

CHILDREN MIGRATION AND THE EMPTY NEST PARENTS: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE ELDERLY LEFT BEHIND IN RAWALPINDI PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is encountering a massive adult migration that is affecting its social fabric in various aspects. The present study has been carved out in context of the adult migration impacts on the elderly left behind in Pakistan. Particularly, the study examines the social, psychological, and economic reciprocity of the elderly left behind owing to their adult (children) outmigration. It has focused to explore the prevalence of social, psychological, and economic well-being of the elderly left behind, to find out the dynamics of the social, psychological, and economic well-being of elderly left behind by demographic variables e.g., gender, residence, etc. To identify the interrelation of the social, economic, and psychological well-being of the elderly left behind in District Rawalpindi, and considering this, to propose a Tridimensional Model of the well-being of elderly left behind and to suggest some measures to improve the social, psychological and economic wellbeing of elderly left behind. The tri-dimensional model of well-being employed the quantitative research design in order to map out the adult migration impact on parents. The study has been conducted in the Rawalpindi district of Punjab Pakistan. The researcher used the self-administered questionnaire and collected the data from the targeted elderly left behind through the multistage sampling technique. The sample size of the study was 400 elderly left behind from the different areas of Rawalpindi. The study concludes through its findings that its findings there is higher reciprocity between social well-being and psychological well-being, economic and social well-being has a strong association, but economic and psychological well-being has not been found significant. The study suggests there is a dire need to devise policies for the well-being of the increasing elderly population.

Keywords: Social well-being, psychological well-being, Economic Well Being, Migration.

INTRODUCTION

Well-Being

Well-being can be carved out as the quality of life or prudential value and wellness. Well-being is something that is fundamentally significant for some individuals. Consequently, the well-being of the individual is the self-interest or what the individual desires. Well-being can be positive and negative as well. It is contrasted with ill-being sometimes with reference to its positive sense (Kross et al., 2021). In comparison with this, subjective well-being can be dug out as the experiences of people, and their evaluation of their own lives which is usually measured in relation to the well-being reported by the individual through the questionnaire. In addition to this well-being can be bifurcated among physical well-being, psychological well-being, emotional well-being, and economic well-being. They all are interlinked with each other and may pose effects in both, positive and as well as in negative ways (Topp et al., 2015).

In the context of well-being, happiness and pleasure are used as an alternative to each other, whereas, they tend to have different meanings from each other owing to their etymology. Pleasure is the constituting element of well-being because it is reflected as the experiences that are felt well by the individual. Somehow, there can be other elements that can be virtue, health, knowledge, and the accomplishment of their desires (Valkenburg, 2022). On the contrary, happiness is also taken as the constituting element of well-being, as it is comprehended as the state of being satisfied in life or an individual's sense of more pleasant feelings over unpleasant feelings.

Migration and the well-Being of Elderly Left Behind

The migration and its impacts have gained much attention from academia and policymakers. But the adverse effects posed by the migration on those left behind have not attained much space within both circles (Wheeler et al., 2022). The phenomenon of the elderly left behind and the migration of adults have not been explored to the level yet, that what are the factors pertaining to the lives that create the susceptibility and vulnerability among them. Similarly, the sufferings of the migrant's household have not been recorded at the higher level (Kharel et al., 2021). The focus of the research has been to seek out the correlation between migration and demographic changes and economic outcomes. The existing body of literature in the context of Asian society maps out that migration has been the source of better health indicators and the overall increased well-being of elderly people. Conversely, the studies have also recorded the negative effects of migration as well as creating various challenges for the health care system of the country which is sending more migrants to the outer countries (Lu et al., 2021). In addition to this, the empirical evidence from Thailand shows that the elderly left behind has encountered poor mental status and fragile physical health. They have also been found prone to the risks of other diseases as well. The poor resilience, least enjoyment, and the state of grief have been common among the left behind despite their demographic variables. In India, the migrations have been correlated with poor social support, mental illness, and disturbing relationship with family members. Poor psycho-social health has been marked as a long-term effect of migration. The migration disturbs the life events of the migrants and the elderly left behind as has been recorded in the case of Sri Lanka that violence and stress was the major issue among these populations. The well-being of the elderly has deteriorated, and the elderly can be found with serious emotional issues, low self-esteem, and social distress. The Kashmiri migrants have been found with generalized anxiety and post-traumatic stress retardation at the Muthi camp of Occupied Kashmir. (Ke et al., 2019) established a longitudinal study from 1993 to 2013 in Pakistan to carve out the association between migration and well-being. It was revealed that the sentiments of stress and physical health have been indicated as outcomes of subjective and objective well-being.

Well-Being of Elderly left Behind in Pakistan

Pakistan ranks among the 15 countries that have more than 14 million elderly people who have more than 60 years of age. Currently, it constitutes 7% of the total population that is expected to rise to 8.5% by 2030. However, the cultural milieu of the country endows significant social status to the elderly people in the family structure. But the aging population and the migration of the adults assert the profound social, economic, psychological, and health impacts on the life of the elderly left behind people. The Global Age Watch Index (GAWI) keeps the observation over the well-being of elderly people and ranks different countries. It measures the social and economic well-being encompassing the health status, income security, capability, and environment (Kopylova et al., 2022). Consequently, it ranked Pakistan at 92 no even after Iraq out of the 96 countries in 2015 which depicts the adverse prevalent situation and the poor social security initiatives from the state. Additionally, the country ranks among the lowest pension income coverage at 2.3% for old-age people (Chohan, n.d.). Nonetheless, the well-being of the elderly parents is associated with their children whether they are in the country or migrated. The migrant adults are solely responsible for the well-being of their parents (psychological, social, and economic) which have been the central focus of the current research venture.

In the context of Pakistan, studies revealed that old-age parents prioritize children's preferences and seek emotional support rather than economic and other benefits. Ashfaq et al., (2016) articulated that the children of the elderly people migrated to enhance their socioeconomic status in society. Besides the enhanced social status the agony of parents can be observed in the various cultural and religious events when they celebrate without their children. This has a long-lasting impact on their mental health and well-being. The rising stress, depression, and helplessness cannot be compensated by mere economic well-being. In addition to this, parents have to go through the loneliness that affects their mental status. They cope with this through various strategies like communication with different people and participating in different social events. In addition to this Ashfaq, (2020) reported through their findings that the majority of Pakistani parents have an overwhelming situation of sadness due to the migration of their children. The migration of the children also affects the social connectivity of the elderly left behind and they visit their relatives on

specific occasions. This indicates that their social well-being has also been badly influenced. It also digs out that the children visit their elderly left-behind parents. Overall, there is a scarcity of literature to explore the various dynamics and impacts of children's migration over their elderly parents in Pakistan.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Psychological Well-Being

The empirical evidence of literature depicts that migration is a dynamic phenomenon that affects the elderly left behind in different aspects. People from under-developed and developing countries migrate to developed countries for bread and butter and leave their elder family members like parents in the countries of their origin (Stöhr, 2015). In many situations, the left behind elderly is ignored and truly left behind in the minds of the migrants as they do not receive the expected care and other benefits Xiang & Shen, (2009) narrates that the left behind people in the rural areas encounter social and the economic challenges. In addition to this migration is not just a movement of some people from one place to another but a bigger social phenomenon that involves the construction of new realities (Falicov, 2005). Furthermore, Thapa et al., (2018) dig out that the left behind elderly face serious mental problems that include depression, anxiety, aloofness, and cognitive complication in contrast to those who have children living with them. Loneliness becomes serious when we talk about underdeveloped countries in absence of social care or any community service for the elderly. Zhou et al., (2015) observed that the elderly in empty nests are more prone to health deterioration and psychological decay contrary to the elderly living with families hence they need more health care in the same way. Abas et al., (2013) remarked that the elderly living alone face a loss of retentive memory and it becomes difficult for them to memories things. They also face multiple health issues that may become severe with the passage of time in isolation. They further explain that this phenomenon is more prevalent among the elderly from the middle class residing in the rural areas of developing countries. They conclude that the elderly, whose children have migrated, sometimes face lesser stress as compared to those whose children are staying with them. Some studies (Kadoya & Khan, 2018 ; Das et al., 2007) reported that an increase in age is associated with sadness and anxiety in low-income countries. Similarly, just like in the developed world, females face more stress in the developing world unlike males (Gaviria & Rondon, 2010).

Economic Well-being

Chuc et al., (2022) illustrates those remittances as the major source of income for growing economies and it even surpasses foreign direct investment for these countries. Remittances are more stable than various economic aids and can exceed the national foreign reserves in many under-developed and developing countries like the countries in South Asia including China, India, Pakistan, Philippines, and Bangladesh. Cai & Wang, (2021) articulated that remittances yield an effective role in the lives of the left behind parents in China. This study was unique because it postulated that remittances matter and it was not considered in earlier research. It has been noted that China has observed the most substantial migration during the last few years. These migrants' parents are living in rural settlements and the infrastructure in all terms is not satisfactory in these areas. The results of the migration have been varying on the one hand the emotional support would happen to be negative for the health issues of the elderly left behind. Meanwhile, the migrants share a substantial portion of their earnings in their homes and they would provide ease to the family who is left behind. This is the first study that has taken it into consideration; the extent of the migrant's remittances can be detrimental to the parent's health owing to the migration (Ma et al., 2022).

Social Well-Being

Migration induces a multifaceted impact on the lives of the elderly left behind like social well-being. Liu, (2022) and Bridges & Liu, (2022) explain that despite increased attention to the potentially dramatic implications of migration and demographic changes on elderly care and subsequent well-being. Feng et al. (2018) found that the elderly population may have an excess of daily use items, but they still may be socially excluded by being alone and left behind. Suvanov & Ukueva, (2021) reported that Kyrgyzstan has been facing the pressure of migration for the last two decades. There is plenty of research persisting in this domain, but the effect of migration is still unclear to the elders in the context of the country. When adult proceeds with labor migration there are two reactions or ramifications. The direction of shocks appears in

the long term and the short-term labor migration. In the short-term shocks, it has been found that when the adult moves outside the country leaving behind the household and the family specifically the spouse and the parents. In the first month, the left behind people takes it negatively. The reason for this is that the initial cost of the migration has been very high. This exerts other potential impacts on the health of the parents negatively. The elders come under new physical demands like cooking and other household maintenance activities. Conversely, in the long-term migration; left behind elders streamline their financial matters because the migrant may have improved his or her financial status.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The quantitative approach has been employed in order to measure the well-being of the elderly left behind on the other hand has such potential. The rationale behind choosing the quantitative design is that it can be generalized and, on the other hand, can be revised. The use of quantitative methods and statistical analysis in ageing perspective is advancing. (Lanitis et al., 1999) introduced the parameterized statistical modeling to model face images of ageing. Pulkkinen and Simola (2000) suggested Bayesian modeling of repairable components of ageing models. Ghisletta & Aichele, (2017) suggested different statistical techniques to model ageing data such as nonlinear mixed-effect model and generalized additive model. In addition to this study especially focuses the aged population of the Rawalpindi district which is living alone or without their children. The study is conducted in the four tehsils of district Rawalpindi that include Rawalpindi, Kallar Syedan, Gujjar Khan and Taxila. The elderly under study were taken from these tehsils on the following basis;

- a) They must have their child/children abroad.
- b) They must be residing the target area of the study (Rawalpindi, Kallar Syedan, Gujjar Khan and Taxila)
- c) They must be dependent upon their children

They must have some economic dependence upon their children and have received foreign remittances. The sample size determined through the Taro Yamani formula was 399 but the researcher decided to collect the data from 440 respondents to cover any sort of missing data. The data was collected through the questionnaire using the multistage sampling technique.

Ethical consideration

The tool was approved from the research ethical committee of the concerned department. A prior permission was sought by the respondent before starting and discussion related to research. After having the permission from the respondents, the researcher and his teams briefed the respondent about the purpose of the study. The data and information were collected in a very friendly, trustful and respectful manner making the respondent quite confident and relax.

The pretesting of the data was performed; the data was taken from 50 respondents randomly from Tehsil Rawalpindi and tehsil Kallar Syedan. These tehsils were also chosen through random selection. Cronbach alpha was used to test the data. Cronbach alpha value stayed above.70 that shows the reliability of the tool and it could be used for the final study.

ANALYSIS& RESULTS

Table No.1 Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by age, gender, and education

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
51-60	163	40.8
61-70	136	34.0
71-80	44	11.0
40-50	57	14.2
Gender		
Male	300	75.0
Female	100	25.0

Education		
Illiterate	45	11.3
Primary	88	22.0
Middle	84	21.0
Matric	88	22.0
Inter	31	7.8
BA	48	12.0
Master and Above	16	4.0
Total	400	100

Table 1 focuses on the percentages and frequencies segregation of respondents on the basis of their demographic profile. The profile consists of gender, education, and age. The table reflects that 75% of the respondents comprised male respondents while 25% comprised female respondents. The number of male respondents is two times higher than the female respondents, and this is because of the cultural pattern as most families are headed by males and any kind of affairs or discussions outside the domestic sphere are mainly considered the responsibility of the male. While we see the distribution of respondents regarding their education status we find (that 11.3%) of the total respondents were illiterate while (4%) of respondents were highly qualified with a master's or above. Among the respondents (22%) were primary pass while (21%) had passed their middle level of education. The percentage of respondents for BA (Bachelor of Arts) was (12%) and for intermediate and matriculation were (7.8%) and (22%) respectively. It was observed during the study that the trend towards higher education increased with the passage of time which means the respondents who were relatively younger were more educated than the elderly ones. The difference in education level among the respondents on the basis of age is due to the education programs initiated by the various governments in Pakistan that helped improve the literacy rate. These programs were improved with the passage of time not only improving the education level in Pakistan but also improving the quality of education. That's the reason that relatively younger people are better qualified as compared to elderly people and it is visible through the respondents.

Table No.2 Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by income and place of living

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Approximate Income		
20000	14	3.5
50000	50	12.5
100000	14	3.5
Above 100000	36	9.0
Not Applicable	286	71.5
Income from all sources		
Below 500000	141	35.3
Below 1000000	103	25.8
Below 1500000	57	14.2
2000000 or above	99	24.8
Place of Living		
Owned House	345	86.3
Rented House	24	6.0
Sharing	31	7.8
Total	400	100

In table 2 the respondents were asked about income in two different ways. The first one was the approximate income while the second was the income from all sources. Approximate income was actually the monthly income, and it was not answered by (71.5%) of respondents, it reflects that most of the respondents do not have monthly income and they rely on remittances, agricultural income, or some other source of income that is not on monthly basis. In this section (9%) of the respondents have approximate incomes above 100000 rupees while (3.5%) of the respondents have incomes up to 100000 rupees. There

are (3.5%) of respondents who have 20000 rupees income and (12.5%) of respondents whose approximate income is up to 50000 rupees. When they were asked about the total income from all the sources the response was (100%). This income reflects their annual income. There are (35.3%) of the respondents has a total income from all the sources under 500000 rupees while (25.8%) have a total income under 1000000 rupees. Respondents who have a total income under 1500000 rupees are (14.2%) while (24.8%) have up to 2000000 rupees or above from all the sources on annual basis.

As the place of living is concerned most of the respondents have their own house which is (86.3%) while (6%) live in rented houses and (7.8%) live in shared places. Now the shared places mean that they are either living in shared houses where two brothers own the house jointly or they still reside in a joint family system where the grandparents hold the property owner. In some rural areas, there is still a tradition where the land is actually owned by some big landlord who gives the rights of living to the people on his property and allows them even to build their homes but the property owner still stays with the landlord. In some unique cases, the property where the respondents were residing was owned by the parents but they were paying rent to them. It is a practice in some families where parents do not transfer the inheritance to their children until they are alive and consider its security for themselves as sometimes children do not live with the parents or allow them to live with them or bear their expenses when parents transfer the property to them.

Table No.3 Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by number of children abroad, financial support from children, and decision regarding spending money

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Number of children abroad		
1	247	61.8
2	103	25.8
3	40	10.0
4 or above	10	2.5
Financial support from children		
Yes	373	93.3
No	27	6.8
Free to decide on spending money		
Yes	353	88.3
No	19	4.8
Not Applicable	28	7.0
Spending the remittances		
Family	330	82.5
Health Care	16	4.0
Social Welfare	12	3.0
Other	11	2.8
Not Applicable	31	7.8
Frequency of receiving money		
Monthly	151	37.8
Quarterly	58	14.5
Need-Based	106	26.5
Children's Will	49	12.3
Bi-annually	36	9.0
Total	400	100

In Table 3 we see that most of the respondents (61.8%) had only one child abroad, (25.8%) had had two children abroad, (10%) had three children abroad, and (2.5%) had four or more children abroad.

Responding to the question regarding financial support from children abroad a large number of the respondents (93.3%) responded that they receive financial support from their children abroad while (6.8%) responded that they do not receive any support from their children abroad.

It was found that (88.3%) of the respondents were free in spending the financial support of their children while (4.8%) were not free to decide on the spending of the money they received from their children. (7%) of the respondents selected the not applicable option that they either never received any financial support from their children or they had nothing to do with that money. The respondents who were not free to decide the spending of the received money, spent this money either through their spouse or by the will of the children who were sending this money.

While responding to the question that where the remittances received by the children are spent majority of the respondents (82.5%) responded that they spent this money on the family. That includes the groceries, utilities, maintenance of the house, and fees for the children. The respondents who spent remittances on healthcare were (4%) and (3%) spent this remittance on social welfare including supporting poor relatives, and neighbors and financial aid to religious institutions like mosques. (2.8%) of the respondents selected another option that indicates the area of spending not listed in the tool. Most of these respondents spent this money on microcredits, small financial ventures, and investments. There were (7%) of respondents to whom this question was not relevant because they either did not receive remittances or were not free to decide the spending of this money. Responding to the question that how frequently remittances are received by the respondents there were (26.5%) of the respondents received this money on need bases, (37.8%) received remittances on monthly basis, (14.4%) received it on a quarterly basis, (12.3%) on children's will and (9%) received this money on a bi-annual basis. Some of the respondents explained the reason for receiving remittances on bi-annual bases the children receive a specific portion of their salaries which is enough to meet their needs and they deposit the rest of the amount to their employer and take it after six months and send it to the family. They do it just to ensure to send a handsome amount which could be utilized properly. Psychological wellbeing was measured by using the PHQ-9 scale. The results show mild, moderate, moderately severe, and severe conditions of mental wellbeing. The respondents with mild symptoms are comparatively in lesser mental stress and have better psychological well-being as compared to the rest of the respondents. The respondents with severe symptoms are at the lowest level of psychological wellbeing. These conditions of the respondents actually show the severity of mental stress they pass through on daily basis. The respondents with mild stress levels were (3.5%) and with moderate symptoms of stress were (59.3%). So these two categories of respondents comparatively had better mental well-being as compared to the rest of the respondents who had a moderately severe and severe level of stress. Respondents with moderately severe symptoms of stress were (27%) and the respondents with severe symptoms of stress were (10.3%). The respondents with severe symptoms of mental stress had the poorest psychological well-being. This is the group that passed through the panic attacks, hurting themselves and having suicidal thoughts, and the few ones who attempted suicide were also from the same group. The causes behind the severe and moderately severe stress were multiple. The most prevalent reasons behind such mental conditions were loneliness, lack of care and attention, poor behavior (in some situations abusive), and disease. It was observed that the elderly who had a better social life and those who maintained their social life were much less stressed. The elderly who was more frequently engaged with their children, grandchildren, and some business were also in much better mental condition. The respondents who used to spend more time performing religious rites faced the least stress level. Most importantly, mental stress levels had nothing to do with economic well-being and the respondents with plenty of money had the same or similar stress levels as compared to the respondents with poor economic well-being.

Hypothesis: the higher the number of children abroad of the elderly left behind, the lower the psychological health of the elderly left behind.

Table No.4 Tukey HSD Test: Difference in social, psychological, and economic wellbeing by children living abroad

Dependent variable	(I) How many children live abroad	(J) How many children live abroad	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P
Psychological Health	One Child	Two Children	.31997	.43808	.885
		Three Children	-1.11669	.63064	.289
		Four or above Children	-3.13184*	1.21049	.049
	Two Children	One Child	-.31997	.43808	.885
		Three Children	-1.43666	.69098	.162
		Four or above Children	-3.45181*	1.24299	.029
	Three Children	One Child	1.11669	.63064	.289
		Two Children	1.43666	.69098	.162
		Four or above Children	-2.01515	1.32318	.425
	Four or above Children	One Child	3.13184*	1.21049	.049
		Two Children	3.45181*	1.24299	.029
		Three Children	2.01515	1.32318	.425

The psychological health of the elderly left behind whose four or above children are abroad is lower than that elderly left behind whose less than four children are abroad. In other words, the higher the number of children abroad of the elderly left behind, the lower the psychological health of the elderly left behind. Hence the hypothesis is supported by data.

Hypotheses:

1. Social and psychological well-being are reciprocally associated with each other among elderly left behind persons. (Supported by data)
2. Economic and social wellbeing are reciprocally associated with each other among elderly left behind persons. (Supported by data)
3. Psychological and economic wellbeing are reciprocally associated with each other among elderly left behind persons. (Not Supported by data).

Table No.5 Parameter estimates of M2

Parameter	B	S.E.	Z	P
Social Wellbeing	-1.470	.371	-3.961	.000
Psychological Wellbeing	1.326	.239	5.544	.000
Economic Wellbeing	.413	.268	1.539	.124
High Social Wellbeing* High Psychological Wellbeing	-.954	.296	-3.219	.001
High Social Wellbeing * High Economic Wellbeing	1.243	.357	3.483	.000
High Psychological Wellbeing * High Economic Wellbeing	.146	.293	.498	.618
Constant	2.971	.216	13.781	.000

The results showed that the hypothesis is supported. The above-drawn table digs out that there is a strong association between social well-being and psychological well-being. However, the same effect has been produced by psychological well-being over social well-being. It is affirmed that both are significant ($p < .001$). In addition to this the parameter of social well-being ($p < .000$) psychological well-being ($P < .000$) and economic well-being ($P > .124$) is not significant. Correspondingly, it has been established that there is an insignificant relationship between psychological well-being and economic well-being.

DISCUSSION

The present study has articulated that there is an association between social well-being and psychological well-being. High social well-being yields stronger psychological well-being and vice versa. There is a similarity with the three studies conducted earlier in Mexico and USA (Li & Tang, 2022) and (Kuhn et al., 2011). Correspondingly Gierveld et al., (2012) put forward the correlation between well-being and migration with reference to the left behind. It framed out that the social networks impact the lives of those left behind if they replace and play the roles of the individuals who have migrated. Similarly, the current venture unfolds that the relatives and the neighborhood have an association with the well-being of the elderly left behind in positive terms. Eventually, Thapa et al., (2018) examined the mental health issues of the elderly left behind parents and the adult children. The study remarked that the elderly left behind parents have become prey to mental ailments in comparison with the non-left behind elderly parents. The same findings have appeared in our present tridimensional model of well-being. It has illustrated that the parents have been found with higher level symptoms of mental health retardations. Similarly, this study has a similarity in loneliness and depression, and poor psychological health with the aforementioned integrated review. In line with this, Fokkema et al., (2012) presented that there is a negative correlation between emotional and social loneliness in Dutch women. Additionally, the nature of contact in a week between the parents and the adult lowers the depression level in elderly parents. Meanwhile, our study depicted that depression and loneliness are ushered in parents owing to the lower frequency of contact with their children. Kuhn et al., (2011) captioned that there is a negative effect on the elderly self-rated health, daily living, and the morality of the parents in Indonesia. While in our study these results endorsed that their adult migration is correlated with parents' daily life activities. Furthermore, the present study established that there is a high frequency of social contact; social support and social interaction have been found among those who have better economic well-being than others. This is contrary to the study by Hommadova Lu & Mejova, (2022) who found social interaction and perceived social support (Szkody et al., 2021) have been negatively correlated with loneliness. In addition to this Gopinath & Poornappriya, (2020) employed the Heckman Probit model to map out the impact of migration on the health-seeking behavior of elderly people, functional ability, subjective health, cognitive abilities instrumental activities. Consequently, it reflected that their elderly parents had fewer chances of receiving health care. It has not been found in terms of health in our study, but the daily life activities happen to be found in a similar manner to this study. The existing body of the literature highlights the same effect of migration on well-being irrespective of the national or international migration. While, there is varying nature of results in terms of demographic factors like age, country of origin, and the gender of the left behind people. This research has highlighted that Pakistani elderly left behind women is more affected by the migration of their children than their male counterparts. Furthermore, our study digs out that there is a strong relationship between the remittances (economic well-being) and the overall health and well-being of the empty nest parents. Consequently the same has been claimed by Adhikari et al., (2011) and Graham & Jordan, (2011). On the contrary, (Heymann et al., 2009) argument reflects that there is no association between migration and improved economic well-being. In the South Asian context culture is strongly embedded in all the spheres of life, here the parents expect financial support along with other support like emotional and physical from their adult migrants (Mui & Kang, 2006). Consequently, in the present quantitative modeling, it has been revealed that parents desire strong economic benefits from their children. Cai et al., (2022) captioned that although Chinese parents have been prey to psychological issues these issues can be tackled with the economic gains of children. The rationale here persists that the economic values determine the other life aspects in Asian societies. The same findings have been endorsed by our study as it unveils those economic well-being influences the lives of the parents to a greater extent. Nevertheless, the findings postulated by the present study have affirmed the standpoint of the previous research ventures which indicated the importance and the gaps that have been studied in the present Pakistani culture.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the individual with a high level of social engagement has poor psychological well-being while high social engagement comes up with a high level of economic well-being. The study finds

no positive correlation between psychological well-being and economic well-being for this group under study. Though there were some individuals who had positive impacts on their psychological well-being with their high social connections. The study reveals that the majority of the respondents was not involved in a kind of business and was living a dependent life hence having no personal source of income. There were some respondents who were either receiving pensions as they were retired from some government job and some other respondents had control over their businesses even though they were being run by their children but they were looking after the businesses and had not yet distributed their inheritance among their children. The majority of the respondents' income was from the remittances they received from their children abroad. It was found that a proper health care system was missing for the elderly and the role of governmental institutions was quite bleak. Most of the elderly had poor lifestyle habits resulting in the poor health of the respondents. Respondents' connections with the local community, neighborhood, friends' and any organizational setup were also below average. Contrary to male respondents' female respondents had better health and social wellbeing. They had better local community and neighborhood connections. Respondents residing in the rural communities had better social and psychological well-being as compared to the respondents living in the urban areas who had better economic and physical well-being.

Recommendations of the study

The current study has a few inferences for further research, policy development, and field implementations. These inferences provide better insight regarding further explorations on the issues related to left behind elderly for their better socio-economic and psychological wellbeing. It may also assist the government organizations/institutions/departments related to social welfare in general and especially those who are related to elderly care. It will highlight how governments and institutions can utilize the potential, wisdom, and services of left-behind elderly and benefit from them as well as how they play a better role in serving this part of the society.

Limitations of the study

The study could have added more respondents like the government servants, and the elderly living in the shelter homes and at other social welfare organizations' hostel facilities. More categories could have been included like the people who got retired from armed services, higher levels of government offices and senior politicians, and elderly who held big businesses, etc., to make this study more meaningful and result-oriented with a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. But due to a shortage of time and resources, it was not possible. The study does not address different cohorts differently and the same tool was used to collect data. Due to age differences, it was difficult to collect data from the elderly who were too old to understand the question and respond accordingly. The same was the issue with younger elderly who took these surveys as a time-killing activity, so it was difficult to convince them to answer appropriately.

Declaration: The present study is part of the Ph.D. Dissertation of the Principal Author.

Conflict of Interest: The manuscript holds no conflict of interest.

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