

Exploring the factors that influence the experience of joy in late adulthood: a qualitative study on South African Indian elderly adults, using in-depth interviews

Honours Psychology: Research RESE8419

Declaration

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Psychology Honours degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER			
1. I declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.			
2. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.			
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DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR / LECTURER / ETHICS COMMITTEE			
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1. Is enrolled at the institution/ employed by the organisation to which the undersigned is attached.			
2. That the research proposal and or study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of The Independent Institute of Education.			
3. The questionnaires / structured interviews / tests meet the criteria of: • Educational Accountability; • Proper Research Design; • Sensitivity towards Participants; • Correct Content and Terminology; • Acceptable Grammar; • Absence of Non-essential / Superfluous items.			
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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my lecturer, Dr. John Hunter and my research supervisor, Steven Sawyer, for their patient guidance, wholehearted encouragement, and useful critiques for this research proposal. Their advice and assistance on my progression is deeply appreciated.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the participants of this research study for their help in partaking in the interviews therefore, offering me the resources needed to reach conclusions of the research study.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the joys of being an Indian South African individual in late adulthood, therefore allowing people to view the elderly in a more positive manner. By examining these joys, the researcher clarifies how middle-aged individuals can accept aging as a normal process that comes with its own joys and benefits, as well as how ageist stereotypes against older people are false. The researcher examines two theories in order to further aid her research. These theories include: the age-related positivity effect, as well as the theory of psychosocial development. The researcher also looks at previous research and identifies themes relating to the research such as, integrity versus despair, subjective wellbeing, social support in old age, and the effects of a positive outlook on wellbeing. The researcher uses an interpretivist paradigm. She uses a qualitative methodology and follows an inductive line of reasoning. Two non-probability sampling methods are used: (1) convenience sampling and (2) purposive sampling. Data has been collected from interviews and published reports. The population parameters of the study include individuals who are elderly, South African, and have an Indian ethnicity. Five themes were ascertained within the conducted interviews, which comprise of interpersonal relationships; religious and/or spiritual affiliation; hobbies and/or daily activities; appreciation of life; and a lack of regret in one's life. This dissertation finds that interpersonal relationships among other factors, is one of the largest contributors to joy for Indian elderly South African's.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextualisation

The topic of the research proposal is: Exploring the factors that influence the experience of joy in late adulthood: a qualitative study on South African elderly adults, using in-depth interviews. There are a variety of challenges that people face with regards to their views on aging (Munsey, 2007). This is especially evident in middle-aged adults who are approaching late adulthood, due to the fact that they are afraid of being at the final stage of their lives (Neuberger, 2008). Many people also hold ageist views against older adults, such as the belief that older people are unhappy (Munsey, 2007). This is a problem that needs to be further investigated, due to the fact that many individuals believe that elderly people are unhappy, which leads to anxiety and fears about themselves reaching late adulthood, as well as ageist views and stereotypes on elderly people (Neuberger, 2008; Munsey, 2007). According to research that has been conducted in the past, the researcher knows that elderly people do experience joys however, what these joys are, are not known (Bishop, Martin, & Poon, 2006).

Ageism and fears of ageing have been a problem in society for a long period of time (Singh & Kelly, 2003). Individuals constantly attempt to appear younger through aesthetic procedures such as, botox (Singh & Kelly, 2003). Ageing has a multitude of negative connotations attached to it, that even as people age, they will do whatever it takes to feel and look younger, due to the fact that older people are viewed as being sickly, unhappy, and unattractive (Flamion, Missotten, Jennotte, Hody, & Adam, 2020). Ageism leads to a variety of harmful effects for older people, including depression and a shorter life expectancy (Greenwood, 2020). Ageism is therefore, detrimental to older people and affects them in an extremely negative manner. It is also damaging to the people holding these views as it affects their ageing process negatively.

The researcher is interested in this topic as, she is a Psychology honours student interested in understanding how people age and develop, as well as how stereotypes

affect human beings. This is important to the researcher, as she has a deep passion for understanding the human mind.

The goal for conducting the research is to enable people to understand that ageing is not a negative process that should be feared (Neuberger, 2008). The study conducted aims to find out what joys elderly adults experience, as well as what contributes to or influences the experience of joy for elderly people, in order to aid people in understanding that elderly adults also experience moments of happiness as well as, to make them aware of the fact that ageing can be a positive process (Neuberger, 2008).

1.2 Rationale

Personal Rationale

This topic is of interest to me, as I am currently witnessing my own parents experiencing emotions of fear and anxiety surrounding the transition from middle adulthood to late adulthood. I believe that as people develop along the life span, different joys are experienced. I would like to explore what these joys are in late adulthood, in order to understand aging from a more positive perspective.

Academic Rationale

The proposed research study may fill the academic gap in potentially finding out what joys Indian South African elderly individuals experience, as well as what contributes to these joys, based on the daily lives of the observable individuals included in the study (Ni, 2015). By finding out what these joys are, or what contributes to these joys, the study will enable people to understand that ageism and fears of ageing can be overcome.

The research links to the researcher's field of study as the aging process and development in late adulthood is analysed, which forms part of Developmental Psychology - a core module in the researcher's honours degree. This could make a contribution to the researcher's field of study as, it enables people to understand human development from a more positive perspective (Devito, 2015).

The research findings could be used by individuals who hold negative stereotypes about older people and about ageing. These individuals could benefit from understanding that at each stage of life along the developmental lifespan, different joys are experienced. The research could also be used by ageist individuals, in order for them to understand that holding negative stereotypes against older people is a form of discrimination and is unfair as well as, untrue. The research allows for the identification of older people's joys and the advantages of being an elderly person, therefore allowing people to view the elderly in a more positive manner. The research will help middle aged individuals accept that aging is a normal process that comes with its own joys and benefits. It will also aid ageist individuals understand that their negative stereotypes against older adults is simply false. Which in turn, will allow them to be more accepting towards elderly individuals. The research will ultimately allow for people to understand that regardless of age, life can be enjoyable.

Relevance

If the joys of being an elderly person are identified, psychologists and other professionals could create a means to educate middle-aged and younger individuals on how older people experience joys, just as any age group would. These professionals could assist people by reducing their fears of reaching late adulthood. They could also help ageist people decrease their stereotypes and accept that elderly people are not very different to any other age group.

This study is relevant because it will be based in a South African context. Most studies conducted in the past on elderly people, have not been done in South Africa, but rather in western or first-world countries (Chyi & Mao, 2012). This is important because the joys that western elderly adults have are very different compared to the joys experienced by South African elderly adults (Chyi & Mao, 2012). This could be due to the fact that the vast majority of South Africans come from collectivistic cultures that emphasise the importance of family, the community, and treating elders with the utmost respect. People from Western countries are generally more individualistic, therefore they are more self-reliant and independent (Killen & Wainryb, 2000). The fact that South Africa is mainly

comprised of collectivistic cultures impacts the study as this affects the types of joys that elderly people experience. Existing studies may provide insights into the South African context however, there are differences that need to be assessed with a study focused on South Africa and the South African collectivistic culture.

1.3 Problem Statement

A large number of individuals believe that elderly people are unhappy (Munsey, 2007). This leads to anxiety and fears about themselves reaching late adulthood, as well as ageist views on elderly people (Neuberger, 2008). The failure to accept ageing as a graceful and happy process may lead to a variety of mental health problems, including depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, and ageism (Singh & Kelly, 2003). It is also interesting from an academic perspective to note that, there is a downward trend for depression as well as, anxiety in old age (Snowdon, 2002). There are also numerous research studies that have been conducted on happiness in old age (Bishop & Peter, 2011). If more of the joys that elderly adults experience are known, people might view older adults in a more positive light, which will result in less ageism and more ageing positivity.

Accepting the ageing process plays an enormous role in the developmental life-span therefore, if individuals are unable to accept that ageing is a very normal process, their views on the elderly, as well as their self-esteem will suffer (Neuberger, 2008). People experience anxiety and fear about ageing because they fear not being able to care for themselves; losing a spouse; and becoming mentally and physically unwell (Smith et al., 2019). The majority of these fears however, stem from stereotypes and misconceptions about ageing (Smith et al., 2019). In reality, older adults are much stronger and more resilient than most people realise (Smith et al., 2019).

The problem of ageism and ageing anxiety needs to be solved, as it will allow for late adulthood to be perceived in a more positive manner and it may disband stereotypes and myths about ageing. The possibility is then that, people will have less ageing anxiety and will hold less judgement against elderly individuals.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to find out the factor that influence the experience of joys for Indian South African individuals in late adulthood. By understanding what the joys are that elderly adults experience, it will enable people to understand that by continually reinventing themselves as they age; by finding new forms of enjoyment; by learning how to adapt to change; and by staying physically and socially active, ageing can be a happy and healthy process (Smith, Segal, & White, 2019).

1.5 Research Question

The primary question of the study is, “What are some of the factors that influence the experience of joy, for South African Indian elderly adults?”

1.6 Objectives/ Sub-Questions

- a) To explore the factors that contribute to elderly people experiencing joyful lives.
- b) To discover the effects of enjoying life on the wellbeing of elderly adults.
- c) To understand how a positive outlook on life contributes to ageing gracefully.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation and how it Links to The Research Problem

The proposed research study proposes to use **The Age-Related Positivity Effect**, which was developed by Mather and Carstensen, in the year 2005 (Mather and Carstensen, 2005). The *positivity effect* refers to the process of positive stimuli being favoured over negative stimuli in cognitive processing (Reed & Carstensen, 2012). According to this theory, elderly people are believed to attend to and remember more positive information, rather than negative information (Reed & Carstensen, 2012). Throughout the years, researchers have failed to investigate the age differences in the cognitive processing of emotional material (Reed & Carstensen, 2012). It is also important to note that younger adults generally attend to and remember negative information more than positive

information (Mather & Fanselow, 2018). The shift from a negativity bias in youth to a preference for positive information later in life is known as the *positivity effect* (Mather & Fanselow, 2018). Understanding the positivity effect can inform other people on stereotypes directed at older people (Mather & Fanselow, 2018).

This theory applies to the research study as the study focuses on older individuals as well as their ability to experience positive emotions, such as joy in their lives. According to this theory, older people actually experience more positive emotions than negative ones, which could aid the researcher in providing new avenues for exploration that may ultimately disprove ageist stereotypes, as well as help younger people overcome their fears of living a miserable life in old age.

The second theory that might be used in the proposed research study is ***The Theory of Psychosocial Development***, which was developed by Erik Erikson in 1974 (Erikson, 1974). Erikson identifies eight stages of development that a healthy developing individual should pass through from infancy to late adulthood in his theory (Goodcase & Love, 2017). The stages include trust versus mistrust, which begins at infancy; autonomy versus shame, which occurs during early childhood; initiative versus guilt, which develops in pre-school aged children; industry versus inferiority, which arises at school age; identity versus confusion occurs during adolescence; intimacy versus isolation develops in young adulthood; generativity versus stagnation in middle adulthood; and lastly, integrity versus despair, which develops at maturity or late adulthood (Cherry, 2020).

Erikson's theory describes the impact that social experiences and relationships have on the life-span, as well as the growth and development of individuals (Cherry, 2020). Each stage in this theory builds on the previous stages (Goodcase & Love, 2017). Erikson believed that people need to go through these stages of conflict, in order to reach a turning point in their development (Cherry, 2020). The stage the researcher is most interested in is the last stage, *integrity versus despair*.

This theory would aid the research as, the researcher would be able to explain what leads to older people experiencing joy as well as, what younger people can do in order to resolve this stage successfully as they age. This theory applies to the research study as, it enables individuals to understand that happiness does not depend on age but rather, on developing successfully along stages of social experience and relationships.

2.2 Review of Previous Literature

Literature that has been conducted in the past that relates to the research problem, question and objectives play a crucial role in understanding the research topic. Books, scholarly articles, and other sources relevant to the research topic will be surveyed, summarised and evaluated, in order to further investigate the research problem. The researcher will be reviewing studies on the themes of: integrity versus despair; subjective wellbeing; social support in old age; and the effects of a positive outlook on wellbeing.

In the researcher's theoretical foundation, she looked at the way in which Erikson (1974) provides the intrapsychic context in which individuals need to find joy as they age. She also examined the way Mather and Carstensen (2005) explain the positivity effect. By Erikson's stage theory considering the positivity effect as a buffer to the integrity versus despair conflict and how it is resolved, understanding aging from a more positive perspective can be achieved.

Integrity versus despair

Integrity versus despair is the final stage in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1974). This stage begins at approximately 65 years old and ends at death, and is focused on elderly individuals reflecting back on life (Goodcase & Love, 2017). Life events such as retirement, the loss of a spouse, facing illness, and other changes to life roles triggers the beginning of this stage (Darnley, 1975). At this stage, people generally reflect on their lives and determine whether they are happy with the life they have lived, or if they have regrets about their lives (Goodcase & Love, 2017). In the proposed study's interview, the participants will be asked to reflect back on their lives and will be questioned as whether they are happy with the life they have lived or whether they have regrets.

At each stage of Erikson's theory, some sort of conflict has to be resolved in order to reach a turning point in development (Cherry, 2020). At the integrity versus despair stage, the conflict that needs to be resolved is on questioning whether or not the individual has led a meaningful and satisfying life (Cherry, 2020). People need to reflect on the lives they have lived, which could either result in them feeling a sense of fulfillment, or a sense of regret and despair (Cherry, 2020).

If individuals experience feelings of regret over the past, they can experience death anxiety (Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, & McAdams, 2017). During this process of reminiscence however, wisdom and death acceptance is achieved if the individual feels as though they have lived a well-lived life (Westerhof et al., 2017). Older people who are successful during this stage feel proud of their accomplishments, as well as satisfied (Goodcase & Love, 2017). These individuals attain wisdom, joy, and ease when confronting death, as well as when living the rest of their lives (Goodcase & Love, 2017).

Given South African's collectivist ways of conceiving the self, it may be questioned whether elderly South African's may or may not conform to Erikson's theory. An independent sample t-test was conducted by Thokchom and Singh (2016), to compare individuals with collectivistic and individualistic values and psychosocial conflict resolution capacity. According to the results, individuals with collectivistic values have more psychosocial conflict resolution capacity than those with individualistic values (Thokchom & Singh, 2016). Therefore, elderly South African's may have no problem resolving each stage along their developmental timeline, and will most likely resolve the last stage, integrity versus despair, with ease. Therefore, in the proposed study, participants might be able to successfully resolve the stage, integrity versus despair, with ease, which could ultimately result in them being happier and experiencing more joys in their lives.

There is a variety of information known about this topic such as, what leads to integrity as well as, what leads to despair in old age. According to previous research, the age that this stage begins at is also known. The main aim or area of conflict of the stage is known,

as well as the triggers that bring about this stage. Finally, the steps that older people need to take in order to achieve a sense of fulfillment and ease their anxieties surrounding death are also known according to previous literature. What is not known about this topic however, would be if despair can be resolved in old age and transformed into integrity. Not much research has been conducted in the past explaining whether or not an individual in a state of despair can transform this into integrity and ultimately, overcome this stage successfully.

This topic relates to the proposed research study as, integrity and despair is an important stage of the theory of psychosocial development as it is the final stage that people go through in life. It is a stage that every elderly person will experience, which will ultimately result in them feeling a sense of integrity or despair. The relationship between the joys that elderly people experience and the stage of integrity versus despair is a complex interplay. If the participants of the proposed study are more conscious of the joys they experience in old age, they may resolve the stage more easily. On the other hand, if they are able to achieve a sense of integrity, they might be able to experience more satisfaction and therefore, more joys in their lives.

Subjective wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing is an individual's evaluation of his or her quality of life (Albuquerque, 2010). This evaluation consists of multiple constructs, and can be in terms of cognitive judgements and affect (Albuquerque, 2010).

Subjective wellbeing is comprised of happiness, life-satisfaction, and positive affect (Diener, 2009). Subjective wellbeing is basically whether or not an individual likes his or her life (Diener, Oishi , & Lucas, 2011). It is a persons cognitive and affective evaluation of his or her life as a whole (Diener et al., 2011). Therefore, high levels of positive emotions, low levels of negative emotions, combined with life-satisfaction results in greater subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 2011).

The concept of subjective wellbeing falls into the hedonistic perspective of well being, which is about maximising pleasure and avoiding or minimising pain (Albuquerque, 2010). The way an individual thinks about his or her life plays an enormous part in determining subjective wellbeing (Albuquerque, 2010). According to Albuquerque (2010), a healthy social life; hobbies; work; leisure; and being married was found to lead to a stronger sense of subjective wellbeing. Therefore, individuals in late adulthood who make an effort to socialise with friends, neighbours or even family will be happier than those who do not. Older adults who spend their time engaging in hobbies they love; working by being productive and achieving goals; and enjoying their leisure time will experience a greater sense of subjective wellbeing compared to their counterparts. Finally, elderly individuals who are married will be happier than their single counterparts. In the proposed study therefore, the researcher will interview participants on their social lives and marital status, in order to find out whether or not an active social life results in them being happier than their single or more isolated counterparts.

Culture also plays a huge role in subjective wellbeing (Diener & Suh, 2003). According to Diener and Suh (2003), individualism is correlated with greater levels of subjective wellbeing whereas, collectivism is correlated with lower levels of subjective wellbeing. This is due to the fact that collectivistic cultures comprise of fewer choices as well as, more comparisons to others (Diener & Suh, 2003). Individualistic cultures were also found to be more closely linked to affluence, which has a large positive effect on subjective wellbeing (Diener & Suh, 2003). Individualism is also related to high levels of self-esteem and optimism (Diener & Suh, 2003). Therefore, with regards to the participants of the study, which include collectivistic South Africans, they may experience lower levels of subjective wellbeing. The researcher's exploration of joy in the elderly may be affected by this, as the study will be conducted in South Africa. Therefore, the South African participants may experience lower levels of subjective wellbeing and therefore, joy.

According to the review of previous literature on subjective wellbeing, there is a variety of information that is known such as the definition of the concept; what it comprises of; as well as, the factors that lead to greater subjective wellbeing. Research has still not been

conducted on how elderly people in specific, can experience greater levels of subjective wellbeing. Research has also not been conducted on how collectivistic cultures can maximise their subjective wellbeing.

The theme of subjective wellbeing relates to the topic as, the way elderly individuals evaluate their lives determines the joys they experience. It is also important to note that doing certain things (such as hobbies and leisure time); or being a part of a specific culture, determines how subjective wellbeing will be perceived by the elderly individuals participating in the study. The elderly adults participating in the study may find that their subjective wellbeing therefore, influences what joys they experience.

Social support in old age

In old age, social support is extremely important (Shanas, 1979). Social support is proven to have an impact on elderly individual's mental and emotional health (Dykstra, 2015). It enables older people to cope with the challenges that life presents them with (Dykstra, 2015). Social support refers to positive exchanges with other people, which in turn helps individuals stay healthy or cope with adverse events (Thoits 2011). Social support networks allow people to experience companionship, social engagement and additionally, it brings about social recognition (Dykstra, 2015).

According to a study conducted by Shanas (1979), the elderly person's immediate family and extended family are their major social support systems, which enables them to be tied to the community. Their social system however, can also consist of friends, neighbours, or people from groups which they are a part of (Shanas, 1979). In another study conducted by Krause (2002), it was found that older people who attended church or other cohesive congregations, felt a sense of emotional and spiritual support from their fellow congregation members (Dykstra, 2015). Therefore, any sort of positive social engagement can have immense positive effects on the aging individual.

Social support can also decline in old age (Field & Minkler, 1988). According to a study conducted by Field and Minkler (1988), a decline in social support generally occurs for

men as they age, compared to their female counterparts. Other changes were also observed in the study such as, the fact that satisfaction levels with children increase as people age (Field & Minkler , 1988). It can be observed that most older people have extremely close bonds with their grandchildren and are often happier when they are around (Field & Minkler , 1988).

According to the research that has already been conducted, the definition of social support; the effects of it on older people; and the types of social support are known. What is not known however, is how elderly South Africans can maximise their joys by expanding their social circles and getting more support from the people around them. The extent to which social support results in joys in elderly South Africans is also not known.

This theme relates to the study as, social support is known as a huge contributor to the happiness of people of all ages therefore, if older people have a great social support system, they might experience more joys within their lives. By focusing on factors that increase joy or result in joy, such as expanding ones social support circle, older people will be ultimately be happier.

The effects of a positive outlook on wellbeing

The word outlook refers to the lens through which each individual views the world (Tindle, 2013). A person's outlook on life has the ability to influence every facet of their health (Tindle, 2013). Every single person has an outlook which can be controlled (Tindle, 2013).

According to Tindle (2013), an individual's outlook is strongly correlated with ageing, as a positive outlook results in happier and healthier lives. It has also been found that optimistic people with a positive outlook on life, have fewer heartattacks and live a longer life, compared to people who have a pessimistic outlook on life (Goleman, 1987). Aspects of an individual's outlook can also predict the development of major physical and mental health conditions, including dementia, strokes and cancer (Tindle, 2013). In addition to major physical illnesses, a negative outlook on life can also cause a variety of mental health problems (Tindle, 2013). For example, optimistic people were found to be less

likely to get depressed compared to their pessimistic counterparts (Tindle, 2013). Outlook can however, be harnessed to work in an individual's favour (Goleman, 1987).

Having a positive outlook on life has a variety of benefits (Cherry, 2019). One of these benefits is stress relief (Cherry, 2019). People with a positive outlook on life generally cope better in stressful situations compared to their pessimistic counterparts (Fredrickson, Tugade , & Waugh, 2003). It was also found that when people with a positive outlook encounter dissapointing situations, they focus on resolving the issue, rather than assuming nothing can be done and it is out of their control (Fredrickson et al., 2003). People with a positive outlook on life also have stronger immune systems (Segerstrom & Sephton, 2010). In a study, researchers found that activation in brain areas associated with negative emotions led to a weaker immune response to a flu vaccine (Segerstrom & Sephton, 2010). It was also proven that people with a positive outlook on life exhibited a stronger immune response (Segerstrom & Sephton, 2010).

According to the review conducted on previous research, the definition of outlook; the benefits of a positive outlook; the disadvantages of a negative outlook; and the effects of outlook on wellbeing is known to the researcher. What is still unknown to the researcher however, would be how to change an elderly person's negative outlook on life into a more positive outlook. By experiencing such a variety of positive effects that come with having a positive outlook on life, elderly people might experience more joy within their lives. By having a better ability to cope in stressful situations for example, people may be less-stressed and therefore happier, which will allow for them to enjoy more of what life has to offer.

This theme relates to the reseracher's study as it is important for the researcher to understand how an individual's outlook on life, in late adulthood, can contribute to the joys they experience.

2.3 Conceptualisation

Ageing Positivity:

According to Reichstadt et al. (2010), the term *Ageing Positivity*, is used to describe the process of maintaining a positive attitude as one ages. *Ageing Positivity* is a significant concept in the research study as, the research study is focused around attempting to aid individuals to view ageing in a more positive perspective. The researcher aims to emphasise the importance of this concept in order to overcome ageism. Society generally promotes age-consciousness where the fear of ageing predominates and ageing is perceived as a social problem (Katz, 2001). *Ageing Positivity* therefore, is the idea that there are sources of happiness in late adulthood that are inherent in the processes of growing old (Hill, 2005). It is the ability to focus on what makes life worthwhile in late adulthood, in spite of the mental and physical challenges that may arise (Hill, 2005).

Ageist:

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word *Ageist* refers to the act of treating people unfairly because of their age (cambridgedictionary.org[a]). The Oxford Dictionary on the other hand, defines *Ageist* as showing prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age (oxfordreference.com, [a]). *Ageist* is an important concept in the research study as, the entire study will be conducted because of the discriminatory views that people have on elderly adults. The researcher aims to eliminate or at least reduce ageist views by showing the joys that elderly people experience. Ageism is a form of prejudice which serves to justify forms of inequality, just as racism and sexism does (Bytheway, 1994). Unlike sexism and racism however, every single human being grows old and are susceptible to experiencing some form of ageism (Bytheway, 1994).

Anxiety:

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *Anxiety* can be defined as, a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome (oxfordreference.com, [b]). *Anxiety* is an important concept in the research study as, the fact that people experience anxiety about ageing, is one of the main reasons the study is being conducted. The researcher aims to eliminate or reduce people's anxiety surrounding the ageing process. *Anxiety* is a type of fear resulting from the threat of

nothingness or nonbeing (Spielberger, 2013). People therefore, fear getting older, despite not experiencing it yet, hence old-age being in a state of nothingness or nonbeing (Spielberger, 2013). This fear ultimately results in them experiencing anxiety (Spielberger, 2013).

Collectivistic Cultures:

Collectivistic Cultures emphasise the needs and goals of the group as a whole, over the needs and desires of each individual (Cherry, 2020). These cultures also emphasise the central role that interconnectedness plays in each group member's identity (Cherry, 2020). The concept of *Collectivistic Cultures* relates to the research study as the study will be conducted in South Africa, which is known for its collectivistic cultures. *Collectivistic Cultures* can be understood as being a part of closely linked individuals who view themselves as part of one or more collectives, such as, family or a tribe; as being primarily motivated by the norms and duties of the group; by willing to give priority to the goals of the group over personal goals; and by emphasising connectedness to the group (Triandis, 2018).

Developmental Psychology:

Developmental psychology is a scientific approach which aims to explain growth, change, and consistency through the lifespan (McLeod, 2017). This relates to the research study as the researcher aims to understand how people experience life in their later years. The researcher looks at how development affects positivity in old age, as well as how a variety of younger people fear ageing. Lifespan *developmental psychology* considers the study of individual development from conception to old age (Paul, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2007).

Elderly Adults:

People reach elderly adulthood at the age of 65 (Orimo et al., 2006). People who are 65 years old to 74 years old are regarded as early *elderly adults* whereas, people who are 75 years old and above are regarded as late *elderly adults* (Orimo et al., 2006). This concept relates to the research as elderly people will be the participants of the proposed

study. *Elderly adults* generally have more in common than just their age for example, most of them are retired and most have grandchildren (Meletis, 2017). *Elderly adults* are generally at a vulnerable stage in their lives as, it is the final stage of their development in their life-span (Paul et al., 2007).

Individualistic Cultures:

Individualistic Cultures stress the needs of the individual over the needs of the group as a whole (Cherry, 2020). People from *individualistic cultures* are generally more independent and autonomous (Cherry, 2020). This concept relates to the research study as many of the studies conducted on this topic, have been done in western or more modern countries with *individualistic cultures*. *Individualism* is a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of the group (Triandis, 2018). They are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs and rights and give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others (Triandis, 2018). France, The United States, and England are examples of countries with *individualistic cultures* predominating (Triandis, 2018).

Joys:

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *Joys* refers to a feeling of great pleasure and happiness (oxfordreference.com, [b]). This is an important concept in the research as the focus of the study is on the *joys* or moments of pleasure and happiness that elderly people experience. It is important to note that the concept *joy* is very different to happiness. Joy is more consistent and is cultivated internally. Feelings of *joy* are experienced when individuals make peace with who they are, why they are, and how they are (Fearnley, 2015). Happiness on the other hand, is externally triggered and is based on other people, things, places, thoughts and events (Fearnley, 2015).

Middle Adulthood:

According to Erikson, *middle adulthood* is when an individual reaches the age of 45 up to the age of 64 (Erikson, 1974). This is an important concept as the researcher elaborates on how middle aged individuals are afraid of growing older and reaching the next stage

in their lifespan, which is late adulthood. *Middle adulthood* refers to the period of the lifespan between young adulthood and old age (Lachman, 2004). *Middle adulthood* is a relatively new period and very little research has been conducted on the aspects of midlife (Lachman, 2004). It is one of the least studied periods of the lifespan (Lachman, 2004). *Middle adulthood* also consists of a variety of differences in the individuals within this developmental stage (Lachman, 2004).

Stereotype:

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *Stereotype* is defined as a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image of a particular type of person or thing (oxfordreference.com, [d]). This is an important concept in the research, due to the fact that the researcher is examining the various negative views and *stereotypes* that people hold against older adults. There are a variety of cognitive and motivational factors that contribute to the formation, maintenance, application and change of *stereotypes* (Hilton & Hippel, 1996). *Stereotypes* begin with the differentiation between certain groups from others (Wyer & Srull, 2014). People develop beliefs about the attributes and characteristics of each group, which leads to them differentiating between groups (Wyer & Srull, 2014). The process that contributes to the differentiation between groups, constitutes the basis for the formation of stereotypes (Wyer & Srull, 2014).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Outline of Worldview/ Paradigm/ Tradition

A research paradigm is an approach to conducting research. The researcher has chosen to use the interpretivist paradigm in the study. The interpretivist paradigm explains that human beings are constantly changing and their environment influences these changes (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). The study that will be conducted follows the interpretivist paradigm as, the researcher aims to understand the participants in an in-depth and empathetic way, by studying and describing their social actions in their lives, which may lead to the joys that they experience (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018).

According to Butler (1980), many people believe that older people are unhappy, which leads to them fearing the aging process. The interpretivist paradigm is relevant to the researcher's study as the researcher aims to empathetically understand what joys elderly people experience, in an attempt to aid younger and middle-aged individuals in understanding that aging is not only negative, but also comes with its own joys and positive moments.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

The researcher will be using the qualitative research design as it will allow for her to gain more insight into the participant's minds therefore, allowing her to understand the factors that contribute to the joys elderly adults experience (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Qualitative research designs are used to study the features, attributes and characteristics of a phenomenon that can be interpreted thematically (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). By using a qualitative research design, the researcher will be able to study human behaviour, opinions, emotions and motivations more effectively (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). It will allow for the researcher to gain more insight, depth and richness into the participant's complex minds and therefore, understand the factors that contribute to the joys experienced by elderly adults.

The study will be exploratory in nature as, it aims to provide an exploration that could open up new avenues to generate new knowledge; isolate key variables and relationships for further examination; gain insight for developing an approach to the problem; and establish priorities for further research (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Exploratory research is research conducted for a problem that has not been clearly defined. It describes relationships; predicts the effects of one variable on another; and tests relationships (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018).

The time dimension of the study is cross-sectional. The study will be conducted at one point in time and it will contain different samples (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). The variables in the study will not be manipulated. Cross-sectional studies allow for the prevailing characteristics in a population at a certain point in time to be determined (du-

Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). The researcher is using a cross-sectional study as, it is not time-consuming and it is inexpensive (Cherry, 2019).

The research that will be conducted will follow an inductive line of reasoning as, it is open-ended and is not concerned with testing or confirming hypothesis (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018).

3.3 Population

3.3.1 Population

Population refers to a finite or infinite collection of items under consideration for a particular study (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Units of analysis are the smallest elements that can be investigated in order to gather data for a research study (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018).

3.3.2 Units of Analysis

The units of analysis in the proposed study would be individuals.

3.3.3 Target and Accessible Population

Target population is the entire group of individuals that the researcher wants to generalise her findings to (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). The target population of the study are all South African, Indian elderly adults.

Accessible population refers to the units of analysis in the target population that the researcher has access to (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). The accessible population are those willing to participate in the study (who also fit the population parameters). The accessible population is therefore, South African Indian elderly adults who are willing to participate in the study.

3.3.4 Population Parameters

Population parameters refers to the nature, size, and unique characteristics of the population of the research study (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). The population

parameters of the proposed study are: the individuals should be elderly (65+), be South African, and have an Indian ethnicity.

3.4 Sampling

3.4.1 Probability or Non-Probability Sampling

The researcher will be using non-probability sampling methods in the study therefore, every unit will not have an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). This will be done, as it is difficult to gain access to the entire population (Howit & Cramer, 2017). The sample will be carefully selected from an accessible population and from those that are convenient/ easy to reach. The sample will still adhere to the population parameters however, the sample will be selected using the researcher's judgement.

3.4.2 Sampling Method

The sampling methods used were: convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling is when the researcher uses individuals that are convenient to reach; individuals that the researcher already knows; and individuals the researcher has some form of contact with (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Convenience sampling has been used as it was difficult to find older people who were willing to participate in a stranger's study therefore, the researcher asked her grandparents and her neighbour to participate, as they were easy to get access to. A disadvantage of convenience sampling however, was that the sample was not very representative of the population as a whole. The results of just five people that the researcher interviewed, may result in the inability to generalise the results to the entire population.

Purposive sampling was also used as, the elements that the researcher wished to include in the sample were purposefully chosen (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Purposive sampling was also used as, the participants were purposefully chosen, because they met certain characteristics (population parameters) which was needed for the study to be carried out. This means that the researcher purposefully only asked people who were above the age of 65, who lived in South Africa, and who came from an Indian racial

background, to participate in the study. The disadvantage of using purposive sampling however, was that similar to convenience sampling, the sample may not be representative of the entire population.

3.4.3 Sample Size

The sample size of the research study was 5 people. The sample size is the sub-population that will be studied to make an inference to a broader population (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). A smaller sample size has been used as it was cost-effective, as well as less time-consuming (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). It is important to note that the sample size was small in comparison to the size of the population. This small sample size also resulted in the researcher not reaching data saturation.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Data Collection Method

In-depth interviews were used as the data collection method as, they are often used to collect qualitative data (Howit & Cramer, 2017). It allowed the researcher to ask questions to participants that allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants views, opinions and beliefs (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to understand the meaning of the participant's answers (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2001). The explanations in the answers were more detailed therefore, they allowed for a richer understanding of the participant's perspective. A disadvantage of in depth interviews however, is the fact that it was a very time-consuming process to interview participants and then transcribe each of the interviews.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as, the questions asked provided a deeper understanding of the participants views and opinions about the joys they faced. The researcher had a richer understanding of the participants' perspective from their responses as, it was more detailed. Due to the country being in a period of lockdown however, collecting data through in-depth interviews was a challenge for the researcher, as in-depth interviews usually requires being in person and in close contact with the

participants. Elderly people are also the most vulnerable population group, with regards to COVID-19.

The researcher was initially going to email the consent form and information sheet to the participants, but then learned that none of the elderly participants had access to email or even knew how to use it. The researcher then decided to adapt to this by driving to each of the participant's homes and placing the documents under their doors. This however, will have the disadvantage of being time consuming. When it came to actually conducting the interview, the researcher did not do this in a face-to-face setting, in order to avoid the risks of COVID-19. She was going to do the interview over a video call, but realised that none of her participants know how to use zoom, skype, or any other video call. She then decided to conduct the interview over a phone call. In order to record the session, she used a call recording application from the Samsung app store on her phone. The app recorded the entire interview from the time the call began, until it ended. This enabled her to transcribe the interview as a typed out version. The disadvantage of this however, was that the researcher could not see the participant's nonverbal responses to the interview questions.

3.5.2 Data Collection Application

The researcher created a set of semi-structured in-depth interview questions prior to the interviews being conducted. Thereafter, she printed out five information sheets and consent forms and drove to each of the participant's homes. The first two participants were her maternal grandparents, who lived in Ormonde together. This was about 13 kilometers away from her home. The third and fourth participants were the researcher's paternal grandparents, who lived about 5 minutes away from her, which made reaching them fairly easy. The fifth participant was the researcher's neighbour, who lives in the researcher's complex.

Upon reaching each of the participant's homes, the researcher placed their information sheets and consent forms under each of their front doors. Once this was done, the researcher called the participants and informed them to read through it and call her back

if they had any further questions. She then instructed them to sign the forms if they were happy with everything and place it outside their doors for her to collect. While waiting for the participants to read through the forms and sign them, the researcher parked outside each of their homes until the participants completed the forms. After attaining each of the participant's consent forms and information sheets, the researcher drove back home, and scanned each of the documents and saved them on her laptop.

The researcher then downloaded a call recording application on her mobile phone and then ensured the application worked effectively. She then called each of the participants on different days and conducted their interviews. This was a bit challenging initially as the participants struggled to hear clearly over the phone. Due to the interviews being semi-structured, the researcher had to find ways to elicit deeper content from the participants, while still remaining neutral. She did this by allowing the participants to answer each question freely, even if they went off-track, the researcher allowed them to speak and then asked the question again in a different way. This enabled the researcher to get a more in-depth understanding of the participants and what they subconsciously felt, when they deferred from the question being asked. The researcher enjoyed using semi-structured interviews as, it was not too formal, which allowed for the participants to open up more freely about their lives. After each of the interviews, the researcher played back the recordings of the calls to ensure that she could hear everything.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Data Analysis Method

Thematic data analysis has been used to analyse the data, as it is one of the most commonly used methods of qualitative analysis (Howit & Cramer, 2017). Thematic analysis requires the researcher to identify a limited number of themes which reflect the textual data (Howit & Cramer, 2017). Thematic analysis however, does have the disadvantage of being difficult to implement correctly.

The researcher has identified themes in the research, not only by counting phrases or words in the text, but also by exploring explicit and implicit meanings within the data.

Coding has been used to develop themes, by identifying items of analytic interest in the data and tagging these with a coding label. The researcher used Braun and Clarke's reflexive approach, by building themes from codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By using thematic analysis, the participants were able to answer questions in their own words, without any restrictions. Due to the fact that the research followed an inductive approach, the themes identified were strongly linked to the data. Therefore, the researcher coded without trying to fit the data into preexisting theory or frameworks.

The researcher conducted the interviews by herself; collected the data by herself; and transcribed the data by herself, in order to be completely familiar with the data. During the data familiarisation process, the researcher transcribed the audio and took additional notes. After the data familiarisation process, the researcher coded the data. She did this by closely examining the data, in order to find common themes that came up repeatedly throughout the interview. These themes included topics, ideas and patterns. The researcher used an inductive approach, which involved allowing the data to determine the themes. She did this by highlighting sections of the text and then came up with labels or "codes" to describe the content of these sections, phrases, or sentences. The researcher then came up with themes, by identifying patterns among the codes. Many codes were grouped together to create one theme. The themes were clearly defined and examples of each theme were provided to illustrate what the analysis has provided. Thereafter, the researcher created a written analysis of the findings (Howit & Cramer, 2017).

The interview included questions on marital status; social life; perspective on life; leisure time; and changes in life roles. An example of a question on social life was, "Are you a part of a community or cohesive congregation?". Similar questions were included in the semi-structured in-depth interview.

3.6.2 Data Analysis Application

In order to analyse the data of the interviews, the researcher had to familiarise herself with the data. She did this by transcribing each of the recorded interviews. This was

extremely time-consuming as each 10 to 15-minute recorded interview took around 45 minutes to transcribe. The researcher therefore, could only transcribe one interview per day, to ensure that they were being transcribed carefully and correctly. While transcribing the interviews, the researcher also made additional notes on when the participant's laughed or paused while speaking, to ensure that she could get a complete understanding of the participant's responses.

The researcher then closely examined the transcribed interviews to find common themes. By highlighting certain phrases, sentences and ideas that were repeated or common amongst the interviews, the researcher was able to code these sections in different colours. Five themes were found within the interviews, which include interpersonal relationships; religion or spiritual affiliation; hobbies and daily activities; pride and appreciation of life; and lack of regret. By highlighting each section in different colours, the researcher was able to easily come up with labels or codes to describe the content of the sections and come up with themes. The theme of interpersonal relationships was coded in the colour yellow; the theme of religion/ spiritual affiliation was coded in green; the theme of hobbies and daily activities was coded in purple; the theme of pride/appreciation of life was coded in grey; and finally the researcher coded the theme of regrets in the colour blue.

The researcher then clearly defined each theme. The theme of interpersonal relationships was defined as, a close association between two or more people. The context can vary from familial relationships, marital relationships, friendships, or even relationships with the people within certain clubs, neighbourhoods, and places of worship. An example of this would be, when the fifth participant mentions that once a week, she has a meal with her son and his family, which makes her bond stronger with them. This illustrates the fact that interpersonal relationships may lead to the joys that elderly South African Indian adults experience. The second theme, which is religion and/ or spiritual affiliation, was defined as, the self-identified association of a person with a religion or spiritual group. This can also be seen in the fifth participants interview, when the participant mentions that she is "hungry" for learning more about religion and she spends most of her time in

different religious groups and engaged in prayers. This could represent the fact that religion may play a huge role in the joys that elderly South African Indian adults experience. The third theme of hobbies and daily activities, was defined by the researcher as, activities done regularly in one's leisure time for pleasure or the tasks of everyday life. In the fifth participants interview, she mentions that she goes to the gym twice a week. By choosing to do this regularly, in her leisure time, this may add to the participant experiencing joys as a South African Indian adult. The fourth theme of pride and appreciation of life is defined as, a feeling of deep pleasure and satisfaction derived from one's own achievements or as being grateful for the life one has lived or is living. In the fifth participant states that, she likes that she is independent. Being proud of herself therefore, could result in her experiencing joy as an elderly South African Indian adult. Finally, the theme of regret is defined as, feeling sad or disappointed over something one has done or has failed to do. The researcher has included this theme as she believes that regret may make it harder for elderly people to experience joy. The fifth participant states that she feels sad that she did not spend enough time with her children when they were younger. This feeling of sadness may result in the participant feeling a lack of joy.

4 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Five themes were ascertained within the conducted interviews, which comprise of interpersonal relationships; religious and/or spiritual affiliation; hobbies and/or daily activities; appreciation of life; and a lack of regret in one's life.

With regard to the first theme of interpersonal relationships, each of the participants' responded to the interviewer's questions, by elaborating that interpersonal relationships contributed considerably to their joys. All participants made mention of interpersonal relationships when conferring about their joys. In the second participant's interview, when questioned on the time period she would generally spend with family, friends or neighbours before the covid-19 pandemic, the participant responded by saying, "Every afternoon my friends would come and sit, and chat, and we'd have tea." The participant further explained, "I can't really go out because of my condition...my kidney and heart failure. I can't go out, so they all come to me." The participant reiterated that she felt

extremely socially supported by the people in her life by saying, “I feel very, very socially supported by them! They are extremely supportive. If I need help, my family is always here to come help me...my friends always come fill my samosas and pies with me...we get together and do things like that.” As a final point, when asked on the ways in which she believes she experiences joys in her life, the participant rejoined by stating, “I think my grandchildren. They give me lots and lots of joys. I just have to see them and my life lights up.” The theme of interpersonal relationships was thus, an exceptionally weighty contributor to this particular participant’s life, as well as the lives of all the other research participants as, it was mentioned recurrently.

The theme of religious and/or spiritual affiliation was similarly emphasised by almost all the research participants. When the first research participant was asked about the spiritual congregations he attends, he replied by saying, “Mostly the Islamic classes, Islamic and day-to-day prayers”. This reiterates the fact that the participant incorporates prayer into his daily life and routine, which could ultimately contribute to the joys he experiences as an elderly individual. When asked how he feels about being a part of his spiritual congregation, the participant responded by saying, “To be very honest with you, very, very content and spiritually inclined, for the simple reason...on younger years, you didn’t have that kind of atmosphere because you more at work and um those sorts of things...but now with me being so much freer to do as I please spiritually, it gives me great joy.” The participant further elucidated how devoted he is to religion by stating, “Prayer times are not at one specific go. In other words, its morning, lunch-time, the afternoon, evening, and at night. So it’s all individual times”. This participant is therefore, dedicated to incorporating prayer into his daily routine, reinforcing the fact that religion and spiritual affiliation is an exceedingly significant theme. All the research participants mentioned either praying, religion, or being spiritual within their interviews. The first and fifth participant made mention of this theme multiple times throughout their interviews, whereas the other participants mentioned in minimally within their interviews. Nonetheless, this theme was recurring throughout all the conducted interviews.

The theme of hobbies and daily activities, was also mentioned by all the participants. This theme however, was not reiterated to the extent of the themes of interpersonal relationships and religion and/or spiritual affiliation, however it was undeniably a recurring theme throughout all the participant's interviews. This theme was particularly depicted in the third participant's interview. When the participant was asked about his hobbies and the activities he enjoys doing, he responded by saying, "I like my gardening and more of looking after the maintenance of the house, yes. That's my hobbies. And I read a lot of the paper." When questioned on the ways he believes he experiences joys in his life as an elderly individual, the participant responded by saying, "Just relaxing. I just need to relax...and I like driving around". This statement illustrated that the participant experiences joys in his life by partaking in his hobbies. Furthermore, the fourth participant mentioned that daily activities were a noteworthy contributor to her joys by explaining, "I like having a routine." This participant further stated that she enjoys "going for drives...cooking and watching TV." According to each of the participant's interviews, they all stated that they experienced some sort of joy by having a routine or participating in daily activities and hobbies. This was a prominent and repeated theme although, not to the extent of the other themes.

The theme of appreciation of life, was also mentioned by all the participants. It was stated repeatedly by almost all the participants, except for the fourth participant, who only mentioned one thing in her life that she was proud of. The fifth participant stated this theme various times throughout her interview and placed abundant emphasis on it. When asked whether she views life in a negative, positive or realistic manner, this participant responded by saying, "All three. It was negative at first and then it got better. But I think I understand life better now and I love life more now because I went through many difficult periods in my life. If I didn't have the difficult times, I don't know if I would appreciate these times." When asked about what gives her the greatest joys in her life, the participant responded by saying, "I appreciate every small thing. Like if I have to go and sit on the table and eat, I feel so good because we couldn't do that when I was younger. Even just having a shower.... I appreciate it so much." This participant was very appreciative of the

life she lived and the life she is currently living. Almost all the participants mentioned their appreciation of life and how it impacts their joys.

The final theme of lack of regrets in life was not shown at all by the participants. All the participants mentioned that they experienced no less than some regret about the lives they have lived, which could contribute to the participants not fully experiencing joy within their lives. In the fifth participants interview, she states that she has many regrets about her life. When asked about her outlook on life, the participant responded by saying, “I never spent enough time with my children because I had to go to work when they were younger. I just had to put food on the table. We were very poor so in the second year of having my babies I had to go to work and I feel I missed out because I wasn’t with them during that period.” When asked about her view on the life she has lived, the participant stated, “I have regrets that I didn’t do so well religiously in the past. I’m trying to cover up for it now. I also feel sad that I didn’t spend enough time with my children.” Similarly, all the other participants mentioned that they regret certain aspects of their lives, which makes them feel sad or unhappy at times. Therefore, proving that a lack of regrets in life, results in more joy.

Each of the participants experienced four out of the five themes of joy: interpersonal relationships; religious/spiritual affiliation; hobbies and daily activities; and appreciation of life. All participants however, did not experience the fifth theme of joy, being a lack of regret, as they all had some sort of regrets about their lives. However, the most prominent theme that came up in all the interviews, was the theme of interpersonal relationships. Every single participant mentioned how important the people in their lives were to them and emphasised the importance of their friends, family and neighbours, as well as how this contributed to their experience of joy within their lives.

5 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF FINDINGS

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2019), trustworthiness refers to whether or not a study can be relied on as honest or truthful. Trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality

of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). It refers to whether the study and the data within it can be trusted. Trustworthiness is divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility is the accuracy that the researcher used to interpret the data provided by participants (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Credibility can be ensured in the study if the researcher spends long periods of time with the participants to understand them and their lives better. This is assured as, four of the five participants are the researcher's grandparents and fifth participant is her neighbour therefore, she has a deep understanding of the participants and of their lives. Credibility can also be ensured if the research findings are believable in the academic/research community. The researcher can ensure that the findings are believable by encouraging the participants to be as honest and open as they possible can be.

Transferability refers to the ability of the findings to be applied to a similar situation and deliver similar results (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). If another researcher uses the findings in a similar situation, he/ she should get the same results. Dependability is the quality of the process of integration that takes place between the data collection method, data analysis and the theory generated from the data (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018).

Confirmability refers to how well the data collected supports the findings and interpretations of the researcher. It indicates how well the findings flow from the data (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). This can be ensured in the study if others who examine the data reach similar conclusions as the researcher did.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of Findings as They Relate to The Research Question, Problem, Objectives

The research question was, "What are some of the joys that most Indian elderly South African adults experience?". This question was answered in the interviews as, the participants each mentioned what gave them joy, which was the interpersonal

relationships in their lives; religious/spiritual affiliation; hobbies and daily activities; appreciation of life; and lack of regret.

Due to the fact that interpersonal relationships was the most emphasised and repeated theme throughout the interviews, it can be concluded that interpersonal relationships is one of the largest contributors to joy for Indian elderly South African's. This theme can be further broken down into sub-themes of interpersonal relationships with friends, neighbours, grandchildren, spouses, and other family members. Therefore, some of the joys that most Indian elderly South African adults experience, would be the various interpersonal relationships with the people around them.

The research problem was that a large number of individuals believe that elderly people are unhappy, which leads to anxiety and fears about ageing, as well as ageist views on elderly people (Neuberger, 2008). The researcher believed that if the joys of being an elderly person are known, these fears and ageist views can be overcome. Now that the researcher has found that interpersonal relationships is the largest contributor to elderly adults' joys, other people will be able to understand what makes older adults happy. They will also be able to understand that they can be happy in their personal ageing process if they nurture and maintain the interpersonal relationships within their own lives. These findings could potentially help ease ageing anxieties and stereotypes.

There were three main objectives of the research being, to explore the factors that contribute to elderly people experiencing joyful lives; to discover the effects of enjoying life on the wellbeing of elderly adults, and to understand how a positive outlook on life contributes to ageing gracefully.

After conducting interviews with the participants, the factors that contribute to elderly people experiencing joyful lives became evident through the themes that were found. It became known to the researcher that elderly people experience joys by having close interpersonal relationships with people around them; by having something to believe in spiritually/ religiously; by participating in daily activities and hobbies; by appreciating their

lives; and by living without regrets. According to the theory of psychosocial development, elderly adults should experience the stage of integrity versus despair, in order to be happy (Erikson, 1974). This means that they should not have any regrets or remorse over the lives they have lived, but should instead be content and appreciative, in order to truly experience joy in late adulthood. Due to the fact that South African Indian elderly adults are from a collectivistic culture, they may have more psychosocial conflict resolution capacity than their individualistic counterparts (Thokchom & Singh, 2016).

The second objective of, discovering the effects of enjoying life on the wellbeing of elderly adults, was also found after conducting the interviews. It became evident that the participants who experienced these themes of joy, were more physically and mentally well, compared to their counterparts, who experienced illness and mental disorders. For example, the second participant who barely mentioned the themes of joy, stated that she suffered many illnesses and mental disorders whereas, the fifth participant who mentioned and reiterated all the themes of joy, experienced little to no physical and mental illness.

The third objective of the research study, was to understand how a positive outlook on life contributes to ageing gracefully. In the participant's interviews, they were asked about their view on life, to which they each responded differently. The first participant for example, mentioned that he did have a few regrets but was "pretty comfortable" with his life. This participant mentioned almost all the themes of joy in ageing, which depicts how his positive outlook on life contributes to him ageing in a graceful manner. The second participant on the other hand, explained that her view on life is "very bleak". This participant mentions various times throughout her interview about illness, not being part of any spiritual groups, not appreciating life, and having many regrets. Her negative outlook on life could be understood as a major contributor to her not ageing gracefully. According to the age-related positivity effect, elderly people are believed to attend to and remember more positive information, rather than negative information (Reed & Carstensen, 2012). Therefore, despite the second participant having a negative outlook on life, she may have been even more negative in her youth as, younger adults generally

attend to and remember negative information more than positive information, compared to older people (Mather & Fanselow, 2018).

6.2 Anticipated Contribution of the Study

The researcher anticipates that the proposed study will make a significant contribution. The research could provide greater insight into the lives of older adults, along with the joys that they experience. This could aid others by transforming their ageist views into more positive and less stereotypical perceptions of the elderly, which could also reduce their own fears about ageing.

The research could contribute to the understanding of the impact of ageism on elderly people as well as, ageing-anxiety. The stress that results from ageism and ageing-anxiety could be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of elderly and middle-aged individuals (Bytheway, 1994).

The research will ultimately contribute to the improvement of knowledge by highlighting the need to understand ageism and to prove this false stereotype wrong. By understanding that older people may be just as happy as any other age group, and maybe even happier, the negative perception of the elderly being unhappy, as well as the fear of ageing, can be dismantled. By gaining insight into the joys that the elderly experience, it could also explain why some people go to extremes to look and feel younger, such as intense diets and aesthetic procedures. Understanding the joys of adults in late adulthood could contribute to discovering the effects of having a joyful life on the wellbeing of elderly adults. Finally, the research will explore the factors that contribute to elderly adults experiencing joys in their lives, which could then allow them and other elderly adults to maximise these joys.

By understanding the effects of ageism on elderly people's lives, other individuals might be less stereotypical and more neutral towards older adults. Instead of viewing the ageing process as daunting and miserable, people will be able to view the elderly as normal people who experience joys, just as any age group would.

The proposed study provides insights on the elderly and how ageism affects their lives as well as the lives of the ageists. Further research could be conducted on other areas of elderly adults lives, apart from the joys they experience, that might give a more realistic view of them to others such as, their relationships, challenges, and even their goals or fears.

6.3 Ethical Considerations

Voluntary participation of respondents in the research:

This will be done in the proposed research study as the participants will be given an information sheet and consent form before participating, which they will need to sign.

The use of offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language needs to be avoided in the formulation of the interview questions:

The in-depth interview will contain neutral language and will not include any offensive questions which could emotionally and/ or mentally harm participants.

Privacy and anonymity of respondents is important:

Participants will have a confidentiality form to complete and sign.

Acknowledgement of works of other authors used in any part of the dissertation with the use of Harvard referencing system:

The research proposal will acknowledge and give credit to all authors when their works have been used.

Maintenance of the highest level of objectivity in discussions and analysis throughout the research:

The researcher of the proposed study will try to remain as objective as possible throughout the creation of the research proposal and in-depth interview questions.

Adhering to safety precautions during COVID-19

Due to the fact that the research has been conducted during the lockdown period, it may have ethical considerations to take into account. The researcher will try her best to get into contact with the participants to conduct their interviews in the safest way possible.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

A limitation identifies potential weaknesses of the study (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). These constraints in the research study are out of the researcher's control (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Limitations of the proposed study include time and access to information. Due to the fact that the research proposal needed to be completed within a time period of less than a year, the researcher had a limit on the amount of information that could be collected within the given time period. Accessibility is a research limitation in the study as it was difficult to find older adults that were willing to participate in the study over the phone, as it was tedious and was difficult for them to hear the researcher when she asks them questions.

Delimitations in the study address how the study will be narrow in scope (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). It results from the specific and definite choices the researcher made when she decided on the scope of the research study (du-Plooy Cilliers et al., 2018). Delimitations in the study include population, time dimension and data-collection method. With regards to *population*, the researcher chose to study adults in late adulthood, who are Indian South Africans. The research is limited to elderly adults as the researcher wanted to focus on how older people are falsely judged and stereotyped against because of their age. The study focuses only on elderly adults as the researcher aims to enable people to understand that growing old is not such a terrible process and ultimately to decrease the number of ageists in the future. The study also only focuses on Indian elderly adults in South Africa, due to the fact that most Indian South African's are from

collectivistic cultures – the researcher wanted to understand how collectivism affects the joys that elderly adults experience.

In terms on the *time dimension* of the study, the researcher chose to use a cross-sectional study. This was done because the researcher did not have enough time to interview participants during the course of several points in time. The researcher interviewed the participants at one point in time to compare differences and similarities among different people in relationships at a given time. This was used as it was less time consuming and more cost-effective.

The *data collection method* that was used was in-depth interviews. This was used because the interviewer/ researcher wanted to be able to devote complete attention to each participant and take time to establish good rapport. An in-depth interview also allows for participants to answer personal questions in a private setting compared to a focus group, for example. In-depth interviews include deeper insights. Each participant had more time and opportunity to share their feelings, perspectives and opinions.

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Annexure A – Consent Form

Interview participant 1

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is Shazia Dadabhay and I am a student at The IIE Varsity College Sandton. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Steven Sawyer about the joys that people experience in late adulthood. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the effect that ageism and ageing anxiety has on individuals.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because it will enable me to complete my honours degree as well as, to eliminate stereotypes against older people. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to find out more about the joys you experience in your day to day lives.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your joys. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College Sandton, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Honours in Psychology. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Shazia Dadabhay

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Steven Sawyer

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Shazia Dadabhay about the joys that people experience in late adulthood.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

Consent form for audio-recording

I, _____, agree to allow Shazia Dadabhay to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the joys that people experience in late adulthood.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
2. The recordings will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's computer.
3. Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature

Date

Annexure B – Interview schedule / Questionnaire

Semi-structured in-depth interview schedule:

[Opening]

Hello [participant's name]. I am a student at The IIE Varsity College Sandton, and would like to interview you on the joys that you experience as a South African Indian elderly adult.

I would like to ask you some questions on your life, your background, your hobbies, and your general outlook on life, in order to enhance my understanding of the effect that ageism and ageing anxiety has on individuals.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because it will enable me to complete my honours degree as well as, to eliminate stereotypes against older people.

The interview should take between 10 and 20 minutes. Are you available to respond to these questions at this time?

[Body - Transition]

A) Let me begin by asking you some questions about your interpersonal relationships.

1. What is your marital/ relationship status?
2. How long have you been in a relationship for?
3. How often do you spend time with your family, friends and neighbours?
4. What do you do with your family, friends and neighbours when you spend time with them?
5. Do you have grandchildren?
6. Tell me about your relationship with your grandchildren.
7. How socially supported do you feel by your friends and family?
8. What types of spiritual congregations or cohesive groups do you attend (for example church or book club)?

9. How do you feel about being a part of a spiritual congregation or cohesive group?

[Transition to the next topic]

B) I will now ask you a few questions about your hobbies and daily activities.

1. Tell me about your hobbies and other activities you enjoy doing?
2. what does your day consist of you doing?
3. How does your daily routine make you feel?

[Transition to the next topic]

C) I will now ask you some questions about your general outlook of life and your perspective on the life you have lived up until this point.

1. Tell me about the outlook you have on life.
2. Why do you view life this way?
3. How do you feel about the life you have lived?
4. What are you proud of yourself for accomplishing in your life?
5. In what ways do you believe you experience joys in your life?

[Transition to closing]

It has been lovely finding out more about you. Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Annexure C – Ethical Clearance Letter



29 July 2020

Student name: Shazia Dadabhay

Student number: 16004610

Campus: IIE's Varsity College Sandton

Re: Approval of Honours in Psychology Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

There are some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor before you may proceed (see below):

Please discuss with your supervisor/navigator/lecturer how you will address these issues listed below:

Please note: Your fieldwork may only proceed once you address the following issues:

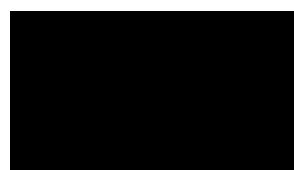
- o Please make all the changes suggested/recommended by your supervisor.
- o Title needs to be reworked. Joys? Possibly: Exploring the development tasks of late adulthood? Please consult your supervisor on this.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.



Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

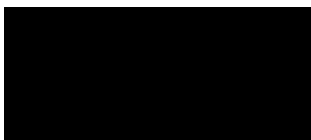
Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

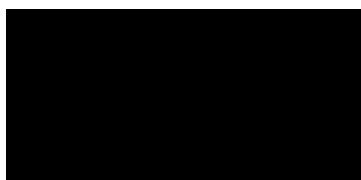
Supervisor: Steven Sawyer



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC):



JENNA-LEE RAMNARAIN



Annexure D – Examples of Data Collected
Interview participant 1

Interview participant 3

Interview participant 5

Exploring the factors that influence the experience of joy in late adulthood: a qualitative study on South African Indian elderly adults, using in-depth interviews

70