³⁾ (39.8%) of the study samples participants were moderate level of health status. while (29.1%) reporting good health. other study supported by ⁽²⁴⁾. current study results can be explained by the fact that, due to age, older people are exposed to many health problems and chronic diseases (such as blood pressure and diabetes). While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽²⁰⁾ that refer to participants of elderly people perceive poor level of social support.

Relative to living with family, the majority of retired elderly people reported that they living with their families. This finding supported by ⁽²⁵⁾ (87.6%) of the study samples participants were living with their families. current study results can be explained by the fact that in Iraqi society, retired elderly people live with their children compared to Western country

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elderly people perceive high social support as reported among 59.2% of them ($M \pm SD = 29.94 \pm 4.289$) but 40.8% of them perceive moderate social support. This finding supported by ⁽²⁶⁾ that demonstrate the levels of social support was higher, current study results can be explained by the fact that the elderly live with their families and therefore have high social support. While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽²⁷⁾ that refer to participants of elderly people perceive moderate social support.

depicts that there is no significant difference in social support among elderly people with regard to their age group. This finding supported by ⁽²⁸⁾ that assess the Gender differences in perceived social support in US Chinese older adults, demonstrated there is no significant difference in social support among elderly people with regard to their age group at $p\text{-value} = 0.77$. While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽²⁹⁾ that demonstrate there is significant difference in social support among elderly people with regard to their age group at $p\text{-value} = 0.002$.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Sex

There is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their male sex at $p\text{-value} = .013$. This finding supported by ⁽³⁰⁾ to Assessing Perceived Social Support, Social Network, and Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors in Older Adults demonstrated there is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their male sex at $p\text{-value} = 0.02$. While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽²⁹⁾ that demonstrate there is no significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their sex at $p\text{-value} = 0.694$.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Marital Status

Reveals that there is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their marital status at $p\text{-value} = 0.002$.

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value= .008 with married elderly as indicated by significant difference in multiple comparison test at p-value= .022. This finding supported by ⁽²⁹⁾ that demonstrate there is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their marital status at p-value=0.001. While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽³¹⁾ that demonstrate there is no significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their marital status at p-value=0.469.

Significant Difference in Perceived Social Support among Elderly people with regard to their Level of Education

There is no significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their level of education. This finding supported by ⁽³⁰⁾ that demonstrate there is no significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their level of education at p-value=0.598. While the finding of this study not consistent with ⁽²⁸⁾ that demonstrate there is significant difference in perceived social support among elderly people with regard to their level of education at p-value=0.005.

Conclusions

Aging is an inevitable process in human life and identifying the factors that improve successful aging benefit both the individual and the society, the feeling of loneliness, one of the most common complaints emotions by the elderly, will decrease with the changes in their social circle that increase in the level of communication with other. and Social support has a significant impact on the lives of the elderly, especially after retirement, whether from family or friends. The results show that the majority of the elderly in this research are aware of a high level of social support.

Recommendations

More awareness should be given to the family and care givers of the elderly regarding the role of social support in their well-being.

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Participating in recreational activities to reduce the level of loneliness and depression they suffer from after retirement.

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