CHAPTER 2

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In the present research the author intends to study role of alexithymia, borderline personality disorder, marital status, and gender in life-satisfaction of middle-aged people. For the purpose, the specific problems of the research under consideration and relevant hypotheses are described here below.

PROBLEM (1)

The first problem of the present research is to verify whether middle agers with high alexithymia differ from those with low alexithymia in respect of their life satisfaction?

More specifically, the problem is whether the two groups of the alexithymia i.e., high alexithymic middle agers and low alexithymic middle agers, differ in respect of their life satisfaction?

HYPOTHESIS (i)

Alexithymia means “no words for feelings.” It refers to a personality construct characterized by impoverishment of fantasy, poor capacity for symbolic thought and experience and verbalizing emotions. Alexithymia is further described as a disturbance in distinguishing between bodily sensations and states of emotional arousal.

On the basis of these descriptions of alexithymia, it is reasonable to believe that alexithymia may be negatively associated with life satisfaction. Fukunishi (1999), Le et al. (2002), and Mattila et al. (2007) observed negative relationship between alexithymia and life satisfaction. Hence, it is hypothesized that low alexithymic middle agers would show more life satisfaction in comparison to high alexithymic middle agers.
PROBLEM (2)

The second problem of the present research pertains to role of borderline personality disorder in life satisfaction of middle agers. In other words, the problem is whether two groups i.e., normal middle agers and middle agers with borderline personality disorder differ in respect to their life satisfaction?

HYPOTHESIS (ii)

Borderline personality disorder is a personality disorder described as a prolonged disturbance of personality function in a person over the age of eighteen years, characterized by depth and variability of moods. McCrae et al. (1986), Wiggins & Pincus (1989), John & Shrivastava (1999), McCrae & Costa (1999), Widiger & Costa (2002), Timothy et al., (2003), and Larsen et al. (2006), observed negative correlation between borderline personality disorder and life satisfaction. Hence, it is hypothesized that normal middle agers would show higher level of life satisfaction than middle agers with borderline personality disorder.

PROBLEM (3)

The third problem of the present research pertains to role of marital status in life satisfaction of middle aged people. In other words, the problem is whether middle aged people of differential marital status i.e., unmarried, married (couple), and married (single), differ in regard to their life satisfaction?

HYPOTHESIS (iii)

Marital status is another vital dimension which has been considered in the present study in relation to its impact on life satisfaction. It is a natural state to believe that presence of a life partner after marriage brings in dramatic changes in the lives of both males and females. There are strong evidences to believe that the marital status do exert its positive effect on satisfaction of people (Ball, 1983; Ball & Robbins, 1986; Diener et al., 2000; and Shapiro & Keyes (2008). Hence, it has been hypothesized that married (couple) middle agers would exhibit higher level of life satisfaction.
satisfaction than married (single) and unmarried middle agers. The unmarried middle agers would exhibit poorest level of life satisfaction.

PROBLEM (4)

The fourth problem of the present research pertains to role of gender in life satisfaction. In other words, the problem is whether male and female middle agers differ in regard to their life satisfaction?

HYPOTHESIS (iv)

Biological differences between male and female also invite differences on various psychological variables. Socio-biologists argue that gender differences are attributable to differences in psychology and biology. During childhood and adolescence, girls as a group tend to be happier than boys. One of the most important reasons for this is that girls get their life satisfaction from interpersonal relationship, while boys’ greatest life satisfaction comes from achievement. After forty, the reverse is true for many women, especially those whose role has been that of home maker. By contrast, many men become happier and better satisfied in their lives after forty because they feel more successful in their careers than when they were younger. Hence, it has been hypothesized that middle aged males would show higher level of life satisfaction in comparison to middle aged females.

PROBLEM (5)

The last and fifth problem of the present research pertains to joint effects of the four independent variables i.e., alexithymia, borderline personality disorder, marital status, and gender, on life satisfaction of middle aged people.

HYPOTHESIS (v)

It has been hypothesized that there would exist genuine interaction effects of the four independent variables i.e., alexithymia, borderline personality disorder, marital status, and gender, on life satisfaction at first-, second- and third-order levels.