



A Study of Preference for Solitude and its Correlates among Young Adults and Middle-Aged Adults

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SUBMITTED BY

Yashika Bansal

PUPIN - 63019

SUPERVISOR

Dr. Rohini Thapar

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation titled “A study of preference for solitude and its correlates among young adults and middle-aged adults” is my original work, conducted under the guidance of Dr. Rohini Thapar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at D.A.V College, Sector-10, Chandigarh. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma from any other institution. I have duly acknowledged all the assistance received and have cited all researchers whose works were referenced in my dissertation. I have committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity throughout this research.

Date:

(Yashika Bansal)

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary society, solitude is crucial for mental renewal, stimulating creativity, and deepening self-awareness. It offers a break from constant connectivity, allowing individuals to recharge and gain clarity away from digital distractions. Solitude fosters creativity by providing a conducive environment for idea generation, while also encouraging personal growth through introspection and self-exploration. Thus, the current study seeks to examine age and gender related differences in preferences for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism). Using purposive sampling, 120 participants (30 middle-aged females, 30 middle-aged males, 30 young adult females, and 30 young adult males) were surveyed. Preference for Solitude Scale, Positive Solitude Scale, UCLA Loneliness Scale, Positive And Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-SF), Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and Big Five Inventory (BFI) were administered. To explore age-related and gender differences within the sample, t-ratios were computed, revealing notable findings. Age-related differences emerged in life satisfaction and certain personality traits, namely openness and conscientiousness. Additionally, significant gender differences were observed in positive solitude (quietness) and personality (neuroticism). Subsequently, Pearson's Product Moment correlation was employed to assess correlations between the variables, revealing several significant correlations across all domains. Finally, a 2*2-way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the main effects and interaction effects of age and gender. Main effects of age were evident in life satisfaction and personality traits (openness and conscientiousness), while gender showed main effects in positive solitude (quietness) and personality (neuroticism). However, no significant interaction effects were detected. These findings deepen our understanding of how age and gender intersect with psychological factors, informing future research and interventions to promote well-being throughout life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
1.	INTRODUCTION	1-16
2.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	17-29
3.	METHODOLOGY	30-37
4.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	38-86
5.	OVERVIEW, PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH & SUMMARY	87-96
	REFERENCES	97-111

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
4.1	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: MEAN, S.D. AMONG TOTAL GROUPS, MIDDLE AGED FEMALES, MIDDLE AGED MALES, YOUNG ADULT FEMALES AND YOUNG ADULT MALES, N=30	44
4.2.1	SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR AGE RELATED DIFFERENCES	47
4.2.2	SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR GENDER DIFFERENCES	47
4.3	PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE, POSITIVE SOLITUDE, LONELINESS, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND PERSONALITY	52
4.4.1	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: MEAN FOR FOUR COHORTS UNDER STUDY	66
4.4.2	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE	68
4.4.3	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (TOTAL)	71
4.4.4	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (ACHIEVEMENT)	71
4.4.5	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (ESCAPISM)	74
4.4.6	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (STRESS REDUCTION)	74
4.4.7	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (SPIRITUALITY)	75

4.4.8	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (CREATIVITY)	75
4.4.9	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (QUIETNESS)	77
4.4.10	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON LONELINESS	77
4.4.11	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PANAS (POSITIVE AFFECT)	79
4.4.12	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PANAS (NEGATIVE AFFECT)	79
4.4.13	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON LIFE SATISFACTION	81
4.4.14	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON OPENNESS	81
4.4.15	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	83
4.4.16	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON EXTRAVERSION	83
4.4.17	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON AGREEABLENESS	83
4.4.18	SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON NEUROTICISM	85

INTRODUCTION

At some point in our lives, we all need solitude. But the degree to which a person demands it may vary, some people prefer to remain in solitude more than others. Solitude is an invigorating state that originates from inner richness. The person may appear alone, in a solitary state but in reality, he is not lonely. From these lines, it may appear both solitude and loneliness are similar but that's not accurate. They are alike because of the element of solitariness in both terms.

The main difference between the two terms is: Loneliness is an isolating feeling that comes with a sense of deprivation in an individual. A person can feel lonely even when he is surrounded by people. It is a negative state in which an individual finds himself. In contrast, Solitude is a desirable and positive state of seclusion in which an individual engages in his own company. It provides us with the opportunity to replenish ourselves and have a newer perspective on life. Therefore, selecting solitude is a personal choice, while loneliness is inflicted upon you by external forces.

- According to Chappell and Badger (1989), Solitude differs from social isolation primarily because the latter entails being alone involuntarily despite not wanting to be (Wichers, 2014).
- According to Larson (1990), Solitude specifically pertains to a state of physical and virtual separation from others, which removes immediate social and interpersonal cues.

David Vincent's book, "A History of Solitude," offers a unique social perspective on the solitary condition. Although it was released amidst the initial Covid-related lockdown in Britain, many reviewers have sometimes misunderstood its focus. While lockdown, indeed, imposed isolation and loneliness on many, Vincent's work highlights that solitude is a multifaceted and expansive aspect of human experience, often actively sought out rather than imposed. It presents solitude as rich with possibilities, contrasting it with the quiet and stillness endured by the lonely, which Vincent aptly described as "failed solitude." The book begins its exploration in the late 18th century with an analysis of Johann Georg Zimmermann's influential work, "Solitude Considered," which laid the groundwork for modern discussions on solitude's psychological dynamics and its management within the context of human sociability. Vincent then traces how solitude evolved into a mass pursuit in 19th and 20th century

Britain, highlighting its significance in the complexities of Modernity and the clamor of urban-industrial society (Weinstein et al., 2022c).

Previous research in social, developmental, clinical psychology, and medicine has predominantly explored the negative aspects of solitude, such as loneliness and social anxiety. However, there is a growing body of literature that focuses on the positive aspects of solitude, highlighting how individuals can thrive when alone. It is now widely recognised that solitude is different from loneliness, which refers to a sense of detachment from others (Galanaki, 2004, 2005), and isolation, which entails a prolonged period of being alone without choice (Coplan and Bowker, 2013). While there is extensive knowledge about loneliness and alienation, research on the benefits of positive solitude is still in its early stages and further investigation is necessary to uncover and delineate its potential advantages (Weinstein et al., 2021).

In contemporary times, the majority of individuals or, worse, are unaware of the advantages of solitude. Instead, many unconsciously subscribe to the principles of Object Relations Theory. This theory is founded on two main beliefs: firstly, that personal development can only occur through interactions with others, and secondly, that these interactions constitute the central, if not exclusive, source of significance in life. John Bowlby, a prominent supporter of this theory, articulated these ideas in his influential book "Attachment and Loss":

Close emotional connections with other individuals are the central focus of a person's life, from infancy through adulthood and into old age (Bowlby, 1969).

Carried there for the rest of time, the beliefs, upheld by Object Relations Theorists suggest that an individual's existence lacks significance beyond their interactions with others. However, this overlooks the widely acknowledged truth that meaning can be discovered and personal development fostered. When people engage in solitary pursuit focused on creative endeavors that captivate their focus. As psychiatrist Anthony Storr argued in his book "Solitude: A Return to the Self," when people immerse themselves in the process of shaping and organizing external creative projects, they simultaneously, often unknowingly, bring structure and coherence to their own thoughts and emotions (Admin & Admin, 2023).

Author underestimated the extent to which personal growth and harmony can occur within individuals who prefer solitude. Introverted creators can establish their identity and fulfill their potential by engaging with their own creations rather than seeking validation or interaction from others (Storr, 1989).

Winnicott (1958) proposed that variations in individuals' comfort with solitude originate from infancy. Specifically, he suggested that only those who, during infancy, had the opportunity to explore and engage in independent activities while being comforted by their mothers would develop the ability to be alone in adulthood. Building on this idea, we can argue that the capacity for solitude depends on maintaining a sense of connection even when alone. In infancy, this connection is typically with the mother, but as individuals mature, their sense of community expands. Those lacking this sense of community, due to external circumstances, or their own behaviors, such as individuals with schizoid personalities, often experience feelings of loneliness and alienation (Admin & Admin, 2023).

To fully understand how solitude affects one's inner life, it's crucial to examine the various factors contributing to solitude and the personality traits of those experiencing it. For many people, solitude brings about feelings of sadness, anxiety, and fear, while for others, it offers an opportunity for spiritual growth, self-discovery, and inner peace, leading to happiness, and a deeper understanding of truth. When solitude is forced upon someone, it often triggers psychological distress, requiring a resilient personality to withstand its effects without suffering significant consequences to their mental and physical well-being. Psychological isolation tends to be more severe in urban areas, where social integration is challenging. Childhood and adolescent isolation, typically stemming from family, conflicts and differences, can have detrimental effects on academic performance and self-esteem. Adolescents can differentiate between imposed social isolation and the beneficial aspect of voluntary solitude, although self-rejection and associated psychosomatic symptoms are more common, particularly among females. Solitude becomes even more painful in old age, often accompanied by physical ailments, socio-economic decline, and emotional isolation due to widowhood. Elderly individuals, residing in care facilities may experience complete, emotional deprivation, with the most severe cases, observed in demented individuals, leading to rapid mental decline. Voluntary solitude, however, can be beneficial for healthy individuals seeking spiritual growth, self-awareness, and inner peace. Those who embrace solitude for

meditation, self-reflection, and spiritual exploration, often find happiness and fulfillment, especially through authentic prayer experiences.

1. PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE

The concept of preference for solitude, also known as unsociability (Coplan & Weeks, 2010) or a liking for solitude (Goossens, 2014), involves choosing to spend time by oneself and finding this choice both enjoyable and fruitful (Burger, 1995; Coplan et al., 2019; Cramer & Lake, 1998). Contrary to the common perception of solitude as something negative or akin to loneliness (Coplan et al., 2019), there is an increasing body of research indicating that individuals often seek out solitude on their own (Chua & Koestner, 2008; Lay et al., 2020) and experience numerous advantages from doing so, such as enhanced creativity, the freedom of anonymity, and the opportunity for self-exploration (Bowker et al., 2017; Long et al., 2003). It's important to note that having a preference for solitude describes a person's general inclination toward seeking alone time without detailing the specific reasons for its appeal. This distinguishes it from related ideas like self-determined motivation for solitude, which zeroes in on the intrinsic reasons for wanting solitude (Nguyen et al., 2022; Thomas & Azmitia, 2019), shyness, which is the pursuit of solitude out of social anxiety (Coplan et al., 2019), and extraversion, a broader personality characteristic encompassing aspects such as sociability and assertiveness (Wilt & Revelle, 2016).

The concept of preferring solitude could suggest that such a trait acts as a shield against the negative impacts of social distancing protocols. In fact, there are reports indicating that many view a preference for solitude as a psychological safeguard during the COVID-19 crisis. For instance, at the outset of the pandemic, both the media and public opinion speculated that those inclined towards solitude (like introverts) would flourish in isolation, experiencing a sense of freedom and satisfaction (Kluth, 2020; Kecmanovic, 2020; Rogers, 2020).

While the common assumption that a preference for solitude offers protection during social distancing has not been empirically proven, there are a few studies from before the pandemic that looked into how people view those who prefer being alone in different situations. For instance, research involving college students found that they believed individuals with a higher preference for solitude have a lower need for social

belonging and are less impacted by social exclusion than those with a lower preference for solitude (Ren & Evans, 2021). Similarly, when children were shown profiles of fictional peers who were solitary, they expressed less sympathy for those described as preferring solitude over those labeled as shy (Coplan et al., 2007; Ding et al., 2015; Zava et al., 2020). Based on these initial findings, it is anticipated that the general public would assume individuals with a greater preference for solitude to be less affected by psychological issues like loneliness when undergoing social distancing.

Individual Differences in Preference for Solitude: We suggest that there's a spectrum of how much people prefer solitude, with some individuals having a very strong preference for it, while others have a very low preference. Except in rare instances, those who highly favor solitude are likely not to spend the majority of their time alone. Social interactions and enjoying the company of others are typical behaviors for almost everyone in society. Yet, compared to their peers, individuals with a strong preference for solitude tend to opt for spending time alone more frequently when given the choice between being by themselves or with others.

The relationship between an individual's preference for solitude and their well-being has been explored in various studies, most of which suggest that favoring time alone over socializing is often linked to psychological challenges. For instance, individuals who spend considerable amounts of time apart from others are frequently reported to experience high levels of shyness or social anxiety (Leary, 1983). In line with this perspective, those identified as socially anxious tend to engage less in social interactions and are more likely to have an intense fear of being negatively judged by others compared to those who are less anxious socially (DePaulo et al., 1990; Schlenker & Leary, 1982).

Some researchers have linked the tendency to spend significant amounts of time alone with experiencing loneliness (Russell et al., 1980). Individuals who exhibit high levels of what is known as trait loneliness consistently feel that they either lack sufficient social connections or that their existing relationships do not meet their needs. Those who are frequently lonely are often found to have inadequate social skills (Jones et al., 1982; Sloan & Solano, 1984) and hold negative perceptions about themselves and others (Jones et al., 1981; Frankel & Prentice-Dunn, 1990), which can hinder their desire and ability to interact socially.

2. POSITIVE SOLITUDE

While people generally have an intuitive understanding of what Positive Solitude (PS) means to them, a precise scientific definition has been elusive. Solitude is commonly understood as the condition of being alone, often equated with social isolation or loneliness, which can affect one's quality of life. However, PS differs from these concepts. Unlike loneliness or social isolation, which are typically seen as involuntary states with negative consequences, PS involves a deliberate choice to spend time alone, ranging from a few minutes to several days, and is considered beneficial. Thomas and Azmitia (2019) introduced the concept of "self-determined solitude" (SDS) to describe solitude that is self-motivated and leads to positive outcomes, as opposed to "non-self-determined solitude" (NSDS), which is associated with loneliness and an unwillingness to be in that state. SDS is seen as productive, whereas NSDS is viewed as harmful. The concept of PS lacks a unified definition (Lay et al., 2019) and remains under-researched, despite its potential advantages. Yet, there is a growing interest in this area of study (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014).

Positive solitude is characterized by its intentional pursuit by individuals at the moment it takes place, with its voluntary nature marking it as a beneficial form of being alone. Hammitt (1982) suggests that people seek out 'recreational solitude' not merely to escape from others, but to enhance their autonomy in choosing their thoughts and actions. Solitude allows for a withdrawal from the immediate pressures of social interactions, leading to lesser social restraint and greater liberty in selecting mental or physical pursuits. Additionally, positive solitude often happens in environments that evoke awe, especially in natural settings, and it's uncommon for people to find themselves in such locations by chance. Therefore, the deliberate act of seeking solitude in nature significantly reduces the likelihood of feeling lonely, thanks to the purposeful engagement with the beauty of the natural world (Hawkins, 2023b).

Benefits of Positive Solitude: Positive aspects of solitude include the opportunity for freedom of choice, liberation from constraints, and self-discovery (Long et al., 2003). Moreover, being free from the pressures of daily life and decision-making can alleviate stress and contribute to overall well-being (Lay et al., 2019). Positive solitude facilitates emotional self-regulation (Nguyen et al., 2018), introspection, and the ability to

negotiate time alone with others. Similarly, it has been proposed that preference for solitude may enhance executive functioning (Long & Averill, 2003).

3. LONELINESS

Loneliness is described as the distressing sensation that arises when a person feels their social needs are not adequately fulfilled by the quantity or quality of their social connections (Pinquart & Sorensen, 2001; Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Wheeler et al., 1983).

According to Rogers (1970, 1973), Loneliness happens when individuals lower their guard to connect with their inner selves but still anticipate rejection from others. Loneliness is a mental condition marked by a range of unpleasant emotions and thoughts, including sadness, negativity, self-criticism, and depression. (Anderson et al., 1994; Cacioppo and Hawkley, 2005).

Theoretical Framework:

Over time, various psychologists and sociologists have examined the theoretical aspects of loneliness, organizing their ideas into eight categories: psychodynamic, phenomenological, existential-humanistic, sociological, interactionist, cognitive, privacy, and theory systems.

Psychodynamic Models: Psychodynamic, pioneered by Sigmund Freud, is a renowned psychological model. While Freud himself didn't explore loneliness, subsequent psychologists within the psychodynamic tradition did (Burton, 1961; Ferreira, 1962; Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Leiderman, 1980; Peplau, 1955; Rubins, 1964; Sullivan, 1953; and Zilboorg, 1938).

Zilboorg (1938) was among the first to analyze loneliness psychologically, distinguishing between "being lonesome" as a normal feeling resulting from missing someone specific, and loneliness as an inner torment. He described loneliness as a gnawing sensation at the heart, often accompanied by concealed or overt hostility towards oneself or others. Zilboorg also traced the roots of loneliness back to infancy, where infants learn joy and love from others but may also experience vulnerability and shock.

Sullivan (1953) identified childhood as the foundational period for the loneliness experienced in adulthood, emphasizing the innate human need for closeness and intimacy. This need first emerges in infancy, with a desire for contact, and becomes more defined in preadolescence, as individuals learn whom to share personal details with. Sullivan pointed out that children who struggle with social skills due to poor communication with their parents may find it challenging to form relationships, potentially leading to loneliness. Fromm-Reichmann (1959), in her highly regarded paper on loneliness, which also acknowledged Sullivan's contributions, concurred with his perspective on loneliness. Her research focused particularly on patients with schizophrenia. Psychodynamic theorists, often working in clinical settings, viewed loneliness as a pathological issue, observing its manifestations and implications with a clear focus.

Roger's Phenomenological Perspective: Client-Centered Therapy, pioneered by Carl Rogers, stands as the foremost phenomenological perspective. Rogers delved into the issue of loneliness in his works from 1961 and 1970, reflecting his "self-theory" of personality. His analysis of loneliness was rooted in his clinical work with clients. Rogers (1970, 1973) posited that loneliness arises when individuals, despite dropping their defenses to connect with their inner selves, still anticipate rejection from others. This belief, he argued, stems from the notion that their authentic selves are unlovable, trapping them in loneliness. Rejection, according to Rogers, leads to a sense of emptiness.

Moore (1976) proposed the hypothesis that a dissonance between one's actual and idealized self contributes to loneliness, a notion supported by Eddy's (1961) doctoral dissertation. Rogers suggests that loneliness stems from poor adjustment and is caused by discrepancies in one's self-concept.

The Existential Approach: Existentialists posit that humans inherently experience solitude, as no one else can fully comprehend their thoughts and emotions. Those who embrace this perspective often grapple with the question of how to coexist with their aloneness.

Moustakas (1961) stands out as a prominent figure in this viewpoint. He distinguishes between loneliness anxiety and genuine loneliness. Loneliness anxiety serves as a defense mechanism, diverting individuals from confronting profound existential

inquiries and prompting them to seek engagement with others. Genuine loneliness entails the stark reality of being solitary and navigating life's challenges alone.

Existentialists aim to empower individuals to confront and transcend the fear of loneliness, offering guidance on how to embrace and harness loneliness constructively. While acknowledging the discomfort associated with loneliness, Moustakas maintains a positive outlook on it, viewing it as a potentially enriching and creative state.

Sociological Approach: Bowman (1955), Riesman (1961), and Slater (1976) are key figures in the sociological examination of loneliness.

Bowman (1955) proposed three societal trends contributing to increased loneliness: a decline in primary group relationships, heightened family mobility, and increased social mobility.

Riesman (1961) and Slater (1976) both linked their analyses of loneliness to the study of the American character and how societal structures fail to fulfill individuals' needs. Riesman and his colleagues argued that Americans have become "other-directed," meaning they not only seek approval from others but also constantly monitor social environments to gauge how they should behave. This leads to diffuse anxiety and an excessive preoccupation with peer approval, which is ultimately unsatisfying.

For Slater (1976) individualism is the problem, not the other-directed people. Slater (1976) believes that all human beings want a community, dependence, and engagement. We want to trust and cooperate with others, "to show responsibility for the control of one's impulses and the direction of one's life". American society does not believe in basic needs because of the commitment to individualism, the belief that everyone should pursue their own destiny. Slater (1976) argues that individualism is rooted in the attempt to deny the reality of human interdependence. One of the major goals of technology in America is freeing an individual from the necessity of relating to, submitting to, depending upon, or controlling other people. Unfortunately, this has left the individual feeling more disconnected, bored, and lonely.

The Interactionist View: Weiss (1973) is a prominent figure in the interactionist approach to loneliness. His explanation of loneliness can be characterized as interactionist for two main reasons. Firstly, he asserts that loneliness doesn't solely stem from personality traits or situational factors, but rather from the interplay between the

two. Secondly, Weiss (1973) explores the importance of social relationships, such as attachment, guidance, and a sense of worth, in alleviating loneliness. Loneliness arises when individuals lack these essential social interactions and struggle to fulfill their social needs.

Weiss identifies two distinct types of loneliness: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. Emotional loneliness arises from a dearth of close and intimate relationships, often manifesting as separation anxiety. Social loneliness, on the other hand, results from a lack of broader social connections, such as friendships or a sense of community.

Furthermore, Weiss suggests that instinctual drives also contribute to loneliness, and he considers both internal and external factors in his analysis of loneliness.

The Cognitive Approach: Peplau and her colleagues (1981) are prominent proponents of the cognitive approach to loneliness. This perspective emphasizes cognition as a crucial factor mediating between deficits in sociability and the experience of loneliness. According to this approach, loneliness occurs when individuals perceive a gap between their desired and actual levels of social interaction. Peplau's perspective aligns closely with Sermat's (1978) viewpoint on this matter. This framework has proven invaluable in organizing the research on loneliness and explaining seemingly contradictory findings, as noted by Perlman and Peplau (1981). Peplau's (1981) focus on loneliness extends beyond clinical populations to include the experiences of loneliness among the general population, similar to Weiss's (1973) perspective.

A Privacy Approach: Derlega and Margulis (1982) are key proponents of the privacy approach, which utilizes concepts of privacy and self-disclosure to comprehend loneliness. They posit that social relationships play a crucial role in helping individuals attain their diverse objectives. Loneliness can arise when there is an absence of an appropriate social partner who can aid in achieving these goals. Furthermore, the lack of privacy within interpersonal relationships can also contribute to loneliness. The underlying assumption is that individuals seek a balance between their desired and actual levels of social interaction. Loneliness, according to this perspective, stems from both individual and environmental factors.

General System Theory: Flanders (1976) proposed a general system theory of loneliness, which suggests that the behavior of living organisms is influenced by

multiple levels operating concurrently as a system. He views loneliness as both painful and potentially beneficial, serving as a feedback mechanism that can contribute to the well-being of individuals or society. The system theory framework encompasses both individual and situational factors influencing behavior.

4. SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

The concept of wellbeing has been a subject of human interest for centuries, from indigenous beliefs to ancient Greek philosophies. It remains central to contemporary social sciences, as emphasized by Alexandrova, who posits that the pursuit of human wellbeing is fundamental to modern social science. Notably, wellbeing has become a prominent topic across various disciplines within the social sciences, including psychology, economics, sociology, philosophy, literature, developmental studies, health, communication, media, education, and public policy. The rapid growth of positive psychology has particularly contributed to this heightened interest in wellbeing. Today, scholars across many social science disciplines are increasingly adopting a wellbeing-focused approach in their research and publications. Furthermore, beyond academic circles, wellbeing is gaining traction in popular culture, especially in Western societies, where there is a growing recognition of its importance for everyone. For instance, Seligman observes that parents often prioritize wellbeing when asked about their aspirations for their children, placing it at the forefront of their concerns (Jarden & Roache, 2023).

Subjective Well-Being is an important part of well-being, which involves individuals' perceptions and assessments of various facets of their lives. It serves as a gauge for mental health and happiness and can significantly forecast personal health, wellness, and life expectancy. It is also called self-reported well-being.

Subjective well-being (SWB), which encompasses individuals' self-assessments and perceptions of their own lives, including specific areas and activities, has seen a significant surge in attention from researchers, policymakers, national statistics organizations, the media, and the general public over the last ten years. This growing interest in SWB, also known as self-reported well-being, is due to its capability to provide insights into the economic, social, and health status of populations, and its potential to influence policy choices in these areas (Krueger et al., 2009; Layard, 2006).

Subjective well-being has emerged as a valuable indicator of societal health. Besides enabling psychologists to evaluate individuals' life satisfaction, it yields valuable insights for shaping public health, economic, and social strategies. Policymakers rely on subjective well-being assessments to assess societal well-being and evaluate the effectiveness of social policies.

According to Diener (2000), SWB refers to how individuals perceive and feel about their own lives both mentally and emotionally.

Veenhoven (1997) describes it similarly: SWB is about the subjective experience of life, including its level of satisfaction, alignment with expectations, and overall desirability.

Components of SWB: Subjective well-being (SWB) is commonly understood to comprise three key elements, as outlined by Diener (1984), Busseri and Sadava (2011), and Tov and Diener (2013):

1. Regular experience of positive emotions
2. Rare occurrence of negative emotions
3. Cognitive assessments of life satisfaction

Diener and SWB Theory: Professor Ed Diener is a leading researcher in the field of subjective well-being (SWB), having introduced the concept in his influential 1984 article. Throughout his career, spanning over 25 years, he has maintained a focus on studying SWB from the perspective of positive psychology. Due to his extensive contributions to the field, he is affectionately known as “Dr. Happiness.”

Therefore, we can say that Subjective well-being (SWB) is regarded as a crucial gauge of individuals' quality of life and mental well-being, indicating the extent to which they feel their wants and needs are fulfilled.

5. PERSONALITY

Personality refers to an individual's distinctive pattern of thoughts, emotions, and actions. It encompasses their moods, attitudes, and opinions, which are most evident in their interactions with others. Personality encompasses both innate and learned behavioral traits that differentiate one person from another, and these traits are

observable in how individuals relate to their surroundings and social circles. The term “personality” has been defined in various ways, particularly within psychology, where two primary interpretations have emerged. The first relates to the enduring distinctions observed among individuals: here, personality research aims to categorize and elucidate relatively consistent psychological traits in humans. The second interpretation highlights the universal attributes shared by all people, distinguishing human psychology from that of other species. This perspective prompts personality theorists to explore common patterns among individuals that define human nature, as well as the factors shaping life trajectories.

“Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics, behavior and thought” (Allport, 1961, p. 28).

The traits or combination of traits that distinguish an individual. (Weinberg & Gould, 1999).

THEORIES OF PERSONALITY: (Schultz et al., 2015)

1. **Psychodynamic Theories:** Psychodynamic theories of personality draw heavily from the contributions of Sigmund Freud, particularly his concept of the self being divided into three components: the id, the ego, and the superego. Freud also posited that experiences in early childhood play a crucial role in the development of personality and the potential for mental health issues. Subsequent researchers, including Carl Jung and Erik Erikson, expanded upon and critiqued some of Freud’s ideas, significantly enriching psychodynamic perspectives on personality.
2. **Trait Theories:** Trait theories suggest that while we all possess personality traits, they manifest at varying degrees along a spectrum. One prominent example is the five-factor theory, also known as the Big 5, introduced by Donald W. Fiske. Fiske proposed that human personality can be understood through five core traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Each individual exhibits these traits to some extent, leading to unique combinations. For instance, one person may be highly extroverted but low in neuroticism, while another individual may display the opposite pattern.
3. **Biological Theories:** Biological theories of personality concentrate on the physiological elements influencing one’s personality. These theories suggest that

factors such as brain structure can play a significant role in shaping personality development.

4. **Behavioral Theories**: Behaviorist theories explore how environmental rewards and punishments shape personality. Positive reinforcement for specific behaviors and negative consequences for others can condition individuals to adopt certain behaviors and thought patterns.
5. **Humanistic Theories**: Humanistic theories of personality posit that individuals' self-perception, or how they perceive themselves, plays a crucial role in shaping their personality. Abraham Maslow, known for Maslow's hierarchy of needs, proposed one such theory, suggesting that personality development hinges on the fulfillment or deprivation of fundamental needs. Another humanistic theory, proposed by Carl Rogers, centers on the concept of self-actualization. According to Rogers, individuals are motivated by their desire for self-fulfillment and personal growth, which in turn shapes their personality.

In light of the above, the present study is an attempt to understand solitude, and its correlates in the form of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being, and personality.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In our fast-paced, hyper-connected world, solitude is essential for mental health relief, offering a break from constant social interaction and media overload. It enhances self-awareness, fosters creativity and facilitates a much-needed digital detox, promoting healthier technology use habits. Solitude also serves as an effective stress reducer, promoting emotional balance and overall well-being in today's modern lifestyle.

A study on the preference for solitude and positive solitude is crucial for multiple reasons: it will provide insights into mental health, highlighting how solitude can support wellness or signal psychological issues. It will aid in understanding personal development, showing how solitude fosters creativity, decision-making, and stress recovery. Tailored psychological interventions can be developed from this understanding, benefiting both individual well-being and organizational productivity. This research will enrich our approach to mental health, social dynamics, and cultural integration.

Moreover, distinguishing between solitude (a positive, voluntary state) and loneliness (a harmful feeling of isolation) informs mental health interventions and public health strategies. Research in this area will guide the development of tailored interventions and personalized therapy, enhancing individual and community well-being by addressing these complex psychological experiences.

Apart from this, exploring the link between solitude and subjective well-being is vital as it sheds light on how solitude impacts happiness and satisfaction with life. The research on these variables will help in determining the right balance between social engagement and solitude, which is crucial for maintaining mental health. It also accounts for personal differences in how solitude is experienced, aiding in the development of customized therapeutic strategies.

Then studying how personality traits like openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism influence solitude is vital for predicting mental health outcomes and informing tailored interventions. The research will enhance our understanding of cultural variations in solitude experiences and will promote greater self-awareness and self-acceptance. Ultimately, it deepens our understanding of the implications of personality on solitude and well-being.

For this research, four different groups will be selected: middle aged females, middle aged males, young adult females and young adult males. Studying solitude in both young adults and middle-aged individuals is crucial for understanding its role across different life stages. Another reason for selecting this sample can be various research had been done on older adults, but previously no research incorporated both young adults and middle-aged individuals together. So, it will be interesting to observe these groups on various variables.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Additionally, this study will help in reducing the gap of review of literature.

1. PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE

A study done by Wang et al. (2013) delved into the relationship between preference for solitude and adjustment issues among adolescents, focusing on both early and late stages of adolescence. While shyness has been extensively studied, less attention has been given to the preference for solitude. The researchers collected data from 234 eighth graders (113 boys; M age = 13.43) and 204 twelfth graders (91 boys; M age = 17.25), examining their self-reported withdrawal motivations and adjustment, as well as reports from their parents. The findings revealed that preference for solitude was more strongly associated with adjustment difficulties in eighth grade compared to twelfth grade. Specifically, adolescents who preferred solitude tended to experience higher levels of anxiety, depression, emotion dysregulation, and lower self-esteem during early adolescence. However, these associations were not as significant during late adolescence. Interestingly, while preference for solitude was linked to lower social competence in both eighth and twelfth grades, the impact was more pronounced in early adolescence. This suggests that interventions targeting adolescents who prefer solitude, especially during early adolescence, could be particularly effective in addressing adjustment issues and promoting positive outcomes.

In Fatfouta's (2017) study, with 537 participants, the aim was to explore how different aspects of grandiose narcissism relate to individual preferences for solitude. The hypothesis was that agentic narcissism (narcissistic admiration) would be negatively linked to the preference for being alone, while antagonistic narcissism (narcissistic rivalry) would show a positive relationship with this preference. Structural Equation Modeling confirmed these expectations and showed that these associations were not influenced by self-esteem levels. These findings support the idea that a two-dimensional approach to narcissism is beneficial and suggest that individuals with certain narcissistic traits, particularly narcissistic rivalry, may prefer spending time alone rather than with others.

Toyoshima and Sato (2019) conducted a study exploring how preference for solitude and social interactions impact well-being across different age groups: young, middle-aged, and older adults. Through a survey of 1,500 participants evenly distributed among

these groups, it was found that older adults with low to average PS scores benefited more from socializing with friends, experiencing higher positive affect. However, for those with high PS scores, this effect was less pronounced compared to other age groups. Spending time alone was linked to greater positive affect in older adults with high PS, suggesting solitude may support well-being as social networks diminish with age. Nonetheless, a preference for solitude was associated with lower life satisfaction across all age groups, indicating a complex relationship between solitude and well-being throughout life.

Ren et al.'s (2020) research aimed to understand how individuals perceive others' preference for solitude and its impact on psychological distress, particularly during periods of social distancing like the COVID-19 pandemic. Four studies were conducted, involving 1,418 participants, utilizing various experimental and longitudinal designs. The findings revealed that people expected those with a higher preference for solitude to be more resilient during social distancing, leading them to allocate fewer supportive resources to these individuals. However, the actual difference in psychological experience between those with higher versus lower solitude preference was smaller or negligible. Despite this, people's beliefs did not become more accurate over time.

Chen et al. (2021) conducted a study investigating the link between preference for solitude and mobile phone addiction among Chinese college students. They collected data from a sample of 927 Chinese college students. The findings revealed a significant positive association between preference for solitude and mobile phone addiction, with psychological distress serving as a mediating factor in this relationship.

Yuan and Grühn (2023) investigated solitude preferences and motivations across three adult stages: emerging (18–29), established (30–45), and midlife (46–64) adulthood. Using data from 465 participants, findings showed that both preference for solitude and controlled motivation peaked in established adulthood. In this phase, a preference for solitude was associated with slightly compromised well-being, while controlled motivation was linked to poorer well-being. Self-determined motivation consistently correlated with better well-being. Antecedents for solitude preferences varied across adulthood stages. The study suggests interventions should focus on addressing controlled motivation for solitude among established adults to enhance well-being.

Mayra et al. (2023) conducted research examining how wisdom affects the preference for solitude and the quality of friendships in young adults. They gathered data from a sample of 250 young adults. The findings indicated that wisdom was a significant predictor of friendship quality, and there was a notable difference in the relationship between wisdom and friendship quality among young adults.

2. POSITIVE SOLITUDE

Cady (2010) conducted a study that explored the happiness levels of individuals who frequently spend time alone, often labeled as “Loners,” against the backdrop of research suggesting social activity correlates with happiness. Surveying 538 participants who self-identify as loners, the study utilized measures including the Subjective Happiness Scale and the UCLA Loneliness Scale, among others, to assess well-being. Contrary to the common belief that solitude leads to unhappiness, findings revealed that not all individuals who spend significant time alone are unhappy; specifically, 21.7% of the overall participants and 20.6% of self-identified loners reported average or above-average happiness without showing high levels of loneliness or social phobia. These results challenge the negative stereotype of loners and question the assumed direct link between frequent solitude and diminished well-being.

The research suggested that while connecting with others tends to increase happiness, people often choose not to engage with strangers nearby, possibly due to the perception that solitude is positive or a misunderstanding of the benefits of casual social interactions. To explore this, researchers conducted studies where commuters were asked to either interact with strangers, stay isolated, or just behave as usual during their journeys on trains and buses. The findings revealed that participants enjoyed more positive and equally productive experiences when they interacted with strangers compared to when they kept to themselves. However, participants anticipated the opposite before the experiment, expecting solitude to be more enjoyable. This solitude appears to be positive partly because people underestimate the interest others might have in connecting, which prevents them from discovering the positive effects of social engagement. The studies also showed that the positive feelings from social interactions are mutual; individuals who were approached and those instructed to initiate conversation both reported positive experiences. This research highlights the social nature of humans and suggests that misconceptions about the outcomes of socialization

may lead some to miss out on opportunities for enhancing their well-being through social interactions (Epley & Schroeder, 2014).

Lay et al. (2019) conducted a research aimed to distinguish between different types of solitude experiences in daily life and explore the factors influencing whether solitude is felt positively or negatively. Conducted with 150 participants across two age groups, the study involved completing daily assessments over a 10-day period, focusing on their social situations, thoughts, and emotions. Analysis revealed two main solitude types: one associated with negative emotions and effortful thinking, and another marked by calmness and minimal negative emotions or effortful thoughts. Factors such as social self-efficacy and a personal inclination towards solitude were linked to more positive experiences of solitude, whereas tendencies toward self-rumination and self-reflection were tied to negative solitude experiences. The findings offer a nuanced understanding of solitude, identifying key patterns of affect and thought that define solitude experiences, and highlighting individual traits that influence how solitude is experienced.

Another study explores the positive aspects of solitude, highlighting its potential benefits such as freedom, creativity, and spirituality. It argues that the quality of solitude experiences is significantly influenced by the interaction between the individual and their surroundings. Solitude can enhance a person's sense of control, broadening the range of possible actions and fostering authenticity. The discussion includes insights from a study on loneliness and solitude within a religious community, revealing that solitude is marked by a sense of presence, in contrast to the sense of absence associated with loneliness. Furthermore, solitude is shown to empower individuals, allowing them to pursue and achieve their valued goals (Motta & Bortolotti, 2020).

A research conducted by Lay et al. (2020) focused on understanding how solitude affects the well-being of older adults, considering that they often spend more time alone and engage in solitary activities compared to younger individuals. The study found that solitude has both negative and positive impacts on older adults' well-being, emphasizing that these effects are influenced by various factors including personal, social, and cultural differences. By adopting a comprehensive approach that considers both individual and broader societal influences, the study shed light on the nuanced

relationship between solitude and well-being among the elderly. The insights gained point towards the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the positive aspects of solitude for older adults, thereby improving their overall quality of life.

Similarly, Ost Mor et al. (2021) conducted a study aimed to deepen the understanding of positive solitude (PS) across different age groups and establish a clear definition. Conducted with 124 participants, including both gerontology experts and general individuals, the research utilized interviews and content analysis to explore the core and aspects of PS. The analysis identified two primary categories: the nature of PS and its components, leading to seven specific content categories and three overarching themes: (1) PS as a voluntary state; (2) PS being fulfilling and enjoyable; and (3) PS holding significance. Notable differences in how PS is experienced by younger versus older adults were observed. These themes underpinned the formulation of a new PS definition, highlighting its distinct characteristics in later life. A clear, unified definition of PS could aid in differentiating it from other forms of solitude, and recognizing and encouraging PS among the elderly may enhance their life quality.

A study investigated how the amount of time emerging adults (ages 18–26) spend alone daily influences their emotional reactions during social interactions and examines if the reasons for seeking solitude, such as shyness, unsociability, and avoidance, affect this relationship. Involving 411 participants who provided daily accounts of their solitary time and social experiences over a week, the findings, analyzed through multilevel modeling, reveal that individuals often felt more positive during social engagements on days they spent more time alone. However, for those who sought solitude due to shyness or avoidance, increased solitary time was linked to higher anxiousness during social encounters. This suggests that while solitude can enhance social enjoyment for many, it may not have the same effect for those using it to avoid social stress (White et al., 2022).

In a study examining the emotional impact of positive solitude, particularly among individuals experiencing moderate-to-severe loneliness, 224 participants were randomly assigned to read about the positive aspects of solitude, the commonality of loneliness, or a neutral topic, followed by a 10-minute period of solitude. The results showed that while solitude reduced both high-arousal positive and negative emotions across all participants, those who were exposed to information highlighting the benefits

of solitude experienced a notably greater increase in calm, positive feelings compared to those in the control group. This suggests that reframing solitude as a beneficial experience can help lonely individuals derive more positive emotional benefits from time spent alone (Rodriguez et al., 2023).

3. LONELINESS

In a study tracking the effects of certain personality traits and the quality of close relationships on loneliness over time, 180 college students at a Northern Wisconsin liberal arts university participated by initially reporting their levels of shyness, optimism, social support, and loneliness, and then doing so again six weeks later. The findings revealed that students with lower optimism and less social support initially were more likely to experience increased loneliness later on. Additionally, those who were both shy and felt unsupported initially faced higher levels of loneliness subsequently. The study underscores the importance of these factors in predicting loneliness and suggests that targeting them could help in developing interventions to reduce loneliness risk (Jackson et al., 2000).

A longitudinal study from Cook County, Illinois, on adults born between 1935 and 1952 found that reducing loneliness can improve subjective well-being if addressed a year in advance, while enhancing well-being can decrease loneliness up to two years later. These effects remained significant even after adjusting for depression, social support, and psychiatric factors. The findings suggest a strong, asymmetrical link between loneliness and well-being, underscoring the potential benefits of targeted interventions in these areas (VanderWeele et al., 2012).

In a dual-level model of personality, loneliness, and attitudes towards being alone, we investigated how personality traits influence these aspects in two groups of late adolescents (with 1388 and 419 participants). We identified consistent associations across both samples. Lower agreeableness and a stronger preference for independence were linked to higher levels of loneliness related to peers and parents. Extraversion was associated with a decreased affinity for being alone and a stronger aversion to it. Other personality traits were predictors of specific types of loneliness or attitudes towards aloneness (Teppers et al., 2013).

A study explored how online communication affects well-being among Chinese undergraduate students (260 participants, average age 20.1 years), focusing on their locus of control, loneliness, subjective well-being, and preference for online social interactions, primarily through the social networking program QQ. Findings indicate that students with a more external locus of control tend to feel lonelier and prefer online interactions, which in turn negatively impacts their subjective well-being. Loneliness and subjective well-being were also found to mediate the relationship between locus of control and preference for online social interaction, suggesting that students who are lonelier and less happy are more drawn to online socializing. The study suggests that addressing students' locus of control, loneliness, and happiness could mitigate problematic internet use (Ye & Lin, 2015).

During early adolescence, boys and girls experience a complex interplay between seeking solitude and fearing it, alongside feelings of loneliness and the desire for peer connection. This study aimed to identify distinct groups based on attitudes towards solitude and loneliness among 656 Italian native and immigrant early adolescents, considering various relational and socio-demographic factors as predictors. Three clusters emerged: an adaptive and normative profile for aversion to aloneness and constructive solitude, and a more maladaptive profile for non-constructive solitude. These findings shed light on the developmental hurdles encountered by early adolescents, emphasizing the importance of understanding their solitude attitudes within a multidimensional framework (Corsano et al., 2019).

A preregistered meta-analysis involving 113 studies and a total of 93,668 participants examined the relationship between loneliness and the Big Five personality traits. Results revealed that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were negatively correlated with loneliness, while neuroticism showed a positive correlation. These associations varied in strength depending on how loneliness was measured. Additionally, structural equation modeling demonstrated that all personality traits, except for openness, remained significantly associated with loneliness even when controlling for the other traits. This underscores the role of stable personality factors in understanding differences in loneliness (Buecker et al., 2020).

4. SUBJECT WELL-BEING

A study explored how the Big Five personality traits, along with key demographic factors like gender, age, and relationship status, relate to subjective well-being among 236 nursing professionals. Using the NEO Five Factor Inventory and Affect-Balance Scale, findings suggest that personality traits, especially Extraversion and Neuroticism, strongly influence subjective well-being. Openness to experience shows a positive link to both positive and negative affect. Additionally, demographic factors like gender, age, and relationship status vary in their association with different aspects of subjective well-being, likely influenced by their connection to personality traits. Controlling for demographic variables is crucial to understand the impact of personality on subjective well-being, just as controlling for personality helps in analyzing the role of demographic factors in subjective well-being (Gutiérrez, 2005).

The study aimed to examine the social skills, life satisfaction, and loneliness among 525 Turkish university students. They completed various scales and forms, with findings showing that female students had higher social skills and life satisfaction compared to males. Conversely, males reported higher levels of loneliness. Results indicated negative correlations between loneliness and both social skills and life satisfaction, with social skills positively linked to life satisfaction. Additionally, life satisfaction and social skills were negative predictors of loneliness among university students (Ozben, 2013).

A study conducted by Anglim (2020) is a comprehensive analysis of how various personality traits from the Big Five and HEXACO models relate to both subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB). Using meta-analysis techniques with a large dataset ($n = 334,567$, $k = 462$), it explored correlations between personality traits and dimensions of well-being. The findings highlighted the significance of neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness from the Big Five model, as well as the strong correlation between extraversion and well-being in the HEXACO model. Additionally, facet-level analyses provided deeper insights into the relationship between personality and well-being, showing that facets often predict well-being better than broad personality domains.

Solitude is often mistaken for loneliness and viewed negatively, yet it can be beneficial when it is a voluntary choice, fostering personal growth and healing. This study investigated the role of mindfulness as a mediator between the preference for solitude and life satisfaction among university students. Data were collected from 261 university students using a personal information form, the Preference for Solitude Scale, the Mindfulness Scale, and the Life Satisfaction Scale. The findings demonstrated that mindfulness significantly mediated the relationship between students' preference for solitude and their life satisfaction (Soysal & Bakalim, 2021).

Toyoshima and Kusumi's (2022) study investigated the connection between older adults' preference for solitude and their subjective well-being. Two sequential studies were conducted: first, the development of a revised Preference for Solitude Scale with a three-factor structure, and second, an examination of the relationship between solitude preference and well-being using this revised scale. Study 1 involved an Internet survey with 210 older adults to refine the scale, while Study 2, aiming to mitigate potential research method biases, utilized a mail survey with 276 participants. The results revealed that factors like "Productivity during solitude" were positively associated with positive affect and life satisfaction, while "Enjoyment of solitude" was negatively linked with negative affect. However, mediation analysis indicated that solitude preference also correlated with feelings of loneliness, resulting in a mixed effect on overall well-being. Despite some marginal effects, both enjoyment and productivity during solitude were found to play a role in maintaining subjective well-being among older adults, underscoring the nuanced impact of solitude preference on well-being outcomes.

The study aimed to investigate how living alone impacts loneliness, solitude, and life satisfaction in young adults. 60 participants from Delhi NCR, split evenly between genders, were assessed using standardized measures. Results revealed a negative link between loneliness and life satisfaction, while showing a positive association between life satisfaction and solitude, as well as solitude and loneliness. These findings imply that a desire for solitude can alleviate loneliness and boost life satisfaction among young adults living alone. Conducting a longitudinal study could provide deeper insights into these dynamics over time (Saurabh, 2024).

5. PERSONALITY

The study aimed to explore how individual personality traits relate to achieving wilderness solitude, intending to enhance wilderness solo program design tailored to diverse participants' experiences. 64 incoming college students, both male and female, participated in a 12-day backcountry trip in 2006, with a focus on their solitude experience during solo periods. Quantitative analysis used questionnaire data on extraversion, self-actualization, and wilderness solitude attainment, while qualitative insights came from two focus group sessions. Findings indicated limited correlation between extraversion and wilderness solitude attainment, no correlation between self-actualization and wilderness solitude attainment, and modest correlation between extraversion and self-actualization. Participants reported experiencing four solitude elements, ranked by frequency as intellectual and spiritual elements, isolation, physical and personal freedom, and emotional restoration. These findings provide valuable insights for designing wilderness solo programs catering to participants' varied experiences (Bochniak, 2007).

The study investigated how self-esteem and gender influence the relationship between extraversion and subjective well-being in Chinese university students. A total of 542 students (217 men, 325 women; aged 17–24 years) completed measures assessing self-esteem, extraversion, and subjective well-being. Results from hierarchical regression analysis revealed that self-esteem moderated the association between extraversion and subjective well-being. Specifically, among students with high self-esteem, those with high extraversion reported higher subjective well-being compared to those with low extraversion. Regardless of extraversion level, subjective well-being was lower when self-esteem was low. Additionally, gender played a role in moderating the link between extraversion and subjective well-being, with men showing a stronger relationship between these factors than women (Li et al., 2015).

The study utilized voxel-based morphometry to uncover the brain structures associated with loneliness in a large sample, as measured by the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Additionally, multiple mediation analyses were applied to investigate how personality traits influence the relationship between loneliness and brain structure. Findings revealed that lonely individuals exhibited greater gray matter volume in the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), possibly indicating challenges in emotional

regulation. Moreover, neuroticism and extraversion were identified as partial mediators between the left DLPFC and loneliness. In summary, this research confirms the impact of both neuroticism and extraversion on loneliness through morphometric and multiple mediation analyses (Kong et al., 2015).

The study aimed to investigate the link between personality traits and the risk of loneliness among individuals aged 60–79. Analyzing data from the Norwegian study on Life course, Ageing, and Generations, researchers found that among women, high agreeableness was associated with a higher risk of loneliness, while among men, low agreeableness, low conscientiousness, and high neuroticism were linked to increased loneliness. These findings suggest that gender plays a role in how personality traits contribute to loneliness in old age, offering insights for targeted interventions to prevent loneliness (Ormstad et al., 2020).

Teenagers who enjoy solitude are often unfairly associated with negative traits and loneliness, yet research on their capacity for solitude is limited. This study aimed to explore the connections between teenagers' solitude capacity, personality traits, and physical and mental health. Data from 562 students at a Taiwanese junior college were gathered using a questionnaire covering demographics, solitude capacity, personality traits, and physical and mental health scales. Results revealed significant correlations between solitude capacity and personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness, as well as associations with anxiety, insomnia, and severe depression. These findings challenge stereotypes and highlight the nuanced relationship between solitude, personality, and mental well-being among teenagers (Lin et al., 2020).

A study by Ren et al. (2024) explored how individual differences and specific functions of solitude influence its perceived importance among 501 US residents. Findings from a variance component analysis indicated significant impacts from both personal traits and solitude functions, with personal preferences notably playing a major role. Personality traits varied the importance of different solitude functions: neurotic individuals valued solitude for emotion regulation, introverts for relaxation, and conscientious people for productivity. These results suggest that understanding and enhancing solitude experiences requires a personalized approach that considers individual characteristics and specific benefits of solitude.

From the above account, it could be safely deduced that research on solitude and its relationship with its positive aspect, loneliness, subjective well-being, and personality is still scarce especially in the Indian context. Also, there existed a flaw in research regarding the preference and impact of solitude across various age spans and even between males and females. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill in these gaps.

METHODOLOGY

AIM

To study age and gender related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives for the study were developed based on the review of the literature and the need for the study:

1. To study the preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) among young adults and middle aged adults.
2. To examine the differences attributable to age in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) .
3. To study gender related differences in preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
4. To study the relationship between preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) amongst young adults and middle aged adults.
5. To study the interaction effect of age and gender in determining the differences between the four cohorts under study in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).

HYPOTHESES

For the present study, the following hypotheses were created.

1. Preference for solitude will be positively correlated with positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness).

2. Preference for solitude will be related to loneliness.
3. Preference for solitude and positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be positively correlated to personality and its following sub-dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness; while negatively related to extraversion and neuroticism.
4. Preference for solitude will be correlated to subjective well-being.
5. Positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be negatively correlated with loneliness.
6. Positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be positively correlated to subjective well-being.
7. Loneliness will be negatively correlated with subjective well-being.
8. Loneliness will be related to personality and its sub-dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
9. Subjective well-being will be correlated with personality and its sub-dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
10. There will emerge significant age-related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
11. There will emerge significant gender related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
12. There will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining the differences between the four cohorts understudy, in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).

SAMPLE

The study was aimed to assess age and gender related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality. The sample included young adults (females and males; age 18-28 years) and middle aged adults (females and males, age 40-50 years). Therefore, a total sample of 120 participants were selected for the study and were divided into 2 subgroups, 60 young adults and 60 middle-aged adults. These groups were further divided into 30 young adult females, 30 young adult males, 30 middle-aged adult females and males respectively.

The inclusion criteria for all the 4 sub-samples was:

1. All the participants must belong to urban areas.
2. People suffering from any chronic physical/ mental disability should not be included.
3. All the participants must be gainfully engaged in any educational course or profession.

TOOLS

The following sample appropriate tools with adequate psychometric qualities were selected keeping in mind the variables and the objectives to be studied.

1. Preference for Solitude Scale (Burger, 1995):

The scale has 12 pairs of statements which are related to the individual's preference for solitude. The subject has to choose one statement out of two given statements. To score, one point is given for each match: 1-B, 2-A, 3- B, 4-B, 5-A, 6-A, 7-B, 8-B, 9-B, 10-A, 11-B, 12-A. The highest score will be 12 indicating high preference for solitude and lowest will be 0 which means low preference.

Reliability and Validity of the scale: The acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.70$), test - retest reliability ($r = 0.72$) and discriminant validity (Dankaert et al., 2017b).

2. Positive Solitude Scale (Palgi, 2020):

It has 9 items concerning positive solitude. The response choices are based on a 5 point likert scale ranging from Agree strongly (5) to Disagree strongly (1), which makes 45 as the highest score showing that the person is high on positive solitude and 9 as the lowest score, which means low on positive solitude. The scale has 6 subcategories, each having different number of items which are : Achievement (item 1, 4, 5), escapism (item 2, 3), stress reduction (item 6), spirituality (item 7), creativity (item 8) and quietness (item 9). Therefore , each subcategory will have a different score.

Reliability and Validity of the scale: The internal consistency of the nine-item PS scale was very high: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.956$. The PS scale in general has a low to moderate correlation with the PSS, yet in the USA study perhaps the stronger association may have been driven by cultural factors. In addition, the PS scale is related to other concepts and measures. The PS has moderate to strong associations with positive aspects of well-being and mindfulness. The PS scale has an intermediate level of reliability across time, which suggests that while this concept comprises a general stable aspect, it also includes a state like skill that may be affected by time (Palgi et al., 2021c).

3. UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau and Ferguson, 1978):

This scale has 20 items, each of which is related to the feeling of loneliness and social isolation. The response choices involve - i often feel this way (O), i sometimes feel this way (S), i rarely feel this way (R) and i never feel this way (N). For scoring all O's = 3, all S's = 2, all R's = 1 and all N's = 0, which makes 60 as the highest score indicating high on loneliness and 0 as the lowest score reflecting low on loneliness.

Reliability and Validity of the scale: The internal consistency (alpha ranging from 0.89 to 0.94) and test - retest reliability over a 1- year period ($r = 0.73$). Convergent validity for the scale was indicated by significant correlations with other measures of loneliness. Construct validity was supported by significant relations with measures of adequacy of the individual's interpersonal relationships, and by correlations between loneliness and measures of health and well - being (Weeks and Asher, 2012c).

4. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS - SF) (Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988): The questionnaire has 20 items which are related to individual's mood

or emotional state. The response choices are based on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Extremely (5) to very slightly or not at all (1). The scoring is divided into 2 parts:

1. Positive Affect score : it involves adding the scores of items 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17 and 19. Scores can range from 10 - 50, with higher scores representing higher levels of positive affect.
2. Negative Affect score : it involves adding the scores of items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18 and 20. Scores can range from 10 - 50, with lower scores representing lower levels of negative affect.

Reliability and Validity of the scale: For the positive affect scale, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.86 to 0.90; for the negative affect scale, 0.84 to 0.87. Over a 8- week time period, the test - retest correlations were 0.47 - 0.68 for PA and 0.39 - 0.71 for NA (Watson et al., 1988).

5. **Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985):**

The scale has 5 items, which measures global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. The response choices are based on a 7 point likert scale ranging from Strongly agree (7) to Strongly disagree (1), which makes 35 as the highest score indicating extreme satisfaction and 5 as the lowest score reflecting extreme dissatisfaction.

Reliability and Validity of the scale: The analysis of the reliability of the SWLS showed an internal consistency of 0.74 (Cronbach's alpha). Similarly, it has been confirmed that the inter-item correlation was significant, and all of the items had moderate to high correlations with the scale (item-test), with values in the range of 0.64 to 0.74 (López-Ortega et al., 2016).

6. **Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John & Srivastava, 1999):**

The inventory has 44 items that measure an individual on Big Five Factors (dimensions - Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) of personality. Each of the factors is then further divided into facets. The response choices are based on a 5 point likert scale ranging from Agree strongly (5) to Disagree strongly (1). The scoring is done separately for all 5 dimensions: Openness (item 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, 44), Conscientiousness (item 3, 8R, 13, 18R, 23R, 28, 33, 38,

43R), Extraversion (item 1, 6R, 11, 16, 21R, 26, 31R, 36), Agreeableness (item 2R, 7, 12R, 17, 22, 27R, 32, 37R, 42) and Neuroticism (item 4, 9R, 14, 19, 24R, 29, 34R, 39).

Reliability and Validity of the scale: The reliability and validity of scores interpretation has been evaluated in different demographic groups such as age, gender, and culture (e.g., Soto & John, 2009; Worrell & Cross, 2004). Factor analytic studies have confirmed the presence of five factors (e.g., Fossati et al., 2011). The coefficient alpha (e.g., α from .70 to .80) and test-retest reliability (e.g., r from .75 to .90) of the scale scores have been considered satisfactory (Arterberry et al., 2014).

PROCEDURE

The present study aimed to assess age and gender related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality. The sample i.e. young adults (18-28 years) and middle aged adults (40-50 years) were purposely identified and approached for data collection, keeping in mind the inclusion and exclusion criteria chosen for the study. The purpose of the present study was explained in brief to all the participants and their doubts related to the questionnaire were cleared. The participants were both males and females. Upon giving the instructions to the participants, data was collected. Prior to completing the questionnaires, participants were informed of their option to participate or not as participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from the study participants of the data collection process. Participants who declined the informed consent were thanked for their interest. The data was collected via offline hard copy of the questionnaire. Participants were required to read and give their consent before they move forward to answer the survey questionnaires. The informed consent described the study, including the purpose of the study, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality and anonymity. Also a demographic profile sheet was administered consisting of demographic information like name, age, gender, class, profession, marital status, family structure and hobbies.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

1. Descriptive statistics: Means and standard deviations were computed for the following variables – preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness,

subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).

2. Pearson's Product Moment correlations were calculated to assess the interrelationship between preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
3. t-ratios were calculated to evaluate the age and gender differences between young adults and middle aged adults in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism), separately.
4. 2*2-way ANOVA was applied to study the interaction effect of age and gender on preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To ensure clear understanding and meaningful analysis of the results, this chapter is organized under the following headings and subheadings.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ALL VARIABLES AMONGST TOTAL GROUP, MIDDLE AGED FEMALES, MIDDLE AGED MALES, YOUNG ADULT FEMALES AND YOUNG ADULT MALES

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics: Mean and S.D. amongst Total Group, Middle Aged Females, Middle Aged Males, Young Adult Females and Young Adult Males.

4.2 AGE AND GENDER WISE COMPARISON: SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR MIDDLE AGED FEMALES, MIDDLE AGED MALES, YOUNG ADULT FEMALES AND YOUNG ADULT MALES

4.2.1 SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR AGE-RELATED DIFFERENCES.

4.2.2 SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR GENDER DIFFERENCES.

4.3 CORRELATIONS OF PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE, POSITIVE SOLITUDE, LONELINESS, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND PERSONALITY (OPENNESS, CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, EXTRAVERSION, AGREEABLENESS AND NEUROTICISM)

4.4 INTERACTION EFFECT AND MAIN EFFECT OF AGE AND GENDER

4.4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: MEANS FOR FOUR COHORTS UNDER STUDY.

4.4.2 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE.

- 4.4.3 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (TOTAL).
- 4.4.4 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (ACHIEVEMENT).
- 4.4.5 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (ESCAPISM).
- 4.4.6 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (STRESS REDUCTION).
- 4.4.7 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (SPIRITUALITY).
- 4.4.8 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (CREATIVITY).
- 4.4.9 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (QUIETNESS).
- 4.4.10 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON LONELINESS.
- 4.4.11 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PANAS (POSITIVE AFFECT).
- 4.4.12 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PANAS (NEGATIVE AFFECT).
- 4.4.13 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON LIFE SATISFACTION.
- 4.4.14 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON OPENNESS.
- 4.4.15 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

4.4.16 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS
OF AGE AND GENDER ON EXTRAVERSION.

4.4.17 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS
OF AGE AND GENDER ON AGREEABLENESS.

4.4.18 SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS
OF AGE AND GENDER ON NEUROTICISM.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ALL VARIABLES AMONGST TOTAL GROUP, MIDDLE AGED FEMALES, MIDDLE AGED MALES, YOUNG ADULT FEMALES AND YOUNG ADULT MALES

The study aimed to assess the age and gender related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism). The review of literature revealed a lack of comprehensive research on all five variables simultaneously. While some studies covered two or three variables, none focused on all five in the context of the given sample. Therefore, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate age and gender related differences in these variables (Refer to Table No. 4.1).

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics: Mean and S.D. amongst Total Group, Middle Aged Females, Middle Aged Males, Young Adult Females and Young Adult Males

Preference For Solitude

Referring to Table No. 4.1, the mean scores on Preference for Solitude came out to be 5.63, 5.03, 5.40, 6.63 and 5.46 among the total group, middle aged females, middle aged males, young adult females and young adult males respectively. Which may indicate high preference for solitude amongst all the five groups, that is, they may prefer solitude over engaging in company of other people in their day to day lives.

Positive Solitude

For Positive Solitude, the mean scores turned out to be 37.19, 38.60, 36.86, 37.96 and 35.33 respectively. The average mean scores depicted a high level of positive solitude among the sample which may suggest that the elements involved in embracing the positive aspects of solitude served as a way for success in overall life transformation in the sample. They had also scored high in the first sub dimension (achievement) of the positive solitude scale (means= 12.58, 13.16, 12.40, 12.66 and 12.10), which may imply engaging in positive solitude led them towards the achievement of their goals. In the second sub dimension (escapism), they all scored high (means= 8.02, 8.23 and 8.13) except for middle aged males (mean= 7.90) and young adult males (mean= 7.83) who

scored moderate, which may indicate that the sample likes to carve out time to be with one own self. The mean scores on the third sub dimension (stress reduction) were high

TABLE 4.1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: MEAN, S.D. AMONG TOTAL GROUPS, MIDDLE AGED FEMALES, MIDDLE AGED MALES, YOUNG ADULT FEMALES AND YOUNG ADULT MALES, N=30

S. NO.	VARIABLE	GROUP									
		TOTAL		MIDDLE AGED FEMALE		MIDDLE AGED MALE		YOUNG ADULT FEMALE		YOUNG ADULT MALE	
		MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.
1.	PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE	5.63	2.69	5.03	2.57	5.40	2.78	6.63	2.42	5.46	2.83
2.	POSITIVE SOLITUDE										
•	TOTAL	37.19	6.36	38.60	4.86	36.86	6.57	37.96	6.05	35.33	7.51
•	ACHIEVEMENT	12.58	2.26	13.16	1.76	12.40	2.49	12.66	2.38	12.10	2.30
•	ESCAPISM	8.02	1.68	8.23	1.43	7.90	1.74	8.13	1.73	7.83	1.83
•	STRESS REDUCTION	3.89	1.23	3.93	1.36	4.00	0.94	3.96	1.18	3.66	1.42
•	SPIRITUALITY	4.12	1.00	4.33	0.95	4.03	1.12	4.16	0.69	3.96	1.18
•	CREATIVITY	4.25	0.89	4.40	0.67	4.30	0.83	4.30	0.91	4.03	1.09
•	QUIETNESS	4.31	0.86	4.53	0.68	4.23	0.97	4.43	0.72	4.06	1.08
3.	LONELINESS	19.73	11.09	20.30	10.11	19.26	12.17	18.53	11.22	20.83	11.19
4.	SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING										
•	PANAS (POSITIVE AFFECT)	35.18	7.17	35.83	6.83	35.53	7.73	35.13	6.52	34.23	7.78
	PANAS (NEGATIVE AFFECT)	22.06	7.53	23.06	7.33	20.36	7.35	22.90	6.98	22.90	8.42
•	SATISFACTION WITH LIFE	24.47	6.38	26.53	6.26	24.63	6.26	23.23	6.55	23.50	6.21
5.	PERSONALITY										
•	OPENNESS	35.10	4.51	34.10	4.58	34.46	5.17	37.16	3.77	34.66	3.92
•	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	31.72	5.57	33.46	5.04	34.16	5.55	30.10	4.18	29.16	5.89
•	EXTRAVERSION	26.76	4.92	28.13	5.14	26.26	5.50	26.50	4.64	26.16	4.33
•	AGREEABLENESS	33.92	5.04	34.36	5.05	34.33	5.40	32.96	4.94	34.03	4.89

(means=3.89, 3.93 and 4.00), except for young adult females (mean= 3.96) and young adult males (mean= 3.66) who were moderate on this dimension, it may imply that the sample believe in having time with themselves help them clear their mind in stress. In the fourth sub dimension, which is spirituality, the first four groups scored high (means= 4.12, 4.33, 4.03 and 4.16) and the last group scored moderately (mean= 3.96). It may suggest that the time for themselves gives their life more meaning. In the fifth (creativity) and sixth (quietness) sub dimensions, the sample mean scores were high (means for creativity= 4.25, 4.40, 4.30, 4.30 and 4.03; means for quietness= 4.31, 4.53, 4.23, 4.43 and 4.06), which may suggest engaging in positive solitude enhanced their creativity and quality of life.

Loneliness

The mean scores for loneliness were found to be low (means= 19.73, 20.30, 19.26 and 18.53) for the first four groups and moderate for the young adult males group (mean= 20.83). It depicted that the sample does not experience loneliness in various aspects of their lives, except for young adult males because they are moderate on loneliness. It may suggest that the young adult males perhaps have a hard time making bonds with people.

Subjective Well-Being

In order to measure the affective component of SWB, we use Positive And Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) and for cognitive component we use Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS).

The mean scores for PANAS are divided into two categories: positive affect and negative affect. In the positive affect, the mean scores were 35.18, 35.83, 35.53, 35.13 and 34.23 respectively for all five groups, which represented high level of positive affect in the sample, that is, high levels of energy, enthusiasm and alertness, whereas, in the negative affect, the mean scores for the sample were 22.30, 23.06, 20.36, 22.90 and 22.90 respectively. It indicated a low level of negative affect in all five groups, that is, low levels of distress, anger, contempt and nervousness or fear.

The mean scores for SWLS were 24.47 (slightly satisfied) for the total group, 26.53 (satisfied) for middle aged females, 24.63 (slightly satisfied) for middle aged males, 23.23 (slightly satisfied) for young adult females and 23.50 (slightly satisfied) for

young adult males, which may indicate their slight level of satisfaction in various of lives.

Personality

Personality was measured in terms of its five sub dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Moderate means were found in all five groups for openness to experience (means= 35.10, 34.10, 34.46, 37.16 and 34.66), which suggests moderate levels of intellectual curiosity, imagination, aesthetic sensitivity and wide interests (John & Srivastava, 1999). Moderate means were found in all the groups (means= 31.72, 33.46, 30.10 and 29.16), except for the middle aged males who scored high on conscientiousness (mean= 34.16). It indicates moderate to high degree of organization, persistence and goal-directed behavior. All the five groups were found to be moderate on extraversion (means= 26.76, 28.13, 26.26, 26.50 and 26.16), which implies moderate level of excitability, sociability, talkativeness and emotional expressiveness. In the agreeableness sub dimension, the sample showed high mean scores (means= 33.92, 34.36, 34.33 and 34.03), except for the young adult females who scored moderately (means= 32.96), which depicted moderate to high levels of trust, altruism, kindness, affection and other prosocial behaviors. Lastly, moderate means were found in all five groups (means= 23.35, 23.60, 21.90, 26.03 and 21.90) on neuroticism, that is, moderate tendency toward anxiety, depression, self-doubt and other negative feelings.

4.2 AGE AND GENDER WISE COMPARISON: SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR MIDDLE AGED FEMALES, MIDDLE AGED MALES, YOUNG ADULT FEMALES AND YOUNG ADULT MALES

According to the aim of the current study, t-ratios were calculated in order to assess the age-related differences and gender differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism), which could be seen in Tables 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, showing significant t-ratio values for the same.

TABLE 4.2.1: SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR AGE-RELATED DIFFERENCES

S. NO.	VARIABLE	GROUP	MEAN	S.D.	T-RATIO
1.	LIFE SATISFACTION	YOUNG ADULT	23.36	6.33	1.924*
		MIDDLE AGED	25.58	6.28	
2.	PERSONALITY				
●	OPENNESS	YOUNG ADULT	35.91	4.02	2.008*
		MIDDLE AGED	34.28	4.85	
●	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	YOUNG ADULT	29.63	5.09	4.421**
		MIDDLE AGED	33.81	5.27	

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.2.2: SIGNIFICANT T-RATIOS FOR GENDER RELATED DIFFERENCES

S. NO.	VARIABLE	GROUP	MEAN	S.D.	T-RATIO
1.	POSITIVE SOLITUDE (QUIETNESS)	FEMALE	4.48	0.70	2.131*
		MALE	4.15	0.98	
2.	PERSONALITY (NEUROTICISM)	FEMALE	24.81	6.48	2.637**
		MALE	21.90	5.59	

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

Positive Solitude (Quietness)

Table No. 4.2.2 indicated a significant gender related difference on one of the positive solitude's sub dimension, namely quietness [$t= 2.131^*$; mean (females)=4.48, mean (males)=4.15]. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there will emerge significant gender related differences in positive solitude (quietness) was partially accepted. Quietness in positive solitude implies the contribution of solitude in one's quality of life. A close look at Table No. 4.2.2 showed that the mean of females (4.48) is greater than the males (4.15), inferring females were significantly higher on quietness than males, which may imply that females prefer spending time with themselves that in turn contributed to their quality of life. Females often demonstrate higher levels of positive solitude, influenced by societal norms emphasizing emotional intelligence and self-care. Their greater emotional awareness enables them to view solitude as a means of self-reflection and personal rejuvenation. Additionally, cultural expectations around femininity encourage introspection and autonomy, fostering a positive attitude towards alone time. Within relationships, females often value both intimacy and individual space, seeing solitude as a healthy component of self-care. As a coping mechanism, solitude offers females solace and strength during times of stress. These factors collectively contribute to the elevated levels of positive solitude observed in females. In short, there are significant differences in terms of gender in the sample on positive solitude (quietness), which led to partial acceptance of the hypothesis for this variable.

Life Satisfaction

According to Table No. 4.2.1, there was a significant age-related difference among young adults and middle aged adults on life satisfaction. The t-ratio came out to be 1.924^* , which was quite significant. Life Satisfaction measures cognitive aspects of subjective well-being, which is crucial for evaluating the satisfaction which the individual perceives with the quality of his life. Referring to Table No. 4.2.1, the mean for middle aged adults (25.58) was greater than the young adults (23.36), which may suggest that the middle aged adults are more satisfied with their lives as compared to the young adults. The reason could be that the middle aged adults have lived half of their lives and might have increased stability, significant personal and professional accomplishments, and greater self-awareness. By this stage, many have developed stronger resilience and more effective coping strategies. They typically enjoy deep, supportive social connections and may prioritize personal well-being more than earlier

in life. This combination of stability, achievement, and a refined perspective on what brings happiness can contribute to a heightened sense of contentment during middle age. As individuals approach the end of their lives, they become more aware of their limited time remaining, according to Carstensen (1995). This realization might prompt them to prioritize making their remaining experiences more fulfilling.

Hence, the hypothesis stating the significant differences will emerge in terms of age in young adults and middle aged adults is partially accepted in case of subjective well-being (life satisfaction), implying middle aged are more satisfied in lives than young adults.

Personality

Table No. 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 clearly showed the significant t-ratio values for personality in terms of its sub dimensions (openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism), which turned out to be 2.008* for openness to experience, 4.421** for conscientiousness and 2.637** for neuroticism. Both openness and conscientiousness showed age-related differences, while neuroticism showed differences in terms of gender. Table 4.2.1 depicted that young adults (mean= 35.91) are higher or more open to experiences in their lives as compared to middle aged adults (mean= 34.28), which suggests high levels of intellectual curiosity, imagination, aesthetic sensitivity and wide interests (John & Srivastava, 1999). It can be due to developmental, psychological, and contextual factors. During this life stage, ongoing brain development, particularly in the prefrontal cortex, enhances receptiveness to new ideas and experiences. This period is also marked by significant life transitions—such as entering higher education or starting a career—that encourage exploratory behaviors. Additionally, young adults often have fewer familial and financial responsibilities, allowing them more freedom to explore diverse interests. Coupled with inherent youthful energy and societal expectations for self-discovery, these factors collectively foster a heightened openness in young adults compared to other age groups. Terracciano et al. (2005) found that as people age, their level of openness to experience tends to decrease in a consistent and direct manner.

For conscientiousness, the Table No. 4.2.1 indicated that middle aged adults (mean= 33.81) were higher on this sub dimension than young adults (mean= 29.63), that is, there was a significant difference between the two groups. Which may suggest a high degree of organization, persistence and goal-directed behavior in middle aged people. It might be due to the increased responsibilities and demands typical of this life stage.

Managing careers, homes, and families requires organization, reliability, and diligence, traits that are central to conscientious behavior. Additionally, personal maturity brings improved self-discipline and impulse control, while professional settings during these years emphasize the need for thoroughness and dependability. The natural inclination towards stability and structured routines also fosters conscientious traits, as does planning for future milestones like retirement. Collectively, these factors contribute to heightened conscientiousness in middle adulthood. McCrae et al. (1999) analyzed samples from multiple countries and discovered that older individuals tend to report lower levels of Extraversion and Openness but higher levels of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness compared to younger individuals.

Next, for neuroticism, Table No. 4.2.2 showed that females (mean= 24.81) were higher than males (mean= 21.90). It may be because of biological, psychological, and social factors. Hormonal differences, such as those associated with estrogen and progesterone, influence emotional sensitivity and stress responses. Societal norms that encourage emotional expressiveness and empathy can also heighten awareness of personal and relational stress. Moreover, cultural expectations around femininity may lead to internalized stress and heightened self-awareness of negative emotions. Additionally, females may face more social pressures related to appearance and success, and they often employ different coping strategies, like rumination, which can amplify feelings of anxiety and insecurity. These combined factors contribute to higher neuroticism levels observed in females. Women tend to score higher than men in Neuroticism, including most facets measured by the NEO-PI-R (Costa et al., 2001).

Therefore, hypothesis stating age-related and gender related differences will emerge in personality (openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism) is partially accepted for these three sub dimensions.

4.3 CORRELATIONS OF PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE, POSITIVE SOLITUDE, LONELINESS, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND PERSONALITY (OPENNESS, CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, EXTRAVERSION, AGREEABLENESS AND NEUROTICISM)

In this section, emphasis would be laid on intercorrelations between preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness,

conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) among total group, middle aged females, middle aged males, young adult females and young adult males. For this Pearson's Product Moment correlations had been used, which can be seen in Table No. 4.3.

TABLE 4.3: PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE, POSITIVE SOLITUDE, LONELINESS, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND PERSONALITY

S. NO.	VARIABLE	TOTAL		MIDDLE AGED FEMALE		MIDDLE AGED MALE		YOUNG ADULT FEMALE		YOUNG ADULT MALE	
1.	Preference for Solitude	Positive Solitude (PS)	Creativity (0.190*)					PS	Creativity (0.455*)	Big Five Inventory (BFI)	Extraversion (-0.444*)
2.	Positive Solitude Total	PS	Achievem ent (0.777**)	PS	Achievement (0.780**)	PS	Achievement (0.903**)	PS	Achievement (0.814**)	PS	Achievement (0.689**)
			Escapism (0.719**)		Escapism (0.644**)		Escapism buy(0.787**)		Escapism (0.738**)		Escapism (0.690**)
			Stress Reduction (0.674**)		Stress Reduction (0.730**)		Stress Reduction (0.681**)		Stress Reduction (0.689**)		Stress Reduction (0.690**)
			Spirituality (0.755**)		Spirituality (0.732**)		Spirituality (0.836**)		Spirituality (0.791**)		Spirituality (0.700**)
			Creativity (0.731**)		Creativity (0.545**)		Creativity (0.784**)		Creativity (0.773**)		Creativity (0.730**)
			Quietness (0.781**)		Quietness (0.733**)		Quietness (0.782**)		Quietness (0.762**)		Quietness (0.791**)
		Loneliness (-0.198*)				Loneliness (-0.479**)		PANA S	Positive (0.442*)	BFI	Neuroticism (0.372*)
		PANAS	Positive (0.360**)			PANA S	Positive (0.540**)	BFI	Openness (0.438*)		
		BFI	Openness (0.272**)				Negative (-0.397*)				
			Conscienti ousness (0.238**)			Life Satisfaction (0.519**)					
			Agreeable ness (0.209*)			BFI	Openness (0.575**)				
					Conscientiousness (0.479**)						
					Agreeableness (0.450*)						
3.	PS Achievement	PS	Total (0.797**)	PS	Total (0.780**)	PS	Total (0.903**)	PS	Total (0.814**)	PS	Total (0.689**)
			Escapism		Escapism (0.394*)		Escapism (0.688**)		Escapism (0.819**)		Stress Reduction

			(0.552**)								(0.367*)		
			Stress Reduction (0.411**)		Stress Reduction (0.464**)		Stress Reduction (0.481**)		Stress Reduction (0.398*)		Spirituality (0.403*)		
			Spirituality (0.491**)		Spirituality (0.415*)		Spirituality (0.630**)		Spirituality (0.469**)		Quietness (0.550**)		
			Creativity (0.478**)	PANAS	Positive (0.392*)		Creativity (0.600**)		Creativity (0.585**)				
			Quietness (0.550**)				Quietness (0.633**)		Quietness (0.543**)				
		Loneliness (-0.210*)				Loneliness (-0.445*)	PANAS	Positive (0.378*)					
		PANAS	Positive (0.351**)			PANAS	Positive (0.470**)						
		BFI	Conscientiousness (0.225*)				Negative (-0.468**)						
			Agreeableness (0.239**)			Life Satisfaction (0.459*)							
						BFI	Openness (0.423*)						
							Conscientiousness (0.477**)						
							Agreeableness (0.498**)						
		4.	PS Escapism	PS	Total (0.719**)	PS	Total (0.644**)	PS	Total (0.787**)	PS	Total (0.738**)	PS	Total (0.690**)
		Achievement (0.552**)			Achievement (0.394*)		Achievement (0.688**)		Achievement (0.819**)		Spirituality (0.486**)		
		Stress Reduction (0.264**)			Creativity (0.400*)		Spirituality (0.543**)		Spirituality (0.379*)		Creativity (0.430*)		
		Spirituality (0.434**)			Quietness (0.540**)		Creativity (0.493**)		Creativity (0.429*)		Quietness (0.387*)		
Creativity (0.443**)					Quietness (0.411*)	Quietness (0.416*)	BFI		Neuroticism (0.525**)				
Quietness (0.431**)					Loneliness (-0.428*)			PANAS	Positive (0.452*)				
PANAS	Positive				Life Satisfaction (0.490**)								

			(0.203*)								
		BFI	Openness (0.271**)			BFI	Openness (0.467**)				
			Agreeable ness (0.307**)				Agreeableness (0.558**)				
5.	PS Stress Reduction	PS	Total (0.674**)	PS	Total (0.730**)	PS	Total (0.681**)	PS	Total (0.689**)	PS	Total (0.675**)
			Achievem ent (0.411**)		Achievement (0.464**)		Achievement (0.481**)		Achievement (0.398*)		Achievement (0.3678*)
			Escapism (0.264**)		Spirituality (0.730**)		Spirituality (0.613**)		Spirituality (0.671**)		Spirituality (0.401*)
			Spirituality (0.564**)		Quietness (0.559**)		Creativity (0.566**)		Creativity (0.422*)		Creativity (0.430*)
			Creativity (0.444**)	BFI	Openness (-0.379*)		Quietness (0.649**)		Quietness (0.496**)		Quietness (0.387*)
			Quietness (0.525**)			PANA S	Positive (0.551**)				
		PANAS	Positive (0.240**)			BFI	Openness (0.366*)				
6.	PS Spirituality	PS	Total (0.755**)	PS	Total (0.732**)	PS	Total (0.836**)	PS	Total (0.791**)	PS	Total (0.700**)
			Achievem ent (0.491**)		Achievement (0.415*)		Achievement (0.630**)		Achievement (0.469**)		Achievement (0.403*)
			Escapism (0.434**)		Stress Reduction (0.730**)		Escapism (0.543**)		Escapism (0.379*)		Escapism (0.486**)
			Stress Reduction (0.564**)		Quietness (0.457*)		Stress Reduction (0.613**)		Stress Reduction (0.671**)		Stress Reduction (0.401*)
			Creativity (0.542**)				Creativity (0.756**)		Creativity (0.674**)		Creativity (0.450*)
			Quietness (0.711**)				Quietness (0.707**)		Quietness (0.734**)		Quietness (0.834**)
		PANAS	Positive (0.278**)				Loneliness (-0.387*)		Loneliness (-0.385*)		
		Life Satisfaction (0.197*)				PANA S	Positive (0.602**)	BFI	Openness (0.485**)		
		BFI	Openness				Life Satisfaction (0.431*)				

			(0.211*)								
			Conscientiousness (0.209*)			BFI	Openness (0.659**)				
							Conscientiousness (0.522**)				
7.	PS Creativity	Preference for solitude (0.190*)		PS	Total (0.545**)	PS	Total (0.784**)	Preference for solitude (0.455*)	PS	Total (0.730**)	
		PS	Total (0.731**)		Escapism (0.400*)		Achievement (0.600**)	PS	Total (0.775**)		Escapism (0.430*)
			Achievement (0.478**)		Quietness (0.420*)		Escapism (0.493**)		Achievement (0.585**)		Stress Reduction (0.537**)
			Escapism (0.443**)	PANAS	Positive (0.434*)		Stress Reduction (0.566**)		Escapism (0.429*)		Spirituality (0.450*)
			Stress Reduction (0.444**)				Spirituality (0.756**)		Stress Reduction (0.422*)		Quietness (0.492**)
			Spirituality (0.542**)				Quietness (0.638**)		Spirituality (0.674**)	BFI	Openness (0.459*)
			Quietness (0.543**)			PANAS	Positive (0.433*)		Quietness (0.574**)		Neuroticism (0.393*)
		PANAS	Positive (0.239**)				Life Satisfaction (0.436*)				
		BFI	Openness (0.340**)			BFI	Openness (0.532**)				
8.	PS Quietness	PS	Total (0.781**)	PS	Total (0.733**)	PS	Total (0.782**)	PS	Total (0.762**)	PS	Total (0.791**)
			Achievement (0.550**)		Escapism (0.540**)		Achievement (0.633**)		Achievement (0.543**)		Achievement (0.550**)
			Escapism (0.431**)		Stress Reduction (0.559**)		Escapism (0.411*)		Escapism (0.416*)		Escapism (0.387*)
			Stress Reduction (0.525**)		Spirituality (0.457*)		Stress Reduction (0.649**)		Stress Reduction (0.496**)		Stress Reduction (0.486**)
			Spirituality (0.711**)		Creativity (0.420*)		Spirituality (0.707**)		Spirituality (0.734**)		Spirituality (0.834**)
			Creativity	BFI	Extraversion (0.414*)		Creativity (0.638**)		Creativity (0.574**)		Creativity (0.402**)

			(0.543**)								
		PANAS	Positive (0.263**)			PANAS	Positive (0.503**)	Loneliness (-0.375*)			
		Life Satisfaction	(0.195*)			Life Satisfaction	(0.439*)	BFI	Openness (0.487**)		
		BFI	Conscientiousness (0.327**)			BFI	Openness (0.414*)		Agreeableness (0.416*)		
							Conscientiousness (0.469**)				
9.	UCLA Loneliness	PS	Total (-0.198*)	PANAS	Negative (0.429*)	PS	Total (-0.479**)	PS	Total (-0.385*)	BFI	Conscientiousness (-0.363*)
			Achievement (-0.210*)				Achievement (-0.445*)		Quietness (-0.375*)		
		PANAS	Positive (-0.353**)				Escapism (-0.428*)	PANAS	Positive (-0.509**)		
			Negative (0.367**)				Spirituality (-0.387*)		Negative (0.496**)		
		Life Satisfaction	(-0.295**)			PANAS	Negative (0.480**)		Life Satisfaction (-0.510**)		
		BFI	Conscientiousness (-0.263**)			BFI	Openness (-0.439*)	BFI	Extraversion (-0.377*)		
			Extraversion (-0.236**)				Agreeableness (-0.377*)				
			Agreeableness (-0.298**)								
			Neuroticism (0.182*)								
10.	PANAS Positive Affect	PS	Total (0.360**)	PS	Achievement (0.392*)	PS	Total (0.540**)	PS	Total (0.442*)	Life Satisfaction (0.571**)	
			Achievement (0.351**)		Creativity (0.434*)		Achievement (0.470**)		Achievement (0.378*)	BFI	Conscientiousness (0.500**)
			Escapism (0.203*)	BFI	Neuroticism (-0.486**)		Stress Reduction (0.551**)		Escapism (0.452*)		

			Stress Reduction (0.240**)				Spirituality (0.602**)	Loneliness (-0.509**)			
			Spirituality (0.278**)				Creativity (0.433*)	BFI	Conscientiousness (0.402*)		
			Creativity (0.239**)				Quietness (0.503**)		Agreeableness (0.449*)		
			Quietness (0.263**)				PANA S	Negative (-0.498**)			
		Loneliness (-0.353**)				Life Satisfaction (0.436*)					
		PANAS	Negative (-0.261**)			BFI	Openness (0.653**)				
		Life Satisfaction (0.390**)					Conscientiousness (0.652**)				
		BFI	Openness (0.208**)				Extraversion (0.552**)				
			Conscientiousness (0.434**)				Neuroticism (-0.494**)				
			Extraversion (0.373**)								
			Agreeableness (0.251**)								
		Neuroticism (-0.346**)									

11.	PANAS Negative Affect	Loneliness (0.367**)		Loneliness (0.429*)		PS	Total (-0.397*)	Loneliness (0.496**)		BFI	Conscientiousness (-0.387*)
		PANAS	Positive (-0.261**)				Achievement (-0.468**)	Life Satisfaction (-0.391*)			Neuroticism (0.591**)
		Life Satisfaction (-0.286**)				Loneliness (0.480**)		BFI	Neuroticism (0.634**)		
		BFI	Conscientiousness (-0.346**)			PANA S	Positive (-0.498**)				
			Extraversion (-0.190*)			BFI	Openness (-0.396*)				
			Agreeableness				Conscientiousness (-0.613**)				

			ness (-0.200*)								
			Neuroticism (0.476**)				Neuroticism (0.406*)				
12.	Life Satisfaction	PS	Spirituality (0.197*)			PS	Total(0.519**)	Loneliness (-0.510**)		PANAS	Positive (0.571**)
			Quietness (0.195*)				Achievement (0.459*)	PANAS	Negative (-0.391*)	BFI	Extraversion (0.414*)
		Loneliness (-0.295**)					Escapism (0.490**)	BFI	Conscientiousness (0.395*)		Neuroticism (-0.425*)
		PANAS	Positive (0.390**)				Spirituality (0.431*)		Extraversion (0.563**)		
			Negative (-0.286**)				Creativity (0.436*)		Neuroticism (0.406*)		
		BFI	Conscientiousness (0.315**)				Quietness (0.439*)				
			Extraversion (0.403**)			PANAS	Positive (0.436*)				
			Agreeableness (0.204*)			BFI	Openness (0.506**)				
			Neuroticism (-0.350**)				Conscientiousness (0.550**)				
							Extraversion (0.488**)				
							Agreeableness (0.458*)				
13.	BFI Openness	PS	Total (0.272**)	PS	Stress Reduction (-0.379*)	PS	Total (0.575**)	PS	Total (0.438*)	PS	Creativity (0.459*)
			Escapism (0.271**)				Achievement (0.423*)		Spirituality (0.485**)		
			Spirituality (0.211*)				Escapism (0.467**)		Quietness (0.487**)		
			Creativity (0.340**)				Stress Reduction (0.366*)				
		PANAS	Positive (0.208*)				Spirituality (0.659**)				
		BFI	Extraversion				Creativity (0.532**)				

			on (0.219*)								
			Agreeable ness (0.195*)				Quietness (0.414*)				
							Loneliness (-0.439*)				
						PANA	Positive (0.653**)				
						S	Negative (-0.396*)				
							Life Satisfaction (0.506**)				
						BFI	Conscientiousness (0.554)				
							Extraversion (0.434*)				
							Neuroticism (-0.389*)				
14.	BFI Conscientiousness	PS	Total (0.238**)	BFI	Agreeableness (0.549**)	PS	Total (0.479**)	PANA S	Positive (0.402*)	Loneliness (-0.363*)	
			Achievement (0.225*)				Achievement (0.477**)	Life Satisfaction (0.395*)		PANAS	Positive (0.500**)
			Spirituality (0.209*)				Spirituality (0.522**)	BFI	Agreeableness (0.600**)		Negative (-0.387*)
			Quietness (0.327**)				Quietness (0.469**)			BFI	Agreeableness (0.531**)
			Loneliness (-0.263**)			PANA	Positive (0.652**)				Neuroticism (-0.444*)
			PANAS	Positive (0.434**)		S	Negative (-0.613**)				
				Negative (-0.346**)			Life Satisfaction (0.550**)				
			Life Satisfaction (0.315**)			BFI	Openness (0.554**)				
			BFI	Extraversion (0.191*)			Extraversion (0.418*)				
				Agreeableness (0.510**)			Agreeableness (0.465**)				
				Neuroticism (-0.340**)			Neuroticism (-0.528**)				
15.	BFI Extraversion	Loneliness (-0.236**)		PS	Quietness (-0.414*)	PANA S	Positive (0.552**)	Loneliness (-0.377*)		Preference for solitude (-0.444*)	
		PANAS	Positive				Life Satisfaction (0.488**)	Life Satisfaction (0.563**)		Life Satisfaction (0.414*)	

			(0.373**)								
			Negative (-0.190*)			BFI	Openness (0.434*)	BFI	Neuroticism (-0.470**)	BFI	Agreeableness (0.397*)
		Life Satisfaction (0.403**)					Conscientiousness (0.418*)				
		BFI	Openness (0.219*)								
			Conscientiousness (0.191*)								
16.	BFI Agreeableness	PS	Total (0.209*)	BFI	Conscientiousness (0.549*8)	PS	Total (0.450*)	PS	Quietness (0.416*)	BFI	Conscientiousness (0.531**)
			Achievement (0.239**)		Neuroticism (-0.451*)		Achievement (0.498**)	PANAS	Positive (0.449*)		Extraversion (0.397*)
			Escapism (0.307**)				Escapism (0.558**)	BFI	Conscientiousness (0.600**)		
		Loneliness (-0.298**)				Loneliness (-0.377*)					
		PANAS	Positive (0.251**)			Life Satisfaction (0.458*)					
			Negative (-0.200*)			BFI	Conscientiousness (0.465**)				
		Life Satisfaction (0.204*)									
		BFI	Openness (0.195*)								
			Conscientiousness (0.510**)								
			Extraversion (0.214*)								
			Neuroticism (-0.312**)								

17.	BFI Neuroticism	Loneliness (0.182*)		PANAS	Positive (-0.486**)	PANA S	Positive (-0.494**)	PANA S	Negative (0.634**)	PS	Total (0.372*)
		PANAS	Positive (-0.346**)	BFI	Agreeableness (-0.451*)		Negative (0.406*)	Life Satisfaction (-0.406*)			Escapism (0.525**)
			Negative (0.476**)			BFI	Openness (-0.389*)	BFI	Extraversion (-0.470**)		Creativity (0.393*)
		Life Satisfaction (-0.350**)					Conscientiousness (-0.528**)			PANAS	Negative (0.591**)
		BFI	Conscientiousness (-0.340**)							Life Satisfaction (-0.425*)	
			Extraversion (-0.317**)							BFI	Conscientiousness (-0.444*)
			Agreeableness (-0.312**)								

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

Preference For Solitude

Referring to Table No. 4.3, preference for solitude indicated a positive correlations with positive solitude (creativity) in total group (0.190*) and in young adult females (0.455*), which may imply that an increase in positive solitude (creativity) can lead to increase in preference for solitude in both the groups. Therefore, hypothesis stating the positive relation between the two is partially accepted. In young adult males, preference for solitude showed a negative correlation with extraversion (-0.444*) of the personality, which may indicate an increase in extraversion will lead to decrease in preference for solitude. In a way, these findings corroborated the already well established positive link between preference for solitude with creativity and introversion.

It partially accepted the hypothesis stating that the preference for solitude will be negatively correlated with personality (extraversion) and fully rejected the hypothesis stating that preference for solitude will be related to loneliness. Extraversion was associated with a decreased affinity for being alone and a stronger aversion to it (Teppers et al., 2013).

Positive Solitude

1. **Positive Solitude (Total):** From Table No. 4.3, as expected positive solitude (total) indicated a strong positive correlation with its other sub dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity and quietness) among all five groups, which mean an increase in any of the sub dimension will lead to increase in its total in all groups. But alongside, the results indicate that amongst all the group solitude was mainly related to achievement purposely, especially among the middle aged males and young adult females. Apart from this, it also showed a positive correlations with PANAS (positive affect) (0.360**), openness (0.272**), conscientiousness (0.238**), agreeableness (0.209*) in total group; PANAS (positive affect) (0.540**), life satisfaction (0.519**), openness (0.575**), conscientiousness (0.479**), agreeableness (0.450*) in middle aged males; PANAS (positive affect) (0.442*), openness (0.438*) in young adult females and neuroticism (0.372*) in young adult males, which means that an increase in any of these will lead to an increase in PS (total). This may suggest that individuals who experience higher levels of positive emotions, possess traits such as openness,

conscientiousness, and agreeableness, are more likely to experience positive solitude. These findings may align with the idea that positive solitude is associated with psychological well-being and personal growth, as individuals who are more open, conscientious, and agreeable may find solace, reflection, and fulfillment in moments of solitude.

It also showed a negative correlations with loneliness (-0.198*) in total group, loneliness (-0.519**), PANAS (negative affect) (-0.397*) in middle aged males, which was expected, that is, an increase in negative affect may lead to decrease in Positive Solitude (total). This negative relationship may highlight the potential role of positive solitude in mitigating feelings of loneliness and enhancing overall well-being.

2. **Achievement:** As expected, achievement indicated a strong positive correlation with all other sub dimensions of positive solitude among all the groups (Table No. 4.3), i.e. an increase in any of the sub dimensions may cause an increase in achievement. In Table No. 4.3, achievement is positively correlated with positive affect (0.351**), conscientiousness (0.225*), agreeableness (0.239**) in total group; positive affect (0.392*) in middle-aged females and positive affect (0.470**), life satisfaction (0.459*), openness to experience (0.423*), conscientiousness (0.477**), agreeableness (0.498**) in middle-aged males and positive affect (0.378*) in young adult females.

It showed a negative correlations with loneliness (-0.210*) for adults in general and loneliness (-0.445*), negative affect (-0.468**) in middle-aged males, i.e. an increase in these variables may lead to decrease in achievement. Thereby, indicating that people who prefer solitude in a positive manner, many do it to have some time to themselves to focus on what they want to achieve, and they are mostly more self disciplined, flexible in thought, and ruled by positivity. Hence, they enjoy their solitude, and are not lonely or sad. Insights from a study on loneliness and solitude within a religious community, revealing that solitude is marked by a sense of presence, in contrast to the sense of absence associated with loneliness. Furthermore, solitude is shown to empower individuals, allowing them to pursue and achieve their valued goals (Motta & Bortolotti, 2020).

- 3. Escapism:** Here also escapism indicated a strong positive correlation with all other sub dimensions of positive solitude among all the groups (Table No. 4.3). Moreover, it also showed a positive correlations with positive affect (0.203*), openness to experience (0.271**), agreeableness (0.307**) in total group; life satisfaction (0.490**), openness to experience (0.467**), agreeableness (0.558**) in middle-aged males; positive affect (0.452*) in young adult females and neuroticism (0.525**) in young adult males, which means an increase in these variables will lead to an increase in escapism.

It is negatively correlated with loneliness (-0.428*) in middle-aged males. An increase in loneliness may cause a decrease in escapism. This indicated a preference to be left alone to perhaps handle things that boggle the mind; maybe to find a solution.

This may indicate a preference to be left alone to perhaps handle things that boggle the mind; maybe to find a solution.

- 4. Stress Reduction:** From Table No. 4.3, stress reduction depicted a strong positive correlation almost with all sub dimensions of positive solitude among all the groups. Apart from this, it also showed a positive correlations with positive affect (0.240**) in total group; and positive affect (0.551**), openness to experience (0.366*) in middle aged males. It may mean an increase in these variables may lead to an increase in stress reduction. It was negatively correlated with openness to experience (-0.379*) in middle aged females. These findings may reveal an intriguing tendency, especially amongst the middle aged females to look for affiliation and bonds when they feel stressed out.
- 5. Spirituality:** According to Table No. 4.3, spirituality observed a strong positive correlation almost with all sub dimensions of positive solitude among all the groups. Spirituality also indicated positive correlations with positive affect (0.274**), life satisfaction (0.197*), openness to experience (0.211*), conscientiousness (0.209*) in total group; positive affect (0.602**), life satisfaction (0.431*), openness to experience (0.659**), conscientiousness (0.522**) in middle aged males and openness to experience (0,485**) in young adult females. It may imply spirituality and these variables may move in the same direction.

A negative correlations were found between spirituality and loneliness (-0.387*) in middle aged males and loneliness (-0.385*) in young adult females, i.e. both will move in different directions. These results again may reveal a tendency amongst the females to prefer to be in company of others, while they feel lonely and not seek solitude; even if for spiritual reasons. Also, this may hint that females who prefer to be in solitude, for spiritual reasons, do not feel lonely or left out, as they may be using their connection with themselves in a positive manner and handling their sense of loneliness.

6. Creativity: As expected, creativity also showed a positive correlation with positive sub dimensions. But it is also positively correlated with positive affect (0.239**), openness (0.340**) in total group; positive affect (0.434*) in middle aged females; positive affect (0.433*), life satisfaction (0.436*), openness (0.532**) in middle aged males and openness to experience (0.459*), neuroticism (0.393*) in young adult males. An increase in any of these variables may cause an increase in creativity. These findings perhaps reveal a trend amongst younger males who, if they are non-conventional or anxious, prefer to resort to creative endeavors in solitude.

7. Quietness: Apart from its positive correlation with positive solitude sub dimensions, it depicted positive correlations with positive affect (0.263**), life satisfaction (0.195*), conscientiousness (0.327**) in total group; positive affect (0.503**), life satisfaction (0.439*), openness to experience (0.414**), conscientiousness (0.469**) in middle aged males and openness to experience (0.487**), agreeableness (0.416*) in young adult females, whereas it indicated a negative correlation with extraversion (-0.414*) in middle aged females and loneliness (-0.375*) in young adult females, i.e. females may generally be more inclined to seek out social connections and maintain relationships, they may also recognize the importance of spending time alone for self-reflection, relaxation, and personal growth. This duality in their preferences for both social interaction and solitude reflects the complexity of human behavior and the diverse ways individuals navigate their social and emotional needs.

Therefore, the hypothesis stating that preference for solitude and positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be positively correlated to personality and its following sub-dimensions:

openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness; while negatively related to extraversion and neuroticism is partially accepted.

Another hypothesis stating that Positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be negatively correlated with loneliness is also partially accepted.

One more hypothesis stating that positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be positively correlated to subjective well-being is also partially accepted. A study showed a positive association between life satisfaction and solitude (Saurabh, 2024).

Loneliness

Apart from above mentioned correlations, from Table No. 4.3, loneliness showed negative correlations with Positive Solitude (total) (-0.198*), achievement (-0.210*), positive affect (-0.353**), life satisfaction (-0.295**), conscientiousness (-0.263**), extraversion (-0.236**), agreeableness (-0.298**) in total group; openness to experience (-0.439*), agreeableness (-0.377*) in middle aged males; positive affect (-0.509**), life satisfaction (-0.510**), extraversion (-0.377*) in young adult females and conscientiousness (-0.363*) in young adult males. It may indicate that if there is an increase in any of these variables, there may be a decrease in loneliness. Earlier studies revealed that Those who were both shy and felt unsupported initially faced a higher level of loneliness (Jackson et al., 2000).

It also depicted positive correlations with negative affect (0.367**), neuroticism (0.182*) in total group; negative affect (0.429*) in middle aged females; negative affect (0.480**) in middle aged males and negative affect (0.496**) in young adult females. Therefore, an increase in any of these variables may lead to an increase in loneliness. Results of a study by Buecker et al. (2020) had revealed that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness were negatively correlated with loneliness, while neuroticism showed a positive correlation.

Overall, the hypothesis stating that loneliness will be negatively correlated with subjective well-being was partially accepted.

Another hypothesis stating that loneliness will be related to personality and its sub-dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) was accepted in case of the total group, while for other groups it was partially accepted. Present results are in line with the study on loneliness and solitude within a religious community, revealing that solitude is marked by a sense of presence, in contrast to the sense of absence associated with loneliness (Bortolotti, 2020). Similarly, findings of another study revealed that lonely individuals exhibited greater gray matter volume in the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), possibly indicating challenges in emotional regulation (Kong et al., 2015).

Subjective Well-Being

Subjective Well-Being consists of two components namely, affective and cognitive components. Positive And Negative Schedule (PANAS) which was used to assess the affective dimension and Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) assessed the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being, providing insight into how individuals perceive the overall quality of their lives.

1. Positive And Negative Schedule (PANAS)

Apart from above mentioned correlations:

- Positive Affect: From Table No. 4.3, positive affect emerged to share positive correlations with life satisfaction (0.390**), openness to experience (0.208*), conscientiousness (0.434**), extraversion (0.373**), agreeableness (0.251**) in total adult group; whereas, life satisfaction (0.436*), openness to experience (0.653**), conscientiousness (0.652**), extraversion (0.552**) in middle aged males. Conscientiousness (0.402*), agreeableness (0.449*) was positively correlated to positive affect in young adult females; and life satisfaction (0.571**), conscientiousness (0.500**) was found to be significantly and positively related to positive affect in young adult males, which may mean that an increase in the following variables may direct an increase in positive affect. These results gathered support from a research which showed a relationship between positive solitude and affect (Lay et al., 2019). Another study suggested that reframing solitude as beneficial experience can help lonely individuals

derive more positive, emotional benefits from time spent alone (Rodriguez et al., 2023).

It also showed a negative correlations with negative affect (-0.261**) in total group, neuroticism (-0.486**) in middle aged females and negative affect (-0.498**), neuroticism (-0.494**) in middle aged males, i.e. an increase in these may lead to a decrease in positive affect.

- Negative Affect: It can seen that negative affect showed negative correlations with life satisfaction (-0.286**), conscientiousness (-0.346**), extraversion (-0.190*), agreeableness (-0.200*) in total group; openness to experience (-0.396*), conscientiousness (-0.613**) in middle aged male; life satisfaction (-0.391*) in young adult females and conscientiousness (-0.387*) in young adult males. This may imply an increase in the above mentioned variables may cause a decrease in negative affect.

It was also positively correlated with neuroticism (0.476**) in total group, neuroticism (0.406*) in middle aged males, neuroticism (0.634**) in young adult females and neuroticism (0.591**) in young adult males. Therefore, an increase in neuroticism may cause an increase in negative affect and may point to the significant impact of emotional stability on the mood and emotional well-being of individuals in these groups.

2. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

Apart from above mentioned correlations, according to Table No. 4.3, life satisfaction indicated positive correlations with conscientiousness (0.315**), extraversion (0.403**), agreeableness (0.204*) in total group; openness to experience (0.506**), conscientiousness (0.550**), extraversion (0.488**), agreeableness (0.458*) in middle aged males; conscientiousness (0.395*), extraversion (0.563**) in young adult females and extraversion (0.414*) in young adult males. An increase in these may lead to an increase in life satisfaction.

It was negatively correlated with neuroticism (-0.350**) in the total group, neuroticism (-0.406*) in young adult females and neuroticism (-0.425*) in young adult males, i.e. an increase in neuroticism may cause an decrease in their satisfaction with life in these

groups. Results of certain studies indicated a similar negative correlation between loneliness and both social skill and life satisfaction (Ozben, 2013; Saurabh, 2024).

Hence, the hypothesis stating that subjective well-being will be correlated with personality and its sub-dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) is partially accepted as middle aged females, young adult females and young adult males don't show correlations with all personality traits. Such results are in line with findings of a longitudinal study which found that reducing loneliness can improve subjective well-being, if addressed a year in advance, while enhancing well-being, can decrease loneliness up to 2 years later (VanderWeele et al., 2012). Another study suggested that personality traits, especially extraversion, and neuroticism, strongly influence subjective well-being (Gutiérrez, 2005).

Personality

1. **Openness**: Apart from above mentioned correlations, Table No. 4.3 depicted that openness was positively correlated with extraversion (0.219*), agreeableness (0.195*) in total group and conscientiousness (0.554*), extraversion (0.434*) in middle aged males. It may mean an increase in conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness may cause an increase in openness. In a study, openness to experience showed a positive link to both positive and negative affect (Gutiérrez, 2005).

On the other hand, it showed a negative correlation with neuroticism (-0.389*) in middle aged males, i.e. an increase in neuroticism may decrease openness.

2. **Conscientiousness**: Apart from above mentioned correlations, it indicated positive correlations with extraversion (0.191*), agreeableness (0.510**) in total group, agreeableness (0.549**) in middle aged females, extraversion (0.418*), agreeableness (0.465**) in middle aged males; agreeableness (0.600**) in young adult females and agreeableness (0.531**) in young adult males. It may imply extraverted and agreeable individuals were also significantly more conscientious and self-disciplined.

It also showed negative correlations with neuroticism (-0.340**) in total group, neuroticism (-0.528**) in middle aged males and neuroticism (-0.444*) in young

adult males, which suggested that those who were more anxious were less systematic and organized.

3. **Extraversion:** Apart from above mentioned correlations, for extraversion, Table No. 4.3 depicted positive correlations with agreeableness (0.214*) in total group and agreeableness (0.397*) in young adult males, i.e. an increase in agreeableness may lead to an increase in extraversion.

Extraversion was negatively correlated with neuroticism (-0.317**) in total group and neuroticism (-0.470**) in young adult females. It may imply an inverse relationship between the two variables. Extraversion was associated with a decreased affinity for being alone and a stronger aversion to it (Teppers et al., 2013).

4. **Agreeableness:** Apart from above mentioned correlations, it showed negative correlation with neuroticism (-0.312**). It may mean an increase in neuroticism may cause a decrease in agreeableness. A study showed lower agreeableness and a strong preference for independence were linked to higher levels of loneliness related to peers and parents (Teppers et al., 2013).

5. **Neuroticism:** It emerged to be positively related to negative affect, escapism, creativity; and negatively related to positive affect, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, life satisfaction, and openness to experience, across all the groups under study. Therefore, as expected and as supported by studies like the one by Kong et al. (2015), which revealed that neuroticism and extraversion were identified as partial mediators between the left DLPFC and loneliness. In summary, this research confirms the impact of both neuroticism and extraversion on loneliness through morphometric and multiple mediation analyses.

In line with the above, significant correlations were revealed in a research study between solitude capacity and personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness, as well as associations with anxiety, insomnia, and severe depression (Lin et al., 2020).

A closer look at Table No. 4.3, revealed that middle aged males showed the maximum number of correlations with all five variables followed by young adult females, then young adult males and lastly middle aged females. It may be because middle-aged males may find themselves in a transitional phase of life where they face significant changes in their social roles and responsibilities. This transition can include shifts in

career dynamics, such as increased workload or the pressure to advance professionally, which may result in less time for social interactions. Additionally, middle age often brings changes in relationship dynamics, such as children leaving home or marital stress, which can contribute to feelings of solitude, whereas, middle-aged females may experience stronger social support networks, nurturing roles within families, and societal expectations regarding female relationships and communication. Additionally, women may actively seek out social interactions as a means of coping with life stressors and maintaining emotional well-being.

Similarly, young adult females may experience increased independence, exploration of personal identity, and the pursuit of individual interests and goals. Additionally, societal pressures, expectations, and the prevalence of social media can contribute to feelings of isolation and the desire for solitude as a means of self-reflection and self-care, whereas, young adult males may experience peer influence, societal expectations surrounding masculinity, and the emphasis on socialization in various contexts such as work, school, and leisure activities. Additionally, young men may be more likely to engage in group activities or seek out social interactions as a way to build relationships and establish their identity within their social circles.

4.4 INTERACTION EFFECT AND MAIN EFFECT OF AGE AND GENDER

In the earlier sections, the focus was on age-related and gender differences among the sample, then it shifted to the correlation between all the variables under study. Now, this section will study the interaction and main effects of age and gender in differentiating all the groups under study, in terms of all the variables. Results revealed significant main effect of age or gender in terms of positive solitude (quietness), life satisfaction, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism with the help of 2*2-way ANOVA. But no significant interaction effects were observed.

Preference For Solitude

From Table No. 4.4.2, the main effects and interaction effects of age and gender on preference for solitude can be studied. The table showed no main effect in terms of age or gender on preference for solitude. Apart from this, the interaction effect of both age and gender is also non-significant. Therefore, it may imply age and gender may not

**TABLE 4.4.1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: MEANS FOR FOUR COHORTS
UNDER STUDY**

S. NO.	VARIABLE		GROUP	YOUNG ADULT	MIDDLE AGED ADULT
1.	PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE		MALE	5.46	5.40
			FEMALE	6.63	5.03
2.	POSITIVE SOLITUDE	TOTAL	MALE	35.33	36.86
			FEMALE	37.96	38.60
		ACHIEVEMENT	MALE	12.10	12.40
			FEMALE	12.66	13.16
		ESCAPISM	MALE	7.83	7.90
			FEMALE	8.13	8.23
		STRESS REDUCTION	MALE	3.66	4.00
			FEMALE	3.96	3.93
		SPIRITUALITY	MALE	3.96	4.03
			FEMALE	4.16	4.33
		CREATIVITY	MALE	4.03	4.30
			FEMALE	4.30	4.40
		QUIETNESS	MALE	4.06	4.23
			FEMALE	4.43	4.53
3.	LONELINESS		MALE	20.83	19.26
			FEMALE	18.53	20.30
4.	SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING	PANAS (POSITIVE AFFECT)	MALE	34.23	35.53
			FEMALE	35.13	35.83
		PANAS (NEGATIVE AFFECT)	MALE	22.90	20.36
			FEMALE	22.90	23.06
		LIFE SATISFACTION	MALE	23.50	24.63
			FEMALE	23.23	26.53
5.	PERSONALITY	OPENNESS	MALE	34.66	34.46
			FEMALE	37.16	34.10
		CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	MALE	29.16	34.16
			FEMALE	30.10	33.46
		EXTRAVERSION	MALE	26.16	26.26
			FEMALE	26.50	28.13
		AGREEABLENESS	MALE	34.03	34.33
			FEMALE	32.96	34.36
		NEUROTICISM	MALE	21.90	21.90
			FEMALE	26.03	23.60

TABLE 4.4.2: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PREFERENCE FOR SOLITUDE

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	3851.400	4	962.850	135.778	0.000**
AGE	20.833	1	20.833	2.938	0.089
GENDER	4.800	1	4.800	0.677	0.412
AGE * GENDER	17.633	1	17.633	2.487	0.118

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

strongly dictate a person's preference for solitude. It may be because the preference for solitude is influenced more by personality traits, individual life experiences, and cultural backgrounds than by age or gender. Additionally, current life circumstances, such as career demands or family responsibilities, as well as mental and emotional health, can significantly impact an individual's inclination towards solitude. Thus, the reasons people seek or avoid solitude are diverse and complex, making age and gender less predictive in this context. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of preference for positive and its sub dimensions was rejected.

Positive Solitude

1. Total: Table No. 4.4.3 allowed for the examination of both the main effects and the interaction effects of age and gender on positive solitude (total). The data revealed that neither age nor gender individually has a significant impact on positive solitude (total). Additionally, the combined interaction effect of age and gender on positive solitude is also non-significant. This may suggest that age and gender may not be strong determinants of a positive solitude. Essentially, this may suggest that the enjoyment and benefits derived from solitude are not influenced strongly by how old someone is or their gender. This could imply that the capacity to appreciate and gain from solitude is a more universally accessible experience, not limited or significantly shaped by these particular demographic factors.
2. Achievement: Table No. 4.4.4 explored the influence of age and gender on achievement, indicating that neither age nor gender significantly affected achievement on their own. Furthermore, the interaction between age and gender also shows no significant impact. This suggests that the achievement is not strongly governed by a person's age or gender. In other words, regardless of whether someone is young or old, male or female, their achievement does not appear to differ significantly based solely on these demographic factors. Additionally, the lack of a significant interaction effect between age and gender further reinforced this conclusion, this may indicate that the combination of age and gender does not significantly affect achievement either.

TABLE 4.4.3: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (TOTAL)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	166170.700	4	41542.675	1037.605	0.000**
AGE	35.208	1	35.208	0.879	0.350
GENDER	143.008	1	143.008	3.572	0.061
AGE * GENDER	6.075	1	6.075	0.152	0.698

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.4: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (ACHIEVEMENT)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	19019.267	4	4754.817	933.685	0.000**
AGE	4.800	1	4.800	0.943	0.334
GENDER	13.333	1	13.333	2.618	0.108
AGE * GENDER	0.300	1	0.300	0.059	0.809

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

3. Escapism: According to Table No. 4.4.5, the main and interaction effects of age and gender on escapism revealed no significant main effects of either age or gender. Additionally, the interaction between these variables is also not significant. Consequently, this may suggest that escapism is not strongly influenced by their age or gender. The lack of significant main effects of age and gender on escapism, as shown in Table 4.4.5, may suggest that these demographic factors are not strong determinants of this behavior. The universal appeal of solitude for psychological benefits like peace and introspection is another factor that transcends age and gender.
4. Stress Reduction: Table No. 4.4.6 showed that neither age nor gender, nor their interaction, significantly affects stress reduction. This may indicate that stress reduction is not greatly influenced by a person's age or gender, i.e. other factors may play a more significant role in how individuals manage stress. This may imply that stress management approaches may be universally applicable across demographic groups, with individual differences in personality, cultural context, and life experiences being more influential. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of personalized and holistic approaches to stress reduction that consider a wide range of factors beyond age and gender.
5. Spirituality: From Table No. 4.4.7, the main and interaction effects of age and gender on spirituality were examined. The table revealed no significant main effect of age or gender on spirituality. Additionally, the interaction effect of both age and gender was also non-significant. Hence, it suggests that age and gender may not strongly influence a person's spirituality. Essentially, this may suggest that spirituality is a deeply personal aspect of human experience that transcends demographic categories. It highlights the complexity of spirituality and the diversity of pathways through which individuals develop and express their spiritual beliefs and practices.
6. Creativity: Based on the findings from Table No. 4.4.8, neither age nor gender, nor their interaction, significantly affects creativity. This may imply that creativity is not significantly influenced by an individual's age or gender, they do not seem to strongly dictate the extent of an individual's creativity. Instead, creativity, a sub dimension of positive solitude, may appear to be a nuanced and individualized characteristic influenced by a wide range of factors.

TABLE 4.4.5: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (ESCAPISM)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	7731.300	4	1932.825	671.884	0.000**
AGE	0.208	1	0.208	0.072	0.788
GENDER	3.008	1	3.008	1.046	0.309
AGE * GENDER	0.008	1	0.008	0.003	0.957

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.6: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (STRESS REDUCTION)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	1819.500	4	454.875	293.958	0.000**
AGE	0.675	1	0.675	0.436	0.510
GENDER	0.408	1	0.408	0.264	0.608
AGE * GENDER	1.008	1	1.008	0.652	0.421

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.7: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (SPIRITUALITY)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	2044.233	4	511.058	499.153	0.000**
AGE	0.408	1	0.408	0.399	0.529
GENDER	1.875	1	1.875	1.831	0.179
AGE * GENDER	0.075	1	0.075	0.073	0.787

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.8: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (CREATIVITY)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	2178.233	4	544.558	680.943	0.000**
AGE	1.008	1	1.008	1.261	0.264
GENDER	1.008	1	1.008	1.261	0.264
AGE * GENDER	0.208	1	0.208	0.261	0.611

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

7. Quietness: Table No. 4.4.9 studied interaction and main effects of age and gender on positive solitude (quietness). Gender differences were notable in this aspect, while no distinctions related to age were detected in the previous analysis. Here, in the table too, the main effect of gender (0.036*) is evident in positive solitude (quietness), but no such effect is found in case of age. Table No. 4.4.1 further showed that females are higher on quietness than males. Apart from this, there is no significant interaction effect of age and gender on this variable. Hence, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of positive solitude (quietness) is rejected.

The lack of the main effect of age may imply that positive solitude (quietness) benefits are universally appreciated across different age groups. This could stem from the inherent advantages of solitude, such as self-reflection and relaxation, which are valued by individuals of all ages. Additionally, the stability of positive solitude as a personality trait or lifestyle choice may override any changes associated with aging. Furthermore, individual differences, cultural teachings, and the adaptive use of solitude for coping could contribute to a consistent perception of its positive aspects across the lifespan. Overall, positive solitude appears to be a trait that remains valuable and relevant regardless of age.

Hence, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of positive solitude and its sub dimensions was rejected.

Loneliness

The findings from Table No. 4.4.10 suggested that neither age nor gender has a significant individual influence on loneliness. In other words, regardless of whether someone is young or old, male or female, their level of loneliness may not appear to differ significantly based solely on these demographic factors. Loneliness is a complex emotional state that can be influenced by various factors such as social connections, relationship quality, mental health, and life circumstances. While age and gender may play a role in shaping these factors, they do not seem to be the primary drivers of loneliness. Instead, individual differences in personality traits, coping mechanisms, social support networks, and life experiences may have a more significant impact on one's experience of loneliness.

TABLE 4.4.9: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON POSITIVE SOLITUDE (QUIETNESS)

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	2239.933	4	559.983	754.741	0.000**
AGE	0.533	1	0.533	0.719	0.398
GENDER	3.333	1	3.333	4.493	0.036*
AGE * GENDER	0.033	1	0.033	0.045	0.833

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.10: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON LONELINESS

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	46824.200	4	11706.050	93.315	0.000**
AGE	0.300	1	0.300	0.002	0.961
GENDER	12.033	1	12.033	0.096	0.757
AGE * GENDER	83.333	1	83.333	0.664	0.417

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining differences between the four cohorts under study in terms of loneliness was rejected.

Subjective Well-Being

1. Positive And Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

Life satisfaction assesses the affective dimension of subjective well-being. It is divided into:

- **Positive Affect:** Referring to Table No. 4.4.11, suggest that neither age nor gender alone significantly influences positive affect. Put differently, irrespective of whether someone is young or old, male or female, their level of positive affect may not vary significantly based solely on age and gender. Positive affect is influenced by a wide range of factors beyond age and gender. These factors may include individual personality traits, such as optimism and resilience, as well as social and environmental factors, such as supportive relationships, meaningful activities, and access to resources. Additionally, cultural norms and societal expectations can shape how individuals experience and express positive emotions.
- **Negative Affect:** The findings from Table 4.4.12 suggest that negative affect, or the experience of negative emotions and moods, is not significantly influenced by age or gender alone. This may imply that an individual's level of negative affect does not vary significantly based on these demographic factors, whether they are young or old, male or female. Negative affect is influenced by a multitude of factors beyond age and gender. These factors may include individual personality traits, such as neuroticism or emotional stability, as well as environmental stressors, life events, and coping mechanisms. Additionally, social support, cultural norms, and access to resources can play significant roles in shaping an individual's experience of negative affect.

**TABLE 4.4.11: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PANAS
(POSITIVE AFFECT)**

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	148587.533	4	37146.883	708.669	0.000**
AGE	30.000	1	30.000	0.572	0.451
GENDER	10.800	1	10.800	0.206	0.651
AGE * GENDER	2.700	1	2.700	0.052	0.821

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

**TABLE 4.4.12: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON PANAS
(NEGATIVE AFFECT)**

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	59870.767	4	14967.692	262.820	0.000**
AGE	42.008	1	42.008	0.738	0.392
GENDER	54.675	1	54.675	0.960	0.329
AGE * GENDER	54.675	1	54.675	0.960	0.329

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

2. Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction assesses the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being, providing insight into how individuals perceive the overall quality of their lives. Referring to Table No. 4.4.13, the main and interaction effects of age and gender on life satisfaction can be examined. The table indicated a significant main effect of age (0.057*) on this variable, but no main effect of gender. From Table No. 4.4.1, it is clear that middle aged adults are higher on life satisfaction, it may be because this age group achieves stability by this time. A closer look at Table No. 4.4.13, shows no interaction effect of age and gender on life satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis stating there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of life satisfaction was rejected. As people age, they become more conscious of their remaining time, prompting them to seek more enjoyment from their experiences, as suggested by Carstensen (1995).

Personality

The main effects and interaction effects of age and gender on personality were evaluated in terms of openness, conscientiousness extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, which can be seen in Tables 4.4.14, 4.4.15, 4.4.16, 4.4.17 and 4.4.18.

1. Openness: From Table No. 4.4.14, main effect of age (0.000**) on openness to experience can be seen clearly. Table No. 4.4.1 further showed that the young adults are higher on openness than middle aged adults. It may be because young adulthood is often characterized by exploration, curiosity, and a willingness to try new things, which contribute to higher levels of openness, whereas middle age tends to bring greater stability and responsibilities, leading to slightly lower scores on openness. In a study by Terracciano et al. (2005), openness to experience showed a negative and linear association with age. However, no main effect of gender as well as no interaction effect of the age and gender on this variable was observed.

TABLE 4.4.13: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON LIFE SATISFACTION

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	72085.700	4	18021.425	450.215	0.000**
AGE	147.408	1	147.408	3.683	0.057*
GENDER	20.008	1	20.008	0.500	0.481
AGE * GENDER	35.208	1	35.208	0.880	0.350

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.14: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON OPENNESS

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	121322.500	4	30330.625	1117.469	0.000**
AGE	525.008	1	525.008	19.343	0.000**
GENDER	0.408	1	0.408	0.015	0.903
AGE * GENDER	20.008	1	20.008	0.737	0.392

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

2. Conscientiousness: The presence of the main effect of age (0.044*) on conscientiousness can be seen in Table No. 4.4.15, but no such effect of gender can be found. On inspecting Table No. 4.4.1, the means for middle aged were found to be greater than young adults. Age differences in the Big Five have also been identified in cross-cultural research. McCrae et al. (1999) used convenience samples from Germany, Italy, Portugal, Croatia, and Korea and found that self-reports of Extraversion and Openness were lower in older participants than younger participants whereas Conscientiousness and Agreeableness showed the reverse pattern. No interaction effect of age and gender was observed in Table No. 4.4.15.
3. Extraversion: The results from Table 4.4.16 indicate that extraversion, or the tendency to be outgoing and sociable, is not significantly affected by age or gender alone. This may suggest that regardless of whether someone is young or old, male or female, their level of extraversion does not vary significantly based solely on these demographic factors. Extraversion is influenced by various factors beyond age and gender. These factors may include individual personality traits, such as openness to experience and conscientiousness, as well as social and environmental factors, such as upbringing, socialization, and cultural norms.
4. Agreeableness: The findings from Table 4.4.17 indicate that agreeableness, encompassing traits such as kindness, cooperativeness, and empathy, is not significantly influenced by age or gender alone. This implies that irrespective of whether someone is young or old, male or female, their level of agreeableness does not seem to differ significantly based solely on these demographic factors. Agreeableness is influenced by a variety of factors beyond age and gender. These factors may include individual upbringing, socialization experiences, cultural norms, and personal values. While age and gender may play a role in shaping certain aspects of agreeableness, they are not the sole determinants of this personality trait.

TABLE 4.4.15: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	148017.000	4	37004.250	1910.322	0.000**
AGE	80.033	1	80.033	4.132	0.044*
GENDER	34.133	1	34.133	1.762	0.187
AGE * GENDER	61.633	1	61.633	3.182	0.077

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.16: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON EXTRAVERSION

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	86051.000	4	21512.750	886.493	0.000**
AGE	22.533	1	22.533	0.929	0.337
GENDER	36.300	1	36.300	1.496	0.224
AGE * GENDER	17.633	1	17.633	0.727	0.396

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

TABLE 4.4.17: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON AGREEABLENESS

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	138147.433	4	34536.858	1339.190	0.000**
AGE	21.675	1	21.675	0.840	0.361
GENDER	8.008	1	8.008	0.311	0.578

AGE * GENDER	9.075	1	9.075	0.352	0.554
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NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

5. Neuroticism: Lastly for neuroticism, the main effect of gender (0.036*) can be observed in Table No. 4.4.18. But no such main effect in terms of age can be seen. The means of females are higher than that of males (Table No. 4.4.1). Neuroticism describes the tendency to experience negative emotion and related processes in response to perceived threat and punishment; these include anxiety, depression, anger, self-consciousness, and emotional lability. Women have been found to score higher than men on Neuroticism as measured at the Big Five trait level, as well as on most facets of neuroticism included in a common measure of the Big Five, the NEO-PI-R (Costa et al., 2001). Apart from this, no interaction effect of age and gender was found on neuroticism in Table No. 4.4.18.

This led to the rejection of a hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining the differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) was rejected.

Overall, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining the differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) was rejected.

TABLE 4.4.18: SHOWING THE MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF AGE AND GENDER ON NEUROTICISM

SOURCE	SOME OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	P
CORRECTED MODEL	65817.433	4	16454.358	450.000	0.000**
AGE	44.408	1	44.408	1.214	0.273
GENDER	255.208	1	255.208	6.980	0.009**
AGE * GENDER	44.408	1	44.408	1.214	0.273

NOTE: *p <.05; **p <.01

OVERVIEW, PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

- Descriptive analysis showed a high preference for solitude and its aspects across most groups—total, middle aged females, young adult females, and young adult males—with exceptions: as for aspects of positive solitude middle aged males emerged to be moderate in escapism, young adult females were moderate in stress reduction, and young adult males moderate in escapism, stress reduction, and spirituality. All groups experienced a low level of loneliness, though it was moderate for young adult males. In terms of subjective well-being, all groups reported high positive affect and low negative affect. Life satisfaction was slightly positive across all groups but middle-aged females reported somewhat higher satisfaction. Regarding personality, all groups displayed moderate traits, but the middle-aged females, and young adult males were notably high on agreeableness; middle aged males scored high on both conscientiousness and agreeableness.
- To assess age and gender related differences among four groups, t-ratios were computed, which revealed significant age-related differences in terms of life satisfaction and certain personality traits (openness and conscientiousness). Here, middle aged adults were found to have high life satisfaction and conscientiousness as compared to the younger lot, whereas, on openness to experience, young adults were significantly higher. It also showed gender related differences in terms of positive solitude (quietness) and personality traits (neuroticism). In this, females were reportedly significantly higher on both positive solitude dimension of quietness and neuroticism.
- As far as intercorrelations were concerned, preference for solitude was positively correlated with creativity in the overall adult group and more specifically among young adult females but negatively related to extraversion in young adult males. In a way, these findings corroborated the already well-established positive link between preference for solitude with creativity and introversion.
- Positive solitude showed broad positive correlations with positive affect, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness across most groups, and with life satisfaction in middle-aged females and young adult females. However, it

negatively correlated with loneliness, especially in the total group and middle-aged males.

- The achievement subscale of positive solitude correlated positively with positive affect, conscientiousness, and agreeableness generally, and specifically with life satisfaction in middle-aged males, but showed negative correlations with loneliness and negative affect in the total group and middle-aged males. Thereby, indicating that people who prefer solitude in a positive manner, many do it to have some time to themselves to focus on what they want to achieve, and they are mostly more self disciplined, flexible in thought, and ruled by positivity. Hence, they enjoy their solitude, and are not lonely or sad.
- Escapism correlated positively with positive affect, openness, agreeableness, and life satisfaction, particularly in middle-aged males and young adult females, while negatively with loneliness in middle-aged males. Again, this indicated a preference to be left alone to perhaps handle things that boggle the mind; maybe to find a solution.
- Stress reduction was positively correlated with positive affect overall, and both positive affect and openness in middle-aged males, but negatively correlated with openness in middle-aged females. These findings may reveal an intriguing tendency, especially amongst the middle aged females to look for affiliation and bonds when they feel stressed out.
- Spirituality positively correlated with positive affect, life satisfaction, openness, and conscientiousness across the total group and middle-aged males, as well as with openness in young adult females, but negatively with loneliness in middle-aged and young adult females. These results again may reveal a tendency amongst the females to prefer to be in company of others, while they feel lonely and not seek solitude; even if for spiritual reasons. Also, this may hint that females who prefer to be in solitude, for spiritual reasons, do not feel lonely or left out, as they may be using their connection with themselves in a positive manner and handling their sense of loneliness.
- Creativity showed positive correlations with positive affect and openness generally, and specifically with life satisfaction in middle-aged males, as well

as with openness and neuroticism in young adult males. These findings perhaps reveal a trend amongst younger males who, if they are non-conventional or anxious, prefer to resort to creative endeavors in solitude.

- Quietness was positively linked with positive affect, life satisfaction, conscientiousness generally, and with openness and agreeableness in young adult females, but negatively with extraversion in middle-aged females and loneliness in young adult females, again implying a preference of females to communicate and affiliate more.
- Loneliness was negatively correlated with positive affect, life satisfaction, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness across the board, and with openness and agreeableness in middle-aged males, as well as specific negative correlations in young adult demographics. It showed a positive correlation with negative affect across all studied groups.
- In subjective well-being, PANAS (positive affect) was positively correlated with life satisfaction, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness in general, with tailored positive correlations in middle-aged males and young adult groups. Negative affect had widespread negative correlations with life satisfaction, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, and positive correlations with neuroticism across most groups. Life satisfaction showed broad positive correlations with conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, enhanced in middle-aged and young adult males, and was negatively correlated with neuroticism in all groups.
- Lastly in personality, openness exhibited positive correlations with extraversion and agreeableness in the total adult group in general and with conscientiousness and extraversion in middle-aged males, while showing a negative correlation with neuroticism in the same demographic. Conscientiousness displayed positive correlations with extraversion and agreeableness in various groups, and negative correlations with neuroticism across the board. Extraversion was positively correlated with agreeableness in the total group and young adult males, while negatively correlated with neuroticism in both the total group and young adult females. Agreeableness showed negative correlation with neuroticism. Neuroticism's correlations were discussed across the other

variables. These findings suggest interrelations among personality traits, with certain traits influencing each other positively or negatively across different demographic groups.

→ Finally, 2*2-way ANOVA was applied to examine the interaction effects of age and gender. However, results indicated no interaction effects of age and gender in terms of any of the variables, but it showed main effects of age were highlighted in case of life satisfaction, openness and conscientiousness, where the senior adults were found to be more self-disciplined, systematic and satisfied in the life, while the younger ones were more non-conventional, curious and open to new experiences. Similarly, quietness and neuroticism revealed main effects related to gender. This revealed an obvious tendency of females being more anxious, but on the other hand, an intriguing trend of females, preferring to be quiet and peaceful, when in solitude.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The practical implications of the study on age and gender differences in preferences for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being, and personality are significant for developing targeted mental health interventions and policies. Here's how these findings can be practically applied:

1. **Tailored Mental Health Interventions:** Understanding that preferences for solitude and perceptions of well-being vary by age and gender allows for the creation of customized mental health programs. For instance, interventions for young adults might focus on enhancing social networks and coping mechanisms for loneliness, while programs for middle-aged individuals could emphasize stress management and cultivating positive solitude experiences.
2. **Inclusive Support Systems:** The study highlights the need for support systems that consider gender roles and societal expectations, which can influence an individual's mental health. Mental health services can be adapted to be more culturally sensitive and inclusive, recognizing the specific needs and challenges faced by different genders and age groups.
3. **Policies to Foster Resilience:** By identifying how different demographic groups experience and benefit from solitude, policymakers can design community and

workplace policies that encourage healthy solitude practices. This could include creating quiet spaces in urban planning, promoting flexible work arrangements, or developing public health campaigns that educate about the benefits of solitude for mental well-being.

4. **Enhanced Coping Strategies:** The insights from the study can be used to enhance personal development programs that teach adaptive coping strategies. These programs can help individuals across various life stages to manage stress better and improve their quality of life by integrating practices that align with their solitude preferences and personality traits.

In essence, the findings equip mental health professionals, policymakers, and educators with the necessary data to craft interventions, policies, and educational programs that support mental health and well-being tailored to the unique experiences of different age groups and genders. This approach not only enhances individual well-being but also contributes to healthier communities.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For future research, several enhancements could be considered to build on the findings of this study:

1. **Broader Population Sampling:** Future studies could benefit from including a more diverse and larger sample to improve the generalizability of the results. Expanding the geographic scope or demographic diversity could provide more comprehensive insights.
2. **Incorporation of Longitudinal Designs:** To better understand causal relationships between the variables studied, future research could employ longitudinal designs. This would allow for observing changes over time and better understanding of the dynamics between age, gender, solitude, and well-being.
3. **Use of Mixed Methods:** Incorporating qualitative research methods could enrich the data, offering deeper insights into the personal and nuanced experiences of individuals with solitude and their psychological well-being. Interviews or focus groups could provide valuable context that quantitative measures might miss.

4. Expanded Variables: It would be beneficial to include additional demographic and contextual factors such as cultural background, socioeconomic status, or life events. This could help to uncover other influential factors affecting solitude and psychological outcomes.

By addressing these suggestions, future research can provide more detailed and actionable insights, potentially leading to more effective interventions and support systems tailored to diverse individual needs.

SUMMARY

- ❖ The aim of this study is to investigate age and gender-related differences in terms of preferences for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being, and personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
- ❖ The following objectives for the study were developed based on the review of the literature and the need for the study:
 - To study the preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) among young adults and middle-aged adults.
 - To examine the differences attributable to age in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) .
 - To study gender related differences in preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
 - To study the relationship between preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) amongst young adults and middle aged adults.

→ To study the interaction effect of age and gender in determining the differences between the four cohorts understudy in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).

❖ For the study, the following hypotheses were created.

1. Preference for solitude will be positively correlated with positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness).
2. Preference for solitude will be related to loneliness.
3. Preference for solitude and positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be positively correlated to personality and its following sub-dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness; while negatively related to extraversion and neuroticism.
4. Preference for solitude will be correlated to subjective well-being.
5. Positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be negatively correlated with loneliness.
6. Positive solitude and its sub-dimensions (achievement, escapism, stress reduction, spirituality, creativity, quietness) will be positively correlated to subjective well-being.
7. Loneliness will be negatively correlated with subjective well-being.
8. Loneliness will be related to personality and its sub-dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
9. Subjective well-being will be correlated with personality and its sub-dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).

10. There will emerge significant age-related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
 11. There will emerge significant gender related differences in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
 12. There will be significant interaction effects of age and gender in determining the differences between the four cohorts understudy, in terms of preference for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being and personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism).
- ❖ The sample included 120 participants divided into young adults (18-28 years) and middle-aged adults (40-50 years), with equal representation of females and males in each group. All participants had to reside in urban areas and be actively engaged in education or employment, with no chronic physical or mental disabilities.
 - ❖ The study aimed to explore age and gender differences in preferences for solitude, positive solitude, loneliness, subjective well-being, and personality among young adults (18-28 years) and middle-aged adults (40-50 years). Participants were briefed on the study's purpose and provided voluntary consent before completing hard copy questionnaires. A demographic profile sheet gathered additional information such as age, gender, profession, marital status, and hobbies.
 - ❖ The main findings of the study were:
 - The descriptive analysis revealed a strong preference for solitude across most groups, with exceptions in middle-aged males and young adult females. Despite this, reported loneliness levels were generally low, except for young adult males. Subjective well-being was positive with slight variations, and moderate personality traits were noted, with high agreeableness scores in certain groups.
 - Significant age and gender differences were observed, with middle-aged adults scoring higher in life satisfaction and conscientiousness, while young adults scored higher in openness. Gender differences were evident, especially in quietness and neuroticism, favoring females.

- Preference for solitude correlated positively with creativity overall and in young adult females but negatively with extraversion in young adult males. Positive solitude also correlated positively with positive affect, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness across most groups, while negatively correlating with loneliness, especially in middle-aged males. Achievement, escapism, stress reduction, and spirituality showed various correlations with personality traits and subjective well-being across different groups. Loneliness consistently correlated negatively with positive affect, life satisfaction, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, while positively correlating with negative affect. Openness displayed positive correlations with extraversion and agreeableness overall, and with conscientiousness and extraversion in middle-aged males, while negatively correlating with neuroticism in the same demographic.
- The 2*2-way ANOVA found no interaction between age and gender, but identified main effects of age on life satisfaction, openness, and conscientiousness, and main effects of gender on quietness and neuroticism.

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