

## ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF THE PERCEIVED ADEQUACY OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON THE SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF THE ELDERLY

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The purpose of this study was to assess the subjective well-being and perceived adequacy of social support of the elderly. In the present era, the field of subjective well-being (SWB; hedonic psychology) is defined as the scientific study of what makes experiences and life pleasant and unpleasant (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Therefore, the present research is intended to bring this less investigated and yet important issue to the attention of researchers by way of taking the first step to reflect on three interrelated basic questions: (1) What is the status of the subjective well-being among the elderly in Amhara Regional State (Oromia Zone, Dessie Administration Zone and South Wollo Zone)? (2) How do the selected demographic variables correlate with subjective well-being of the elderly? (3) What is the independent contribution of social support in predicting subjective well-being? It is a quantitative cross-sectional survey that was conducted with a total of N=1789 randomly selected elderly (aged 60 and over) from South Wollo and Oromia Zone, Ethiopia, guided by Dinner's (2001) Well-Being Model. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (D. Watson, L. Clark & Tellegen, 1988) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988) were administered. The results indicated that the elderly had low level of total subjective well-being. The independent t-test results indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female elders with regard to life satisfaction, positive affect, support from friends, and support from significant others. However, there were gender differences regarding perceived adequacy of social support, negative affect, total subjective well-being and received support from families. Above all, support gained from friends had the highest predictive power of subjective well-being than other predictive factors. To promote the healthy subjective well-being of the elderly, responsible organizations should establish different programs and activities that enhance the elderly quality of life and promote good social support. At last, the findings of this research only paint part of the picture, so in the future in-depth research should be conducted on this very basic issue that may influence the subjective well-being of the elderly by incorporating other variables. This study may serve as a model for addressing methodological problems when researching student well-being.