



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPTY NEST SYNDROME, MEANING IN LIFE AND
SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG MOTHERS**



Dissertation submitted as a partial fulfilment for the Degree Of
M.A (Clinical Psychology)

Submitted By:

Name: Akshita Bansal

Program: MA (Clinical Psychology)

Enrolment no: A0403422054

Supervised By:

Name: Dr. Neelam Pandey

Designation: Associate Professor

Amity University of Psychology and Allied Sciences Amity University, Noida

DECLARATION CERTIFICATE

I, Akshita Bansal, a bonafide student of Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology), in Amity University, declare that the dissertation entitled “Relationship between Empty Nest Syndrome, Meaning in Life and Social Support among Mothers” submitted by me, in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology, is my original work.

The matter presented in the thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other Institute.

Name: Akshita Bansal

Enrolment Number: A0403422054

MA Clinical Psychology

Batch: 2022-2024 AIPS, AUUP

COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation (AADS600) entitled “Relationship between empty nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life among mothers” submitted by Ms. Akshita Bansal, Enrolment number A0403422054, Programme name: “Masters in Clinical Psychology”, Semester IV, Batch 2022-24, student at Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences has carried out and completed under my supervision.

This is submitted to Amity University, Noida, in partial fulfilment of the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology.

Name of Faculty Guide: Dr Neelam Pandey Designation: Associate Professor

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences Amity University, Noida

Date – 30 April 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The completion of the original work entitled "Relationship between Empty Nest Syndrome, Meaning in Life, and Social Support among Mothers" is a product of the unwavering support, effort, and guidance of numerous individuals, without whom this endeavor would not have been possible.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Ranjana Bhatia, Head of the Institute at Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Noida, for providing me with the invaluable opportunity to delve into this dissertation topic.

I am profoundly indebted to my guide, Dr. Neelam Pandey, whose unwavering support, guidance, and invaluable feedback have been instrumental in shaping this project into what it is today. Without her mentorship, this journey would have been far more challenging.

Akshita Bansal

M.A. Clinical Psychology 2022-2024

Enrolment number: A0403422054 AIPS, AUUP, Noida

TABLE OF CONTENTS

S. No.	Title	Page Number
1.	Declaration	1
2.	Completion certificate	2
3.	Acknowledgement	3
4.	Table of contents	4
5.	List of tables	5
6.	Abstract	6
7.	Chapter 1: Introduction	7
8.	Chapter 2: Review of Literature	13
9.	Chapter 3: Method	23
10.	Chapter 4: Results and interpretation	27
11.	Chapter 5: Discussion	30
12.	Chapter 6: Conclusion	32
13.	References	35
14.	Appendices	40

LIST OF TABLES

S. No.	Title	Page Number
1.	Mean and Standard deviation of Empty Nest Syndrome, Presence of Meaning, Search for Meaning, Significant other, Family, Friends and Social Support.	27
2.	Correlation between Empty Nest Syndrome, Presence of Meaning, Search for Meaning, Significant other, Family, Friends and Social Support.	28

ABSTRACT

Parents who experience feelings of grief and loneliness when their children move out are known as empty nesters and this subject has attracted a lot of attention. It is thought that social support, which includes practical, emotional, and informational help from others, mitigates the negative impacts of empty nest syndrome. Furthermore, finding meaning in life, that is seeking significance and purpose becomes apparent as a vital element in managing the shift to an empty nest. Comprehending the complex relationship among mothers, empty nest syndrome, social support and life purpose provided important insights into supporting their mental health at this critical time of life. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between empty nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life among mothers. Standardized scales were used to measure the stated variables. The results found out significant relationship between empty nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life. Examining these connections illuminates practical methods for helping mothers deal with the difficulties of having an empty nest.

Keywords: *Empty Nest Syndrome, Social Support, Meaning in Life*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The term "empty nest syndrome" describes the depressing, isolating, and bereaved sentiments that parents go through after their children move out and, usually, begin their own families. As their function as nurturers and caregivers becomes less important, this shift can leave parents with a deep sense of emptiness and purposelessness. Taking up new interests, getting back in touch with partners, or discovering meaning in one's career or community service are common coping mechanisms. Arora and Khanam (2023) states that empty nest refers to “house becoming deserted when children stretch their wings and leave the nest for future lives.”

According to Shina (2022), “Empty nest syndrome refers to feelings of depression, loss, and sadness that parents experience at being separated from their children for various reasons. Women will be more affected than men, so a mother will be more affected than a father. It occurs when children move into adulthood and start building a new family, so they are busy with their own business.” Mitchell (2016) defined empty nest syndrome as “a family course transition and post parental phase that occurs when children have moved out and left their parental home.”

“These are relatively infrequent reactions and information about their epidemiology is not available. They are defined as temporal associations of clinical depression with the cessation of child-rearing. They may also go along with an inability of the parent to cope with demands of everyday living” (Kahana & Kahana, 1982).

According to Borland (1982), “the empty nest syndrome is a period of depression, identity crises, adjustment, confusion, role loss, and a lowered sense of well-being which occurs when the last child leaves the parental home.”

“The term "empty nest" is widely used to refer to that period in life when children have

finally grown up and left home. Although both men and women experience this transition, it has been considered uniquely stressful for women since it entails the loss of the major components of the mother role, a role which has traditionally been a central focus of many women's lives and identities" (Harkins, 1978). Empty nest is a "phenomenon which occurs when the child begins to run their independent life" (Darmayanthi and Lestari, 2018).

According to Mansoor and Hasan (2019), "family love is just like love of birds living together in a nest. In life, there comes a point where young one's fly away and start living their lives independently. Launching of children is a cycle in which children move into adulthood and set their goals, develop their identity and become more independent. Parents usually deal with the absence of their children when they leave the house to establish their own families. Sometimes children leave home due to marriages, or in pursuance of higher education or career. Empty nest syndrome is an unhappy sad feeling and negative emotional disturbance which parents experience when their children leave them."

The help, consolation, and encouragement that one receives from friends, family, and peers is referred to as social support. It is essential for supporting resilience and mental health, reducing stress, and creating a feeling of community and connection. Robust social support networks can improve general well-being and quality of life by offering emotional validation, useful support, and a sense of security during trying times.

According to Taylor (2011), "Social support, which is the perception or experience that one is cared for, esteemed, and part of a mutually supportive social network, has beneficial effects on mental and physical health." Gottlieb and Bergen (2009) said, "social support is in fact highly contingent on numerous personal, environmental, and cultural factors, it cannot be assumed to permanently reside in social networks. Nor can it be assumed to be available and adequate in

quantity and quality at times when people appraise the resources at their disposal.”

“Social support in the narrow sense has been defined in various ways. For example, it may be regarded as resources provided by others, as coping assistance or as an exchange of resources. Several types of social support have been investigated, such as instrumental (e.g., assist with a problem), tangible (e.g., donate goods), informational (e.g., give advice), and emotional (e.g., give reassurance), among others” (Schwarzer et al., 2003).

“A multidimensional construct that refers to the characteristics and functions of social relationships thought to enhance mental and physical health, also the psychological and material available to individuals through their social networks” (Rodriguez & Cohen, 1998).

The sense of fulfillment, significance, and purpose that come from one's connections, experiences, and acts is what is meant to be included in one's meaning in life. Living in accordance with one's values, aspirations, and beliefs entails understanding them. Finding meaning can come from a variety of sources, including spiritual activities, pursuing passions, improving the lives of others, and personal development. Finding meaning in life offers a compass for overcoming obstacles and ambiguities in life and is linked to increased resilience, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being.

The phenomenon known as "Empty Nest Syndrome" frequently leads people to look for social assistance when adjusting to their children moving out. Friends, family, and peers can help ease the pain and sense of loss that come with empty nest syndrome by offering support, encouragement, and consolation. Social support provides practical assistance in adjusting to the new phase of life and validates emotions, acting as a buffer against the emotional upheaval experienced during this time.

In addition, social support can be quite helpful in assisting people in finding purpose in life

when they are experiencing the empty nest syndrome. Beyond the parental role, social support networks can offer a sense of purpose and belonging by creating connections and nurturing relationships. People's sense of fulfillment and happiness can be enhanced by discovering new interests, hobbies, or possibilities for personal growth through interactions with others. On the other hand, discovering purpose in life can also improve a person's capacity to handle empty nest syndrome. Those who establish and pursue goals or activities that are consistent with their values and beliefs can develop a feeling of purpose that extends beyond the short-term difficulties of being an empty nester. This feeling of purpose offers a framework for navigating the change, giving resilience in the face of uncertainty and a sense of direction. In the end, the interaction of meaning in life and social support can help with adaptation and adjustment during the empty nest stage, fostering general fulfillment and well-being.

Empty Nest and Social Support

A phenomenon known as "empty nest syndrome" (ENS) is when parents feel depressed, alone, and bereaved after their children move out, usually to live on their own or establish their own families. According to research, social support is essential for fostering wellbeing at this time of life transition and reducing the detrimental psychological effects of ENS. Research has continuously shown how crucial social support is as a buffer against the emotional anguish brought on by ENS. Having a solid support system of friends, family, and peers who can offer companionship, practical help, and emotional validation might make it easier for people to adjust to the empty nest stage. Because they live together for a long year, the interactions between family members, especially those between children and parents have a significant impact on quality of life (Chen et al., 2012).

Furthermore, social support affirms people's value and relevance outside of their function as parents, providing comfort and validation throughout the empty nest time. This affirmation holds significant value when people manage the shift from providing care to leading a more self-sufficient existence. A sense of self-worth and resilience in the face of obstacles associated with an empty nest can be fostered by social support, which validates an individual's identity and value parenthood.

In addition, social support makes it easier to retain existing relationships and establish new ones, both of which are critical for preserving a feeling of fulfilment and belonging throughout the empty nest stage. Participating in hobbies, social events, and community service can offer avenues for meaningful engagement and social connection, thereby mitigating emotions of loneliness and bereavement.

In summary, social support is essential for reducing the detrimental psychological effects of empty nest syndrome and fostering wellbeing at this time of life transition. Social support networks boost people's resilience and transition during the empty nest phase by promoting emotional validation, offering helpful advice, and developing social relationships. Future studies should focus on developing interventions to strengthen social support networks for people going through this transition as well as investigating the mechanisms by which social support affects outcomes associated with ENS.

Empty Nest and Meaning in Life

The departure of children from the parental home is a major life shift known as Empty Nest Syndrome (ENS), which frequently results in feelings of loss, emptiness, and a revaluation of life's meaning. To fully address the psychological effects of this shift, it is imperative to comprehend

the connection between meaning in life and Empty Nest Syndrome.

People who have reached the empty nest phase are prompted to reevaluate their identities and priorities, which causes them to look for new meanings and purposes outside of being parents. Empirical evidence suggests that discovering purpose in life is essential for managing the difficulties related to ENS and promoting mental health during this shift.

Additionally, the empty nest phase gives people the chance to pursue personal objectives, take up new hobbies, and participate in activities that are consistent with their values and beliefs, all of which contribute to a greater feeling of meaning and purpose in life. Individuals can experience a sense of fulfilment and happiness outside of their parenting obligations by making investments in activities that promote personal growth.

Moreover, sustaining significant relationships with friends, family, and neighbors is crucial to fostering wellbeing in the empty nest stage. A sense of connection and belonging can be fostered by supporting others and having meaningful social contacts, which helps lessen the emotions of loneliness and isolation that are frequently felt during this transition.

In summary, overcoming the difficulties of empty nest syndrome and fostering psychological well-being throughout this life transition depend on discovering purpose in life. As people transition to the empty nest era, they can develop resilience, adaptability, and fulfilment by finding meaning and purpose outside of parenthood. Subsequent investigations ought to persist in examining the intricate relationship between ENS and purpose in life, providing insights for interventions designed to assist those going through this shift.

Empty Nest Syndrome Stages

Rubenstein (2007) gave the stages of empty nest syndrome consisting of Grief, after the grief stage and Joy stage.

Grief Stage: In the first stage, parents experience deep feelings of grief, hopelessness, and agony as their children leave the house. A sense of loss and grief for the former family dynamic are hallmarks of this stage. It can be difficult for mothers to let go of their kids, which can increase mental anguish.

Relief: Parents may move on to a phase of relief and acceptance after the grieving process. They start to adjust to the changes in their lives as they progressively come to grips with the empty nest. Parents may experiment with new interests, pastimes, or hobbies during this stage when they turn their attention from their parental duties. Parenting during this phase is about adjusting to newfound freedom and autonomy and self-discovery.

Joy: Rubenstein describes a happy, satisfied stage as the last one. In this stage, parents have accepted their independence and effectively overcome their first grief. As they explore new avenues and possibilities in their post-empty nest lives, they could feel a sense of purpose and fulfilment that has been diminished. This stage, where parents find fulfilment and joy in their newfound freedom and autonomy, is a good effect of the empty nest transition.

In general, Rubenstein's model emphasizes the wide range of feelings and experiences that parents could have while they adjust to life without their children in the house, finally leading to a sense of fulfillment and growth.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature provides a comprehensive examination of existing research important between empty nest syndrome (ENS), social support and meaning in life among mothers. This section synthesis relevant studies to offer insights into the psychological and social factors influencing mother's experiences during the transition to an empty nest. By exploring the body of literature, this review aims to discuss the understanding of the relationship involved in the empty nest phenomenon and its impact on maternal well-being. Through these findings, this review sets the stage for the present study.

Empty Nest Syndrome

Ezeh et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the role gender and coping strategies in predicting empty nest syndrome among midlife to late adults of Southeast Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional approach under which 73 males and 175 females participated. The average age of the sample was 59 years. Though outcomes of the study revealed that empty nest syndrome was not significantly associated with age. However, coping strategy (acceptance) showed a negation relationship with empty nest syndrome.

In another study, empty nest syndrome (which is termed as self-reported depression and emotional distress among parents when offspring leave home) was explored with relation to parental health and well-being. The study examined 316 parents belonging to different cultural groups such as Chinese, British, Indo/East Indian and Southern European residing in Vancouver and British Columbia. The sample was interviewed in depth over the telephone. Findings of the

study demonstrated that only a few parents reported symptoms of empty nest syndrome. Though, these results are highly influenced by cultural background and other sociodemographic and relational patterns (Mitchell & Lovegreen, 2009).

Najib and Hanirudin (2020) did a study to investigate the links between empty nest syndrome, appetite and quality of life among adult females from Kuantan (Malaysia). A total of 242 adult females, aged from 40 to 59 years, were evaluated whose offspring had left home. Different standardized questionnaires were used to assess the sample such as De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale, Council for Nutritional Appetite Questionnaires (CNAQ) and World Health Organization Quality of Life (brief version). Though, it was found that the prevalence of empty nest syndrome was high among females and through statistical analysis, a significant negative correlation was discovered between empty nest syndrome, appetite, and quality of life. Further, researchers added mothers who suffer from empty nest syndrome have low appetite and poor quality of life.

Moreover, another study was conducted by Abedi et al. (2020) to investigate the association of empty nest syndrome with sexual function and satisfaction. For this study 460 Iranian women were assessed whose ages lie between 40-60 years. Various standardized scales were used in this study such as University of California Los Angeles loneliness scale, Female sexual function index and Larson Sexual Satisfaction. In addition to this, Pearson correlation and linear and multiple regression analysis was conducted. The findings of the study demonstrated a significant association between loneliness, sexual desire, sexual arousal, orgasm, sexual satisfaction and pain. A negative correlation was observed between loneliness and sexual satisfaction. However, it was also seen that females with empty nest syndrome have reduced levels of sexual function and satisfaction. To conclude, sexual function and satisfaction are affected by

loneliness, however, employment and good economic status may enhance sexual function and satisfaction among females.

A cross-sectional analysis was done between empty nest and non-empty nest elderly by Chang et al. (2016). A large sample of 3208 elderly was used from northeast China with ages of more than 60. Further, three different sections were formed - nonempty nest group, empty nest group (couples) and empty nest group living alone. These three sections were analyzed on various dimensions such as lifestyle, serum parameters, depression, ultrasonic cardiogram (UCG), quality of life and other comorbidities. Consequently, the study depicted that empty nest elderly had no risk for comorbidities such as general obesity, abdominal obesity, diabetes, hyperuricemia, hyperhomocysteinemia and stroke and moreover, no signs of depression and reduced quality of life.

A study related to empty nest syndrome was conducted by Choudhary and Sain (2020) among Indian couples. The aim of the study was to evaluate relation between empty nest syndrome, marital adjustment, and coping strategies. A total sample of 80 couples who were presently not living with their offspring. However, the study concluded a negative association between empty nest syndrome and marital adjustment among females only while empty nest syndrome was positively correlated coping strategies in both males and females.

Kaur et al. (2016) conducted a study in the Indian context on analyzing gender differences in psychological well-being of elderly parents living with their children and living alone. Total 60 couples were examined from Ludhiana city of Punjab belonging to a middle-class family. Through the analysis, it was seen that the females were more prone to psychological problems in both the settings as compared to males. Though the situation was worse for females who were living alone when compared with mothers who were living with their children.

A longitudinal study conducted with a goal to assess the relationship between empty nest syndrome, depressive symptoms, and loneliness among German parents with ages above 40 years. To examine these variables several questionnaires were used such as the De Jong Gierveld Loneliness scale and the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. With the fixed-effect regression analysis time varying socio demographic and other health related variables were adjusted (Kristensen et al., 2021).

Wang et al. (2013) did an investigation to discover the prevalence and correlates of anxiety disorder among 352 older adults (ages above 60 years) suffering from empty nest syndrome in China. The raw data was collected through various scales such as SELF Rating Anxiety Scale, the Geriatric Depression Scale - Short Form, the University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale in addition to that mini mental examination status (MMSE) was conducted on the sample. In conclusion, results of the study depicted that almost 30% of the sample population having empty nest syndrome had symptoms of anxiety and anxiety disorders. However, differences in levels of anxiety were observed relating to different factors such as gender, marital status, occupation, academic level, economic independence, and residence but no difference was observed regarding the factor related to age. In addition to this, results also demonstrated positive correlations among anxiety, depression, and loneliness in contrast to this a negative association was found with MMSE scores of the sample. Similarly, the data was analyzed through regression analysis as well which predicted that patients with depression, loneliness, cognitive impairment as well who are living in rural areas and are females are more prone to anxiety disorders.

Anike (2023) did research to study the role of optimism in the relation of empty nest syndrome and life satisfaction among 150 mid age adults (90 males and 60 females) aged between 40 to 60 years from Enugu state. The findings demonstrate no significant association between

empty nest syndrome and life satisfaction however, no major role of optimism was evaluated in the relationship of empty nest syndrome and life satisfaction. In conclusion, optimism is considered as the key factor in life satisfaction in middle aged adults.

Social Support

A one-year longitudinal study was conducted by Green and Rodgers (2001) to study relationships among perceived mastery, stress and three dimensions of social support (tangible support, informational support and belongingness support) among mothers belonging to low socioeconomic status mainly African American mothers only. The mothers were interviewed twice. The outcomes revealed that tangible and advice support were predicted by levels of mastery. In contrast to this, later levels of mastery were predicted by levels of tangible support and initially belongingness support predicted declined stress at the second time. The study highlighted the significance of availability of tangible support networks and close emotional support for parents belonging to lower economic status.

Additionally, another research was conducted on low-income mothers in the USA to study the detrimental effects of poor health and traumatic life events constituting obstacles to social support. The approach used by the researcher in the study was cross sectional analysis as well as longitudinal analysis on 1,910 mothers' Different sections were formed from the sample, mothers who showed symptoms of psychological distress, those who had physical health issues and mothers who were healthy. It was observed that mothers with psychological distress and with health issues reported lower social support as compared to other groups. Besides, domestic violence was a negative factor associated with reduced social support (Offers, 2012).

Brown et al. (2001) did an investigation to discover factors related to perceived constraint

in physical activities of mothers of young children. The researchers studied the relationship between physical activity and levels of social support among 543 mothers of different socioeconomic statuses. The study documented various facts such as; a) two third of the mothers were less physically active in their free time for health benefits; b) most of mothers felt that that they needed to be more active but were constrained by other factors such as shortage of time, money or energy; c) mother who receive social support from parents, husband and friends were placed better in constraints regarding diminishing leisure participation; d) moreover, huge difference was observed in active leisure of mothers belonging to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

An investigation carried on by Hudson et al. (2000) in Midwestern cities. The primary goal of the study was to assess the relation between levels of depression, self-esteem, loneliness and social support among 21 mothers of adolescents participating in New Parents Project. Consequently, it was observed that most of the participants had higher scores of depression and a strong and significant relation was seen in all the variables except the relationship of depression and self-esteem.

Likewise, another research was done to examine the effects of stress and social support on the relationship of family structure and depression among single and married mothers. For this aim 2,921 mothers participated in the survey (both married and single mothers). Bivariate regression was done to understand the effects of stress and social support. Though, results concluded that mothers who were single were more prone to have episodes of depression, chronic stress and more recent or childhood adversities when compared to married mothers. Thereupon, lower levels of perceived social support, social involvement and frequency of contacts with friends in contrast to married mothers. Following this, multivariate regression analysis demonstrated that almost 40%

of the relationship between the single parent status and depression was contributed by stress and social support together. Additionally, it was noticed that life events play a major role in depression of married mothers than single mothers (Cairney et al., 2003).

Pinto et al. (2019) did an investigation to understand whether a mother's psychological functioning is associated with maternal satisfaction, parenting stress and social support. The study also assessed the association of children's emotional well-being and social behavior with maternal perception of parenting. A total sample of 160 mothers was collected among which 79 females lived with aggressive husbands and the rest of the mothers lived in shelters. Along with these 61 children were assessed. The findings showed a negative association of maternal satisfaction and perception of social support with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and psychological distress, whereas parenting showed a significant positive association with these factors. Furthermore, both the children's emotional and conduct issues, and maternal mental health were predicted by maternal satisfaction (as this factor acts as a protective factor for both parent and offspring).

A correlational study was done to investigate the relationship between post-partum and social support among new mothers of East Turkey. A total sample of 364 mothers was collected who were between 6-48 weeks of postpartum. Different scales were used to measure depression, perceived social support. Additionally, questions related to obstetric were collected along with other demographics. Consequently, study revealed a negative correlation between stress and perceived social support. In the sample, 33.2% of prevalence was observed regarding the postpartum depression. However, the depression scores were related to several factors such as mother's age, occupation, education level, planned pregnancy, years of marriage, knowledge of infant care, method of delivery, psychological issues, and support from family members during

postnatal period.

Manual et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal study of 5 years to assess the relationships of stress, depressive symptoms, and social support in American mothers of young children related to low economic background. A total of 3675 mothers participated in the study who were analyzed for many years (5 years). Multivariate analysis predicted the probability of being depressed as a function of stress related factors, social support factors and sociodemographic factors. The rate of depression was around 15-21% in each year of the study. Additionally, it was also noticed that economic issues, poor physical health, parenting tends to enhance depression among mothers. Potential protecting factors that can help in reducing the symptoms or risk of depression are instrumental and partner support.

A gender study was done for the first time Chinese mothers and fathers to compare the prevalence of postpartum depression in relation to stress and perceived social support. For this purpose, a total of 130 couples were analyzed who were new parents. Several standardized scales were employed at 6-8 weeks after delivery to assess these variables like Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, the Perceived Stress Scale, and Social Support Rating Scale. However, results demonstrated that among the sample, 18 of the mothers and 14 fathers were suffering through postnatal depression. But no major difference was seen in the prevalence rates among both the genders. Following this, perceived social support, partner's depression and stress were significantly associated with depression (Gao et al., 2009).

Leahy-Warren et al. (2012) did a correlational study among 410 first time mothers to evaluate the association between social support, maternal parental self-efficacy and postnatal depression. The data was collected after 6 weeks of delivery through certain questionnaires such as Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, Perceived Maternal-Parental Self-Efficacy Scale and

Social Support Questionnaires. Therefore, results of the study suggested significant correlations between social support, information social support, maternal-paternal self-efficacy with postnatal depression. Along with this, maternal-parental self-efficacy was related to information social support at 6-weeks of post-delivery.

Meaning in Life

Taubman-Ben-Ari et al. (2012) did a cross-sectional study among 152 first time mothers and 152 grandmothers to assess personal growth and meaning in life. The study also explored the contribution of self-esteem, perceived social support, and perceived features of situations such as cognitive interpretation of threat, obstacles and self-efficacy, the background factors that were evaluated were age and frequency of meeting between mothers and grandmothers. The results displayed an enhancement in personal growth and meaning in life in both the sections due to this transition. It was also observed that knowledge and information passed from one generation to another generation helps to explain the response of others.

An investigation was conducted to observe work-home conflicts and meaning in life among Israeli parents which was affected by multiple roles played by parents. Among the sample of 616 parents, three sections were formed based on role satisfaction: a) satisfying roles, b) unsatisfying roles and c) neutral roles. The results concluded that meaning in life was directly and indirectly effected by satisfying roles. However, role conflict was enhanced by neutral roles and had an inverse impact on meaning in life among parents. In contrast to this, frequency of unsatisfying roles insignificantly contributes to role conflict and meaning in life. Furthermore, it was seen that fathers experience more intense work-family conflict as compared to mothers but both father and mother experience work-family conflict (Kulik et al., 2015).

In another study to different sections, Asian Americans (187) and European Americans (201) college students were assessed to examine the contribution of parent-child intimacy and parent's meaning in life to personal meaning in life of young adults. It was evident through results that in both sections a significant amount of variance was predicted in personal meaning in life by parent-child closeness. In contrast to this in Asian Americans, parent's meaning in life enhances significant variance in parent-child closeness but this was absent in European Americans. Though, study concludes that parents play an important role in young adults' meaning in life but it keeps varying according to different culture and ethnicity an individual belongs to (Yu & Chang, 2018).

Research was done by Yilmaz (2019) to study the correlations of spiritual orientations, meaning in life, life satisfaction and well-being among 128 mothers of children who are disabled in eastern Turkey. Several standardized questionnaires were used by the researcher to assess the raw data such as the Spiritual Orientation Scale (SOS), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) and Well-Being Index (WBI). The results concluded that as the scores increase on the spiritual orientation scale, a rise in scores on meaning in life, life satisfaction and on well-being questionnaire was also seen, hence a positive correlation was observed among all the variables. However, the average scores were the highest on the spiritual orientation scale (SOS) for mothers among other variables.

Lightsey and Sweeney (2008) conducted research to examine meaning in life, coping styles, self-efficacy and family cohesion as predictors of family satisfaction among mothers of disabled offspring. For this purpose, a total of 64 mothers were examined. However, findings demonstrated a 31% of variance in family satisfaction by stress, meaning in life, emotion-oriented coping and family cohesion. Furthermore, family cohesion and family satisfaction mediated the relationship of stress, meaning in life, emotion-oriented coping. Additionally, it was assessed that

mothers who exhibited lower stress rates showed increased meaning in life and those mothers who employed emotion-coping strategies to deal with stress had more family cohesion, which leads to enhanced family satisfaction.

In another study, Conti (2015) tried to evaluate the role parenting goals, life satisfaction, meaning in life, family life satisfaction and parenting efficacy among mothers of autistics. It was demonstrated that mothers of autistics were more compassionate in parenting goals as compared to other mothers. Furthermore, parenting satisfaction, family life satisfaction and meaning in life and higher parenting efficacy all these positive outcomes were predicted by compassionate parenting. Hence, results of the study are broadly consistent that compassionate parenting plays a key role in life satisfaction of mothers of autistic children.

An experimental study was done to enhance emotional well-being, hope, life satisfaction and meaning in life among 50 mothers of children who are suffering from cancer by introducing positive psychological intervention. The sample filled various questionnaires before and after the intervention which included Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Snyder's Hope Scale and Meaning in Life Questionnaire. Surprisingly, it was evaluated that each variable increased after the introduction of intervention among the sample (Damreihami et al., 2018).

Further, Mousavi (2016) did an experimental study and formed two groups: experimental and control group to study the impact of positive thinking training on life satisfaction and meaning in the lives of mothers with children suffering from externalized disorders. Through random sampling, 15 mothers were put into the experimental group (positive thinking was promoted through a training program) and 25 mothers in the control group (no such training was provided).

The outcomes of the finding displayed an increment in life satisfaction and meaning in life for the experimental group when compared to the control group, no such enhancement was observed. But disruptive behaviors of children can cause inverse effects on psychological well-being for their parents, especially for their mothers.

In another experimental study, a total sample of 40 mothers of offspring who had ASD (autism spectrum disorder) were evaluated by providing an intervention of ten sessions of 90 minutes of logotherapy twice per week to experimental group which comprised of 20 mothers and other group (Control Group) also had 20 mothers, but no such therapy was introduced in this group. The mothers were randomly assigned to both the groups. Moreover, the raw data was collected before and after the intervention through Meaning in Life Questionnaire. To conclude, results depicted significant differences among the scores of both the groups regarding meaning in life questionnaire, thus these findings confirm that changes were observed due to the introduction of logotherapy as intervention (Mihandoust et al., 2021).

Bekenkamp et al. (2014) conducted a correlational study to assess the relationships of physical health and meaning in life of parents of special needs children. Various dimensions of meaning in life such as self-actualization, self-acceptance and self-transcendence were also evaluated in relation to physical health. 115 parents completed the questionnaire like Existential Fulfillment Scale, an inventory of subjective health and VOEG -21. The study depicted that parents of special needs children tend to have more physical problems as compared to parents of normal children. Further, a positive relationship was seen in perceived physical health and self-acceptance and self-actualization however, a negative relationship of self-transcendence was seen with perceived physical health.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The chapter clarifies the research methodology to answer the hypothesis to acquire systematic information. The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between empty nest syndrome, meaning in life and social support among mothers. For this purpose, a total sample of 100 mothers in the age 45-55 years of age was collected.

Research Design

The study employed a purposive sampling to study the relationship between empty nest syndrome, meaning in life and social support among mothers.

Aim

The aim is to study the relationship between empty nest syndrome, meaning in life and social support among mothers.

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between empty nest syndrome and meaning in life among mothers.
- To examine the relationship between empty nest syndrome and social support among mothers.
- To examine the relationship between meaning in life and social support among mothers.

- To assess the relationship between empty nest syndrome, meaning in life and social support among middle aged mothers.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between empty nest syndrome and meaning in life among mothers.
- There will be a significant relationship between empty nest syndrome and perceived social support among mothers.
- There will be a significant relationship between perceived social support and meaning in life among mothers.

Inclusion

- Mothers aged 45 to 55 years of age.
- Mothers who have experienced/experiencing their children leaving home for independent living (empty nesters).
- Mothers who are willing to participate in the study voluntarily.
- Mothers who can communicate effectively in the language of the study.
- Mothers who have at least one child.

Exclusion

- Mothers who are younger than 45 years of age.

- Mothers who have never experienced empty nest syndrome.
- Mothers who are currently experiencing significant health issues or mental health disorders that could affect their participation.
- Mothers who are single and do not have a support network.
- Mothers who have children living with disabilities requiring full time care.

Sample

A total sample of 100 mothers in the age 45 to 55 years was collected from NCR, Delhi.

Description of tools employed

- **Empty Nest Syndrome Scale- Indian Form (ENS-IF):**

The scale as developed by Jhangiani et al. (2022) assesses the extent of empty nest syndrome among middle aged parents whose children have emptied the nest because of their career obligations, independent pursuits, or marriage. It is a 6-point Likert scale comprising 50 items.

Psychometric evaluations showed a high reliability score (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.919$), indicating strong internal consistency. Construct validity was established through expert input, solidifying the scale's relevance in assessing empty nest syndrome within counseling and education contexts.

- **Meaning in Life Questionnaire:**

The scale as developed by Steger et al. (2006) assesses individuals' perceived sense of meaning and purpose in life. A 10-item questionnaire designed to measure two dimensions of meaning in

life; presence of meaning (i.e., how much respondents feel their lives have a meaning); search for meaning (i.e. how much respondents strive to find meaning and understanding in their lives).

Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1(true) to 7 (untrue).

Psychometric evaluations have demonstrated its reliability with a strong Cronbach alpha score (typically around 0.85-0.90), indicating robust internal consistency among the questionnaire items. Moreover, the questionnaire has shown construct validity, confirmed through comparison with other measures related to well-being and life satisfaction, affirming its relevance in assessing and understanding an individual's perception of meaning in life across various contexts within psychology and related fields.

- **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS):**

The scale as developed by Zimet et al. (1988) to gauge individuals' perception of the support they receive from three sources: Family, friends and significant others. Comprising 12 items across these dimensions, respondents rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale, indicating their perceived level of support from each source.

Psychometric evaluations have consistently revealed its high reliability, often yielding a strong Cronbach alpha score (ranging from 0.85 to 0.95), indicating robust internal consistency among the scale's items. Additionally, the MSPSS has shown construct validity through comparison with related measures, affirming its relevance and effectiveness in assessing perceived social support across diverse settings within psychology and social sciences.

Procedure

Keeping in view the objectives and ethical consideration, the following procedure were executed by the researcher.

Informed consent was taken from the subjects before they were enrolled in the study. All the interested subjects were administered self-report measures. The participants were asked to answer the questions and follow the instructions. The respondents were assured that results and the information regarding them and their responses would be kept confidential and used for only research purposes. Proper standardization instructions were delivered to the subjects as per specified by the manuals. Once the respondents completed the questionnaire, they were thanked for their active participation given in the manual. The raw scores were tabulated and subjected to various statistical analyses by using the SPSS. The research was conducted to study the relationship between empty nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life among mothers.

After commencing the research, literature review was collected, and the studies of various researchers were evaluated to gain insight into variables and their relationship with other variables that were being studied. The statistical tool for data collection for all the variables were taken into consideration. After that, the hypothesis was formulated, and the expected outcomes were identified. The sample of 100 middle aged mothers was identified and approached for data collection. A brief description regarding the purpose of the study was provided to the sample as well as doubts were cleared regarding the variables and the questionnaire. Further, after giving instructions to the participants, data was collected. Participants were informed regarding the choice to participate and not participate voluntarily. During the data collection, an informed consent was taken from all the participants who were willing to participate voluntarily. The elements that were part of the data collection process included a) Informed consent b) Demographic profile c) Empty Nest Syndrome scale d) Social support scale e) Meaning in life Scale.

Once the desired responses were collected, participants were appreciated for their valuable responses. Later, the raw scores were compiled in excel sheets for each variable that was studied.

For the analysis of raw scores, SPSS was considered. Mean, Standard deviation and Pearson correlation was computed using SPSS. Once the results were tabulated, the interpretations and the analysis of the results was done. Further, the limitations of the study and implication of the study were written and evaluated.

Statistical Analysis

Scoring for all the given tests was done as per the scoring instructions given in the manual. The raw scores were tabulated and subjected to various statistical analyses by using Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) Package. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, statistical analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation Analysis was conducted.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The results section presents the findings derived from the data analysis conducted in the study on the relationship between empty nest syndrome (ENS), social support and meaning in life among mothers. The section provides a detailed overview of the quantitative outcomes obtained through statistical analyses.

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard deviation of Empty Nest Syndrome, Presence of Meaning, Search for Meaning, Significant other, Family, Friends and Social Support.

	Empty Nest Syndrome	Presence of Meaning	Search for Meaning	Significant Other	Family	Friends
N	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean	111	21.5	20.0	20.1	21.1	18.4
Standard Deviation	40.3	5.01	5.60	6.02	5.47	6.58

The Mean of the studied variables in a sample of (N=100) is discussed as following. The mean for empty nest syndrome is (111); presence of meaning (21.5), search for meaning (20.0), significant other (20.1), family (21.1) and friends (18.4).

The Standard Deviation for the studied variables is as following. The Standard deviation for empty nest syndrome is (40.3), presence of meaning (5.01), search for meaning (5.60), significant other (6.02), family (5.47) and friends (6.58).

Table 2

Correlation between Empty Nest Syndrome, Presence of Meaning, Search for Meaning, Significant other, Family, Friends and Social Support.

Empty Nest Syndrome			Presence of Meaning		Search for Meaning	Significant Other		Family		Friends
Empty Nest Syndrome	—									
Presence of Meaning	-0.630	***	—							
Search for Meaning	0.093		0.207	*	—					
Significant Other	-0.381	***	0.344	***	-0.028	—				
Family	-0.378	***	0.506	***	0.071	0.548	***	—		
Friends	-0.305	**	0.463	***	0.105	0.285	**	0.547	***	—
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$										

The results found that presence of meaning (subdimension of Meaning in Life) has a significant negative correlation with Empty Nest Syndrome ($r=-0.630$, $p < .001$). The results further, found significant relationship of social support and its dimensions (significant other, family, friends) with Empty Nest Syndrome. The results found there is significant negative correlation between Significant others and Empty nest syndrome ($r=-0.381$, $p < .001$), significant negative correlation between family and empty nest syndrome ($r=-0.378$, $p < .001$) and significant negative correlation between friends and empty nest syndrome ($r=-0.305$, $p < .01$).

The results found significant positive correlation between the subdimensions of social support and meaning in life. The results found that there is significant positive correlation between significant others and presence of meaning ($r=0.344$, $p < .001$). However, no significant relation was found between significant other and search for meaning.

The results also found positive significant relationship between family and presence of meaning ($r=0.506$, $p < .001$). However, no significant relation was found between family and search for meaning.

Likewise, significant positive correlation was found between friends and presence of meaning ($r=0.463$, $p < .001$). However, no significant relation was found between friends and search for meaning.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The following findings are discussed

Presence of Meaning and Empty Nest Syndrome

- The significant negative correlation ($r=-0.630$, $p < .001$) between presence of meaning and empty nest syndrome indicates that mothers who perceive greater sense of meaning in their lives tend to experience lower levels of empty nest syndrome. This suggests that having a strong sense of purpose and significance may act as a protective factor against the negative effects of empty nest syndrome. Having a clear sense of meaning may help them navigate this life stage with greater resilience and adaptability. Interventions aimed at promoting existential meaning such as encouraging meaningful activities may help mothers cope better. Past studies have shown that when child leaves his/her home, parents end up losing their identity, purpose and motivation (Arora and Khanam, 2023). However, Afzal and Waraich (2023) states that many parents instead find joy and fulfilment in empty nest phase. Al Ubaidi (2017) states that purpose in life is strongly related with positive functioning of empty nesters.

Social Support and Empty Nest Syndrome

- Significance Others: The negative correlation ($r=-0.381$, $p < .001$) suggests that mothers who receive strong social support from significant other (husband) tend to experience lower levels of empty nest syndrome. This highlights the importance of intimate relationships to tackle negative effects of empty nest syndrome. Researchers have found that parents

discover new opportunities when the child leaves home. This opportunity leads them in their personal growth, time for their hobbies and a chance to reconnect with their partner (Afzal and Waraich, 2023). Additionally, they make the most of the time to rekindle their marriages by spending more time together and engaging in personal interests that they were unable to explore earlier. Contrary Bongyoga and Risnawaty (2021) argued that parents emotional health may suffer when their children aren't living with them. However, researchers have stated that one of the important attributes to an increase in the amount of time and effort dedicated to the marriage (Gorchoff, John and Helson (2008).

- Family: Similarly, the negative correlation ($r = -.378$, $p < .001$) between family support and empty nest syndrome implies that mothers who perceive strong support from their family members are less likely to experience empty nest syndrome. This highlights the importance of family bonding as a protective factor against the negative impact of children leaving the home. Al Ubaidi (2017) in the study found that meaningful interaction with others is strongly correlated with better functioning.
- Friends: The negative correlation ($r = -0.305$, $p < .01$) indicates that mothers who have supportive friendships tend to report lower levels of empty nest syndrome. This suggests that social connections outside of the family unit play an important role in mitigating the negative effects of empty nest syndrome. Researchers have found that the previously neglected social networks and old friendships gets reconnected with newfound independence. Singh and Misra (2009) states that socialization acts as a coping for empty nesters. The declining health of the elderly can make social contact difficult for them. However, the social support of their cohabiting children, friends and neighbors is essential to lessening their loneliness (Chalise et al., 2007).

Social Support and Meaning in Life

- Significant Others: The positive correlation ($r=0.344$, $p < .001$) between support from significant others and presence of meaning suggests that mothers who receive support from close relationships are more likely to perceive their lives as meaningful.
- Family: The positive correlation between ($r=0.506$, $p < .001$) between family support and presence of meaning indicates that familial support brings greater sense of meaning in life.
- Friends: The positive correlation ($r=0.463$, $p < .001$) between support from friends and presence of meaning suggests that supportive friendships contribute to a greater meaning in life.

Search for Meaning

While, significant correlations were found between social support and presence of meaning, no significant relationships were observed between social support (from significant others, family or friends) and the search for meaning. This suggests that while social support may enhance mothers' perception of life's meaning, it may not necessarily influence their active pursuits or explorations of existential meaning.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Empty Nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life are all related, which emphasizes how difficult it is for mothers to adjust to changes in their lives. Research suggests that mothers experiencing empty nest syndrome often turn to their social support networks for emotional validation and practical assistance, which can mitigate the negative psychological impact of the syndrome. Conversely, social support also serves as a catalyst for finding meaning in life beyond the parental role, fostering connections and facilitating personal growth.

The pursuit of meaning in life can act as a protective factor against the negative impact of empty nest syndrome. By engaging in activities that resonates with their values and beliefs, mothers can derive a sense of purpose that transcends the challenges and negative impacts of an empty nest. This sense of meaning provides a guiding framework for navigating the transition, promoting resilience and well-being.

To conclude, the complex connection among empty nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life emphasizes the value of a comprehensive strategy for managing life changes. Knowing how these elements are related to one another might help develop therapies that support people with empty nest syndrome by highlighting the importance of meaning making and fostering social relationships as essential elements of psychological well-being. To provide more specialized and successful interventions for people navigating the empty nest stage of life, greater investigation into the complex interplay between these studied variables is necessary.

Limitations

Although, the presented findings emphasized the importance of meaning in life and social support in reducing the effects of Empty Nest Syndrome, it's important to recognize that the research has certain limitations. First off, a significant portion of the body of research on the subject uses self-report measures, which can be biased and subjective. Mothers who are experiencing empty nest syndrome could under-report their distress or respond in a way that is socially acceptable, which could bias the results. Our capacity to infer causal relationships between empty nest syndrome, social support and meaning in life is further hindered by the cross-sectional design of many studies. More solid evidence of how these characteristics over time and interact would come from longitudinal research methods. Moreover, most of the research primarily concentrates on the experiences of parents, especially women, ignoring the viewpoints of other family members or those in non- traditional family arrangements. This restriction makes it more difficult for us to comprehend how empty nest syndrome present itself in various familial and cultural circumstances. Finally, there are concerns over the generalizability of findings to different cultural settings because much research in this field has been done in western societies. To overcome these constraints and offer a more thorough understanding of empty nest syndrome and its correlated, future research should make use of variety of methodologies, such as cross cultural and longitudinal approaches.

Further Recommendations

Going forward, several suggestions can improve our comprehension of Empty Nest Syndrome (ENS) and guide interventions to assist those going through this transition. First and foremost, longitudinal research is required to investigate the temporal evolution of ENS, social

support, and meaning in life. Researchers would be able to examine the paths of adjustment and pinpoint the elements that either contribute to resilience or susceptibility with a long-term follow-up. Furthermore, qualitative research techniques like focus groups and interviews can offer greater insights into the subjective experiences of those receiving ENS by collecting details that quantitative measures would miss.

Interventions aimed at ENS should also include elements that strengthen social networks and ease the process of finding purpose in life. Psychoeducational programs can inform people about the possible difficulties associated with the empty nest era and offer techniques for preserving and enhancing social ties. Beyond the parental role, interventions that support interests and values-based activities can help people feel fulfilled and have a purpose in life.

Furthermore, future studies should put inclusion first by looking at ENS experiences in a range of cultural and familial circumstances. This method would advance our understanding of how sociocultural variables affect the appearance and consequences of ENS in a more sophisticated way. Researchers, practitioners, and community stakeholders working together can guarantee that interventions are culturally aware and customized to meet the specific requirements of various groups.

Finally, interdisciplinary cooperation is critical to knowledge advancement and the creation of comprehensive ENS interventions. Including perspectives from sociology, psychology, and gerontology, among other fields, can deepen our comprehension of the complex nature of ENS and guide the development of all-encompassing strategies for helping people through this stage of life. Researchers and practitioners can aid in the creation of successful plans for fostering resilience and well-being in people with ENS by putting these suggestions into practice.

REFERENCES

- Abedi, P., Afshari, P., Yaralizadeh, M., & Dastoorpoor, M. (2020). Does loneliness following empty nest impair sexual function and satisfaction of middle-aged Iranian women?. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24, 2045-2055.
- Al Ubaidi, B. A. (2017). Empty-nest syndrome: Pathway to construction or destruction. *Journal of Family and Disease Prevention*, 3(3).
- Anike, R. U. (2023). The Moderating Role of Optimism in the Relationship between Empty Nest Syndrome and Life Satisfaction in Middle Age Adults. *Caritas Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, 1(1).
- Baumeister, R. F. (1991). *Meanings of life*. Guilford press.
- Bekenkamp, J., Groothof, H. A. K., Bloemers, W., & Tomic, W. (2014). The relationship between physical health and meaning in life among parents of special needs children. *Europe's Journal of psychology*, 10(1).
- Bongyoga, V., & Risnawaty, W. (2021, August). The description of family quality of life in parents with empty-nest syndrome. In *International Conference on Economics, Business, Social, and Humanities (ICEBSH 2021)* (pp. 911-916). Atlantis Press.
- Borland, D. C. (1982). A cohort analysis approach to the empty-nest syndrome among three ethnic groups of women: A theoretical position. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 117-129.
- Brown, P. R., Brown, W. J., Miller, Y. D., & Hansen, V. (2001). Perceived constraints and social support for active leisure among mothers with young children. *Leisure sciences*, 23(3), 131-144.
- Cairney, J., Boyle, M., Offord, D. R., & Racine, Y. (2003). Stress, social support and depression in single and married mothers. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 38, 442- 449.

- Chalise, H. N., Saito, T., Takahashi, M., & Kai, I. (2007). Relationship specialization amongst sources and receivers of social support and its correlations with loneliness and subjective well-being: A cross sectional study of Nepalese older adults. *Archives of gerontology and geriatrics*, 44(3), 299-314.
- Chang, Y., Guo, X., Guo, L., Li, Z., Yang, H., Yu, S., ... & Sun, Y. (2016). Comprehensive comparison between empty nest and non-empty nest elderly: a cross-sectional study among rural populations in Northeast China. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 13(9), 857.
- Chen, D., Yang, X., & Aagard, S. D. (2012). The empty nest syndrome: Ways to enhance quality of life. *Educational Gerontology*, 38(8), 520-529.
- Choudhary, N., & Sain, R. (2020). Empty nest syndrome, marital adjustment and coping strategies among mid life Indian couples. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*, 11(4- 6), 216-219.
- Conti, R. (2015). Compassionate parenting as a key to satisfaction, efficacy and meaning among mothers of children with autism. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 45, 2008-2018.
- Damreihani, N., Behzadipour, S., Haghpah, S., & Bordbar, M. (2018). The effectiveness of positive psychology intervention on the well-being, meaning, and life satisfaction of mothers of children with cancer: A brief report. *Journal of psychosocial oncology*, 36(3), 382-388.
- Darmayanthi, N. K. P., & Lestari, M. D. (2018, July). From Negative Feeling to Well Adjusted Person: Experience of Middle Aged Women in Empty Nest Phase. In *Universitas Indonesia International Psychology Symposium for Undergraduate Research (UIPSUR 2017)* (pp. 138-143). Atlantis Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2007). *The meaning of life*. Oxford University Press, USA.

- Ege, E., Timur, S., Zincir, H., Geckil, E., & Sunar-Reeder, B. (2008). Social support and symptoms of postpartum depression among new mothers in Eastern Turkey. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research*, 34(4), 585-593.
- Ezeh, M. A., Okonkwo, E. A., Nwagbo, I. L., Nweke-Uko, N., & Ogbozor, P. A. (2021). Gender and Coping Strategy as Predictors of Empty Nest Syndrome among Midlife to Late Adults in South East Nigeria. *Esut Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(3).
- Gao, L. L., Chan, S. W. C., & Mao, Q. (2009). Depression, perceived stress, and social support among first-time Chinese mothers and fathers in the postpartum period. *Research in nursing & health*, 32(1), 50-58.
- Gorchoff, S. M., John, O. P., & Helson, R. (2008). Contextualizing change in marital satisfaction during middle age: An 18-year longitudinal study. *Psychological science*, 19(11), 1194-1200.
- Gottlieb, B. H., & Bergen, A. E. (2010). Social support concepts and measures. *Journal of psychosomatic research*, 69(5), 511-520.
- Green, B. L., & Rodgers, A. (2001). Determinants of social support among low-income mothers: A longitudinal analysis. *American journal of community psychology*, 29(3), 419-441.
- Harkins, E. B. (1978). Effects of empty nest transition on self-report of psychological and physical well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 549-556.
- Hudson, D. B., Elek, S. M., & Campbell-Grossman, C. (2000). Depression, self-esteem, loneliness, and social support among adolescent mothers participating in the new parents project. *Adolescence*, 35(139).
- Jhangiani, T., Dutta, M., Arundhati, Banerjee, T., & Jochan, G. M. (2022). Empty Nest Syndrome Scale- Indian Form (ENS-IF) » The International Journal of Indian

Psychology. *International Journal of Indian*

Psychology. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1004.059>

Kahana, B., & Kahana, E. (1982). Clinical issues of middle age and later life. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 464(1), 140-161.

Kaur, S., Gulati, J. K., & Kaur, S. (2016). Psychological well-being of elderly parents living with children and in empty nest families: Gender differentials. *Indian Journal of Health & Wellbeing*, 7(10).

Kristensen, K., König, H. H., & Hajek, A. (2021). The empty nest, depressive symptoms and loneliness of older parents: Prospective findings from the German Ageing Survey.

Kulik, L., Shilo-Levin, S., & Liberman, G. (2015). Multiple roles, role conflict, and sense of meaning in life among working parents. *Journal of Career Development*, 42(4), 263-280.

Leahy-Warren, P., McCarthy, G., & Corcoran, P. (2012). First-time mothers: social support, maternal parental self-efficacy and postnatal depression. *Journal of clinical nursing*, 21(3-4), 388-397.

Lightsey Jr, O. R., & Sweeney, J. (2008). Meaning in life, emotion-oriented coping, generalized self-efficacy, and family cohesion as predictors of family satisfaction among mothers of children with disabilities. *The Family Journal*, 16(3), 212-221.

Mansoor, A., & Hasan, S. S. (2019). Empty nest syndrome and psychological wellbeing among middle aged adults. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 17(1), 55-60.

Manuel, J. I., Martinson, M. L., Bledsoe-Mansori, S. E., & Bellamy, J. L. (2012). The influence of stress and social support on depressive symptoms in mothers with young children. *Social science & medicine*, 75(11), 2013-2020.

Mihandoust, S., Radfar, M., & Soleymani, M. (2021). Effectiveness of Group Logotherapy on Meaning in Life in Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Randomized

Clinical Trial. *Journal of Advances in Medical and Biomedical Research*, 29(132), 54-62.

Mitchell, B. A. (2019). Empty nest. *Encyclopedia of gerontology and population aging*, 288, 1-6.

Mitchell, B. A., & Lovegreen, L. D. (2009). The empty nest syndrome in midlife families: A multimethod exploration of parental gender differences and cultural dynamics. *Journal of family issues*, 30(12), 1651-1670.

Mousavi, S. S. (2016). Effect of positive thinking training on life satisfaction and sense of meaning in life of mothers of children with externalized disorders. *Biannual Journal of Applied Counseling*, 5(1), 63-80.

NAJIB, N. H. M., & HAMIRUDIN, A. H. (2020). EMPTY NEST SYNDROME AND ITS ASSOCIATION BETWEEN APPETITE AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG FEMALE ADULTS IN KUANTAN. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES*, 4(3), 1409-1420.

Offer, S. (2012). Barriers to social support among low-income mothers. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 32(3/4), 120-133.

Pinto, R. J., Correia-Santos, P., Levendosky, A., & Jongenelen, I. (2019). Psychological distress and posttraumatic stress symptoms: The role of maternal satisfaction, parenting stress, and social support among mothers and children exposed to intimate partner violence. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 34(19), 4114-4136.

Rodriguez, M. S., & Cohen, S. (1998). Social support. *Encyclopedia of mental health*, 3(2), 535-544.

Schwarzer, R., Knoll, N., & Rieckmann, N. (2004). Social support. *Health psychology*, 158, 181. Schwarzer, R., Knoll, N., & Rieckmann, N. (2004). Social support. *Health psychology*,

158, 181.

Shina, A. F. I. (2022). How meaning of life correlates with emptiness syndrome of Minangkabau elderly women. *IJIP: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 4(2), 50-57.

Singh, A., & Misra, N. (2009). Loneliness, depression and sociability in old age. *Industrial psychiatry journal*, 18(1), 51-55.

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire: assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of counseling psychology*, 53(1), 80.

Taubman-Ben-Ari, O., Ben Shlomo, S., & Findler, L. (2012). Personal growth and meaning in life among first-time mothers and grandmothers. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13, 801- 820.

Taylor, S. E. (2011). Social support: A review. *The Oxford handbook of health psychology*, 1, 189-214.

Wang, Z., Shu, D., Dong, B., Luo, L., & Hao, Q. (2013). Anxiety disorders and its risk factors among the Sichuan empty-nest older adults: A cross-sectional study. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 56(2), 298-302.

Wolf, S. (2012). *Meaning in life and why it matters* (Vol. 35). Princeton University Press.

Yilmaz, G. (2019). Spiritual orientation, meaning in life, life satisfaction, and well-being in mothers with disabled children. *Journal of religion and health*, 58(6), 2251-2262.

Yu, E. A., & Chang, E. C. (2018). Parent–child closeness and parents’ meaning in life in personal meaning in life: Examining ethnic differences. *The Family Journal*, 26(3), 300- 305.

Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., & Farley, G. K. (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of personality assessment*, 52(1), 30-41.

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

Greetings!

I am Akshita Bansal, a final year student, currently pursuing Masters in Clinical Psychology from Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences as part of dissertation, I am conducting research on “Relationship between Empty Nest Syndrome, Meaning in Life and Social Support among Mothers”. The project has been approved by the Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences. I, kindly request you to spend 10-15 minutes of your valuable time filling out the questionnaire and contributing to my research, all the information gathered for this study will be kept confidential and used solely for research. Your participation is valuable to me.

You are invited to participate in this project if you meet the following criteria:

1. You are a mother aged 45-55.
2. Your children have moved out and no longer live with you.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have read the above description and voluntarily agree to be a part of this research. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

Demographic Details

Name– Age –

Which state are you from –

How many children do you have? –

Empty Nest Syndrome Scale- Indian Form (ENS-IF)

Instructions:

"This booklet contains statements regarding the way you have been thinking, feeling and acting after your child/children have left home to live elsewhere. For each statement, please select the option that best describes your thinking, feeling and actions by marking (✓), on any one of the five response points, 'Always', 'Very Frequently', 'Often', 'Sometimes', 'Rarely' and 'Never'. There are no right or wrong answers and there are no trick questions. Work quickly and do not think too long about the exact meaning of the question. Give your first response. Do not leave any question unanswered." Disclaimer: Please note that while answering this scale you might have to revisit some memories of your child who has left home which might be uncomfortable and could be upsetting. If at any point you feel discomfort of any sort you can stop answering. [Items: (N) Negative Items, mentioned only for experts' review].

Items	Always	Very Frequently	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Ever since my child/children left home I feel that I am satisfied in my life (N).						
2. Ever since my child/children left home I often tend to experience a sense of emptiness						
3. Ever since my child /children left home I feel bitter when I see other parents with their children.						

4. I don't like the fact that my child had to leave the house for work/studies/marriage.						
5. My routine has been the same since my child/children have left home. (N)						

6. Ever since my child/children left home I find myself looking back on memories.						
7. Delay in/unable to contact my child/children causes a lot of stress and anxiety.						
8. Ever since my child/children left home, I have thoughts of not being able to see him/her/them for one last time when I fall ill.						
9. Ever since my child/children left home there have been lesser conflicts (N).						
10. I need to constantly check on my child/children to assure myself that they are okay.						
11. I do not feel like eating the food I make on special occasions knowing that I cannot share it with my child/children.						
12. Ever since my child /children left home I feel like I have more time on my hands to do the things I enjoy (N).						

13. I feel sad when I am not able to celebrate my child/children's accomplishments with them in person.						
14. Ever since my child/children left home I feel more irritable than before.						
15. Ever since my child /children left home I constantly worry about my child's/children's safety.						
16. Ever since my child/children left home I feel aches/pains in my body that do not seem to go away no matter what I try.						
17. Ever since my child/children left home I often feel sad for no apparent reason.						
18. I feel okay about my child moving away from home (N).						
19. My child moving away has not affected me emotionally (N).						
20. Ever since my child/children left home I lack the energy to do my work daily.						
21. I have lost my appetite ever since my child/children left home						
22. Ever since my child/children left home I find myself with more free time these days and do not know how to occupy myself.						

23. Ever since my child/children left home I find myself in a good mood most of the time (N).						
24. When my child is unwell, I worry and feel helpless for not being able to take care of them.						
25. I don't like that my child/children don't talk to me enough and that we're growing apart.						
26. Ever since my child/children left home I feel abandoned by my child.						
27. I worry that I might be disturbing my child/children when I call them.						
28. Ever since my child/children left home I feel anxious when I am unaware of their routine.						
29. Moving away from home is a good opportunity for my child/children to become independent and grow (N).						
30. There has been an increase in the amount of work I do around the house after my child has left home.						
31. I have not constantly thought about my child/children since they have left home(N).						
32. When my child is facing difficulties, I feel guilty for not being physically present with them.						

33. Ever since my child/children left home I can take care of my health, wellness, and appearance better (N).						
34. Ever since my child/children left home I feel like I have lost my friend.						
35. Ever since my child/children left home I do not find joy in activities that previously interested me.						
36. I don't feel like attending any family occasions/gatherings/ any fun event without my child/children.						
37. I tend to use my phone a lot to distract myself ever since my child/children have left home.						
38. Ever since my child/children left home I feel that I can focus more on what I usually do and its demands (N).						
39. I tend to talk about my feelings of sadness with family and friends after my child/children left home.						
40. I can enjoy festivities and special occasions despite not having my child/children around (N).						
41. I do not feel safe and secure without my child/children in the house.						
42. I am unable to communicate as much as I'd like with my child/children because I lack technological knowledge.						

43. I feel I have lost a major part of my identity because I no longer can get involved with my child/children's life events.						
44. Ever since my child/children left home my sleep cycle is disturbed because of a constant worry.						
45. Ever since my child/children left home I enjoy spending more time with my friends now (N).						
46. Ever since my child/children left home I feel like I have nobody to talk to in my daily life.						
47. I feel that my child/children leaving has negatively impacted my marriage/relationship with my spouse.						
48. Ever since my child/children left home I find myself interacting more with children around me.						
49. I prepare for my child's visit and plan a lot way before they come home.						
50. Ever since my child/children left home I feel positive about my family's future (N)						

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

Instructions: We are interested in how you feel about the following statements. Read each statement carefully. Indicate how you feel about each statement.

Circle the “1” if you Very Strongly Disagree Circle the “2” if you Strongly Disagree Circle the “3” if you Mildly Disagree

Circle the “4” if you are Neutral Circle the “5” if you Mildly Agree Circle the “6” if you Strongly Agree

Circle the “7” if you Very Strongly Agree

		Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1.	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My family really tries to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I get the emotional help & support I need from my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	My friends really try to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8.	I can talk about my problems with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	My family is willing to help me make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I can talk about my problems with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)

Instructions: Please take a moment to think about what makes your life and existence feel important and significant to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

Absolutely Untrue	Mostly true 2	Somewhat Untrue	Can't say True or False 4	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True
1		3		5	6	7

_____ 1. I understand my life's meaning.

_____ 2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.

_____ 3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose.

_____ 4. My life has a clear sense of purpose.

_____ 5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.

_____ 6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.

- _____ 7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.
- _____ 8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.
- _____ 9. My life has no clear purpose.
- _____ 10. I am searching for meaning in my life.

Scoring:

Item 9 is reverse scored. Items 1, 4, 5, 6, & 9 make up the Presence of Meaning subscale
Items 2, 3, 7, 8, & 10 make up the Search for Meaning subscale Scoring is kept
continuous.