THE EFFECTS OF GENERATIONAL GAP ON WELL-BEING OF OLDER ADULTS

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Abstract

In today's culture, which is continually changing, the generational gap has grown more noticeable. This study explores the complex effects of the generational divide on older individuals' wellbeing. The study investigates how differences in viewpoints and lifestyles between older persons and younger generations impact many aspects of wellness, including mental health, interpersonal relationships, and self-image.

A sample of six people (3 males, 3 females) were taken and qualitative method was used in this study. The results were extracted through Thematic Analysis.

The findings emphasize detrimental effects of the gap's impact, demonstrating its complex nature. The findings suggest that older persons endure emotions of loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem as a result of their difficulty comprehending and relating to younger generations, which is made worse by the widespread use of technological advances.

In conclusion, this study offers important new understandings into the intricate relationship between older persons' wellbeing and generational dynamics. The study fosters a deeper awareness of how society may work to promote a more welcoming and positive environment for people of all ages by highlighting the opportunities and difficulties posed by the generational divide.

Keywords: Generational gap, wellbeing, older adults, mental health, social relationships, communication, technology, coping strategies, intergenerational harmony.

Introduction

In current times, with vastly increasing technology and new ways of life, life has become so convenient and easy but not for all of us. This convenience has come with its own difficulties. Life has become so quick and fast that some of us cannot even find our pace with it. Older adults are a generation who is highly affected by this and who finds it difficult to fit themselves in such an updated life.

This study's focus is going to be this generational gap between both generations and how it affects an older adult's life. The main focus of this topic is exploring the potential impact of generational gaps on the social well-being of older adults. Specifically, we will examine how the differences in values, communication styles, and technology use between older adults and younger generations can influence older adults' social connectedness, physical health, and mental health.

People who have aged 60 or above, play a vital role in a society as workforce participants, volunteers and family members. Some of them may enjoy good mental health but most of them are at the verge of different kinds of mental disorders and neurological problems also some other health conditions

for example diabetes, osteoarthritis and hearing loss. Although, as people grow old, they are quite prone to develop many frailties in the same time period (World Health Organization, 2017).

Aging is a natural phenomenon that can cause physiological, psychological and social barriers to people and affect their quality of life. There are different psychological and physical problems caused by aging in older adults like dementia, alzheimer, compromised mobility, Age can also cause visual impairment, so that's why non-verbal communication is compromised.

Generational gap refers to the difference in opinions between generations regarding views, customs, values, norms, and technological advancements (Clark 2009).

Furlong (2016) pointed out that this disparity between generations becomes more prominent as youth transition into adulthood.

As societies continue to evolve and progress, the generational gap between older individuals and younger generations is becoming increasingly noticeable. This gap refers to the differences in norms, convictions and actions between people of different ages, and it has the ability to affect the welfare of older individuals in various ways (Thalgaspitiya & Hettiarachchi, 2018). On the one hand, intergenerational connections and interactions could have a joyful effect on older adults' physical and mental health, as well as provide them with opportunities for learning and personal growth. On the other hand, generational differences can create barriers and lead to social isolation, disconnection, and feelings of alienation among older adults. In this context, it is essential to explore the effects of the generational gap on the social welfare of older generations and identify ways to bridge the gap and promote intergenerational understanding and respect (Teerawichitchainan et al., 2015).

Literature Review
The generational divide is a significant, solvable issue in Pakistan's developing society. It describes arguments, contradictions, and disparities between parents or seniors on a variety of topics, including politics, intimacy, contemporary technology, cultural shifts, and interactions.
(Pir Wahab et al., 2022)

The younger generations, commonly referred to as the Baby Boomers, showed a substantial difference in the views and perspectives of their predecessors in day-to-day living in the 1960s, which led to the first appearance of the sociological idea of a generation gap. (Govitvatana 2001)

Since then, Emery et al. (2015) have observed in a number of instances that physical isolation frequently incorporates generational mental isolation, meaning that there is typically no contact or even contact hurdles as people age. Today, we would notice this sense of isolation even when there is an age difference of less than three years. In the past, this isolation was noticeable when there were age differences of about a decade or more. In fact, the difficulties, such as the use of contemporary technology, cultural and societal obstacles, and communication gaps, are becoming so complicated that it is challenging to understand how this cycle might be broken.(Pir Wahab et al., 2022)

The extent to which older persons are enmeshed in networks of social support has a significant impact on how they age (Victor, 1994). Shippy et al.

(2005) found that social support for older persons, especially those with persistent medical conditions, becomes a key source of assistance and affects recovery patterns. Given that frailty and disability are more common as people grow (Albert, 2004), social assistance, especially practical and emotional support, mitigates impairment. At different levels, such as the physical level (impairment), the person level (activity), and the societal level (participation), disability may be recognized and evaluated. (khalil Ahmad, 2011)

The phrase "generational gap" describes the disparity in the preferences, perspectives, and perceptions of different generations, which leads to tensions and estrangement amongst relatives. It affects relationships as well as daily activities because to the introduction of technological advances and an abundance of interaction between generations that are younger and older.
(Mehak Aggarwal et al., 2017Several studies have been done to understand the influence of generational gap and possible solutions to reduce this sense of loneliness in older adults due to social disconnectedness. Agitation has positive and negative impacts in association with social exchange on emotional well-being of people from different age groups.

Tim D. Windsor and Kaarin J. Anstey reveal that older adults have more positive and less negative social exchanges, although, midlife and younger adults have stronger understanding and communicative relationships unlike older adults. Generational gaps hit differently to the members of each age group (Windsor & Anstey, 2010).

Happiness is significantly impacted by generational gaps. According to research conducted by Jean M. Twenge, Ryne A. Sherman, and Sonja Lyubomirsky on adults between the ages of 18-96, generational differences may have varied effects on people's happiness. They reveal that in America present adolescents are happier than their predecessors are, on the contrary adults around thirty are less satisfied in their lives in contrast to the older adults in their thirties. In light of this, happiness may vary over time and across generations (Twenge et al., 2016).

Rational of the Study
The rationale behind this study is that society is continually evolving and changing, driven by advancements in technology, social norms, and cultural practices. These changes can create a sense of disconnection and isolation for older adults who may not have grown up in the same cultural context or experienced the same technological advancements as younger generations. Studying the effects of the generational gap on older adults can help promote positive aging and upgrade the overall welfare of older individuals in a rapidly changing world.

Objectives of the Study
Following are the objectives of this study;
1. To explore the challenges faced by older adults due to the generational gap.
2. To study the effects of generational gap on psycho-social wellbeing of older adults.

Research Questions
Following are the research questions used in the study;
1. What are the challenges faced by older adults due to the generational gap?
2. How have these challenges affected the psycho-social wellbeing of older adults?

Methodology
Research Design
The research will be Qualitative in nature. The non-probability purposive sampling technique is used in this research. An older person is explained by the United Nations as a person whose age is over 60 years of age so the data will be gathered from people ranging from an age of 60 to 65 years old. The sample size of the current study will be N=6. The sample will consist of 3 men and 3 women.

Inclusion criteria
- Only male and female gender will be included for the population.
- Only non-working older adults will be included.

Exclusion criteria
- 3rd gender will not be included in the study.
- Individuals less than 60 years and more than 65 years will not be included.
- Working older adults would not be included in the study.

Procedure
To learn more about the difficulties faced by older persons as a result of the generational divide and how these difficulties have impacted their mental health, semi-structured interviews were performed. A timetable for the interviews was created based on the factors found in the literature and the research's findings. With each participant's permission, an interview and tape recording were conducted. For analysis, all of the information collected was transcribed.

Ethical Considerations

A written permission was acquired by all the participants involved in the study to use their given information for this research. They were assured that the information shared was kept confidential and was only used for research purposes. Instructions were given to each participant about the research. Every point was explained for better understanding.

Results

To investigate the effects of generational gap on older adults, six participants (3 males, 3 females) were individually interviewed and their interviews were interpreted and analyzed through interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA).

IPA emphasizes personal experience and in-depth knowledge about problems and people's perception and reaction. After the interview these themes emerged under the light of IPA, Participant I: Generational Gap's Impact on Relationships and Well-Being. Technological Influence on Interpersonal Relationships, Navigating Changing Social Landscapes. Participant II: Generational Gap's Impact on Communication and Relationships, Effects on Mental Health and Coping, Navigating Communication Across Generations. Participant III: Diverse Perspectives and Communication Dynamics, Impact on Relationships and Societal Context, Technological Influence and Coping Strategies. Participant IV: Generational Gap's Impact on Society, Parent-Child Relationship Dynamics, Communication Challenges and Technological Influence. Participant V: Understanding the Generational Gap, Generational Gap's Impact on Mental Health and Relationships, Technology's Influence on Social Dynamics, Personal and Emotional Resilience. Participant VI: Understanding and Navigating the Multidimensional Gap, Impact on Mental Health and Emotional Resilience, Technology's Role in Connection and Isolation.

It was found that Generational Gap had innumerous effects on older adults.

Because this is the age when people are emotionally, physically, mentally weak and mostly suffering with serious mental and physical illnesses. So they are dependent not by choice but for some reasons. It was shown that female older adults had emotional effects and males had financial effects. Old studies showed that men and women are equally emotional but women are more expressive as compared to men and also have cultural, beliefs and differences in their upbringing, because of that women express their emotions and men have control over them (Hess et al., 2000). In the light of this previous study we can relate our results as female participants of this study showed emotional impacts on them.

Men spent their lives financially independent in our society. So that is challenging for them to depend on someone financially, although those are their kids.

Financial dependence in men causes chronic illnesses, trouble in relations, anger issues. (Kim, 2020). This study explored that, those older men who are financially dependent on their children are usually more affected by the generational gap.

Previous studies have shown that those who have lost a spouse suffer from a greater risk of dying themselves, emotional distress, irritation, anger, lack of understanding and keep a strong relationship with others (Brockmann et al, 2004).

This study supported our results as we explored that those participants whose spouses were not alive had increased effects of generational gap on them.

To sum up this research, Generational gap egregiously affects our older adults but who are more sensitive or emotional, financial dependence and losing their spouse has abysmal effects of generational gap on them.
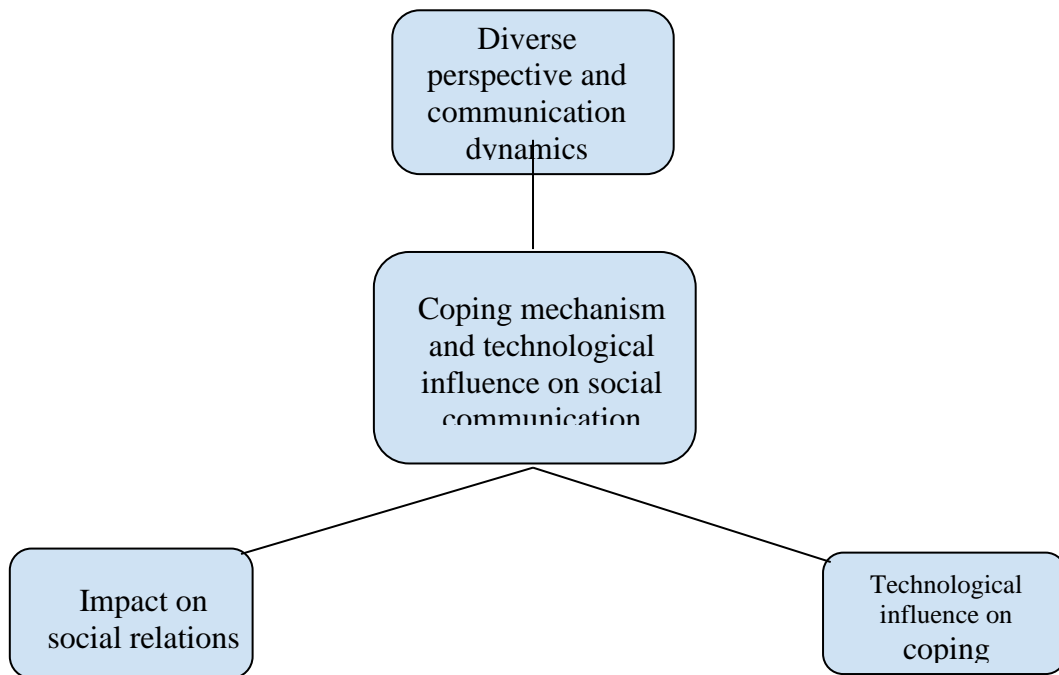
3.1 *Figure 1*: Superordinate and master themes emerged after analyzing interview of participant I with Growing Apart: Effects of Generational Gap on Well Being of Older Adults through, IPA.
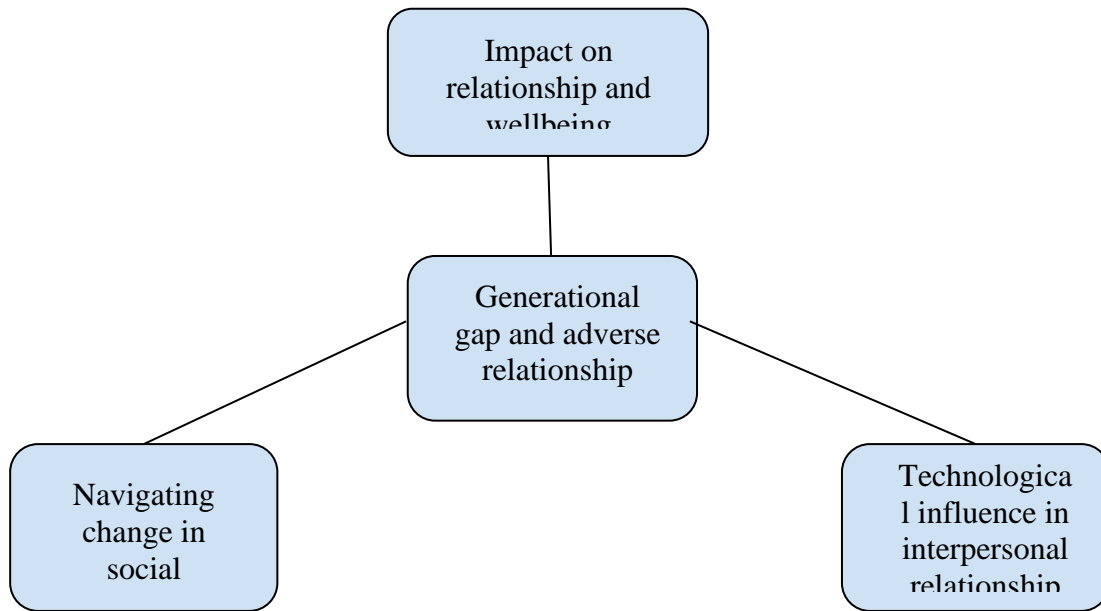
3.1 *Figure 2*: Superordinate and master themes emerged after analyzing interview of participant II with Growing Apart: Effects of Generational Gap on Well Being of Older Adults through, IPA.
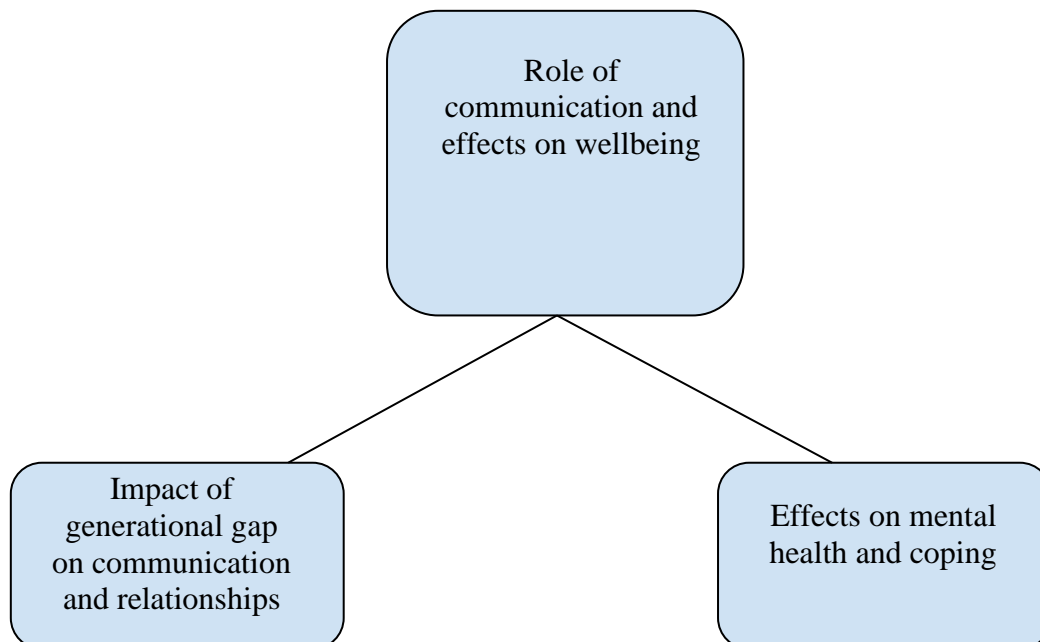
3.3 Figure 3: Superordinate and master themes emerged after analyzing interview of participant III with Growing Apart: Effects of Generational Gap on Well Being of Older Adults through, IPA.

3.4 Figure 4: Superordinate and master themes emerged after analyzing interview of participant IV with Growing Apart: Effects of Generational Gap on Well Being of Older Adults through, IPA.

3.5 Figure 5: Superordinate and master themes emerged after analyzing interview of participant V with Growing Apart: Effects of Generational Gap on Well Being of Older Adults through, IPA.
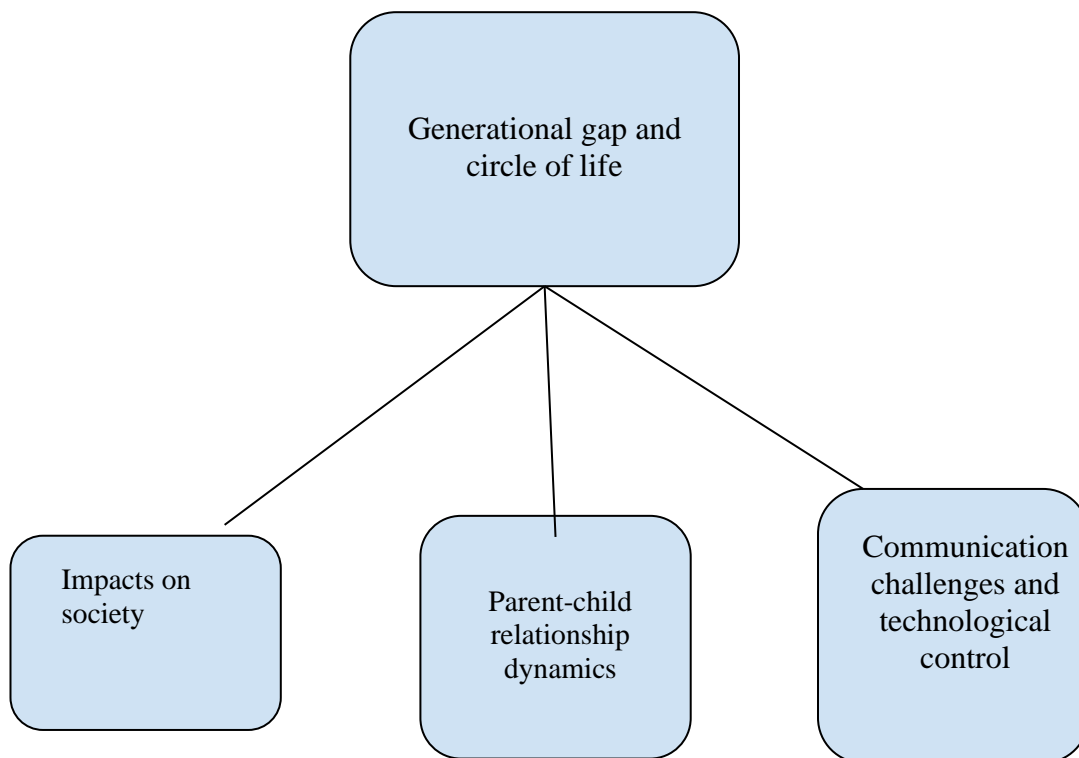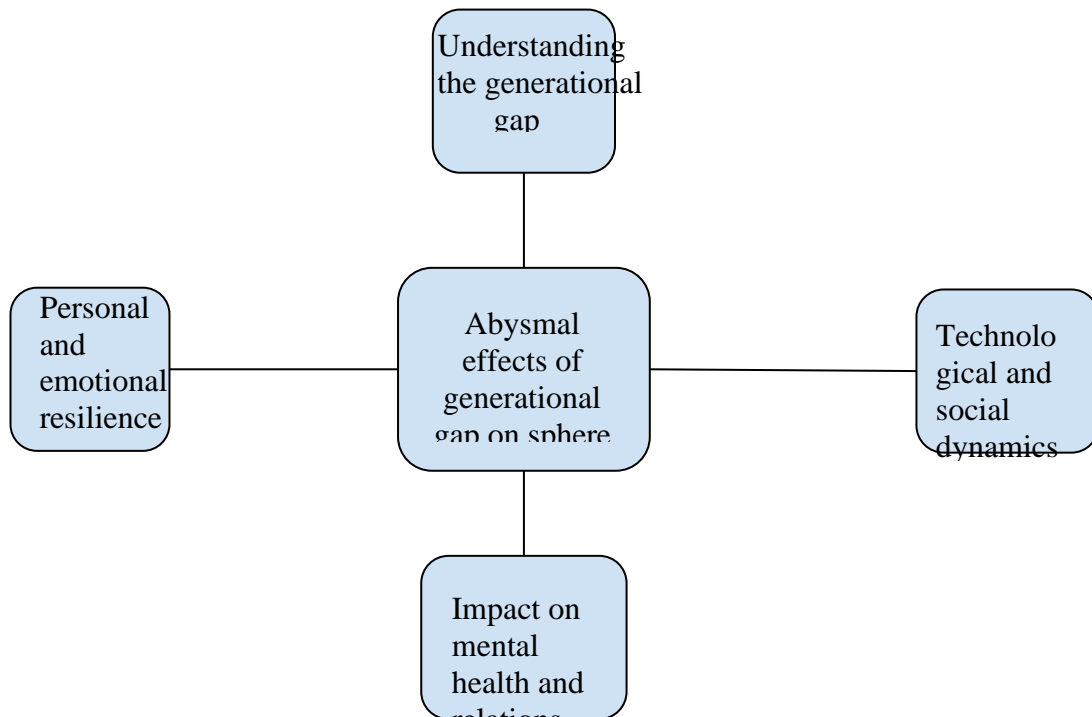
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*3.6 Figure 6***:** Superordinate and master themes emerged after analyzing interview of participant VI with Growing Apart: Effects of Generational Gap on Well Being of Older Adults through, IPA
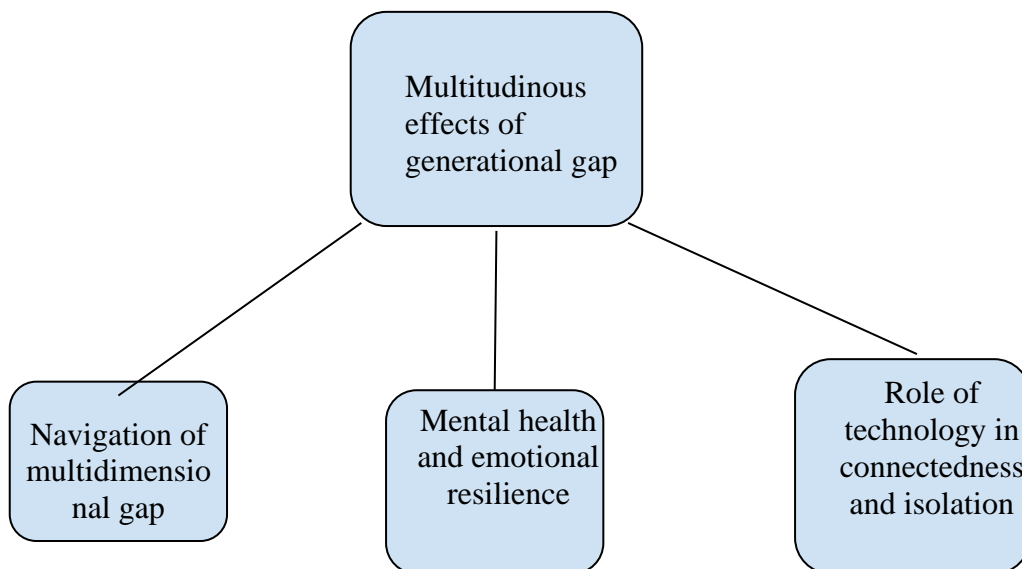
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Discussion

This study aims to qualitatively explore the effects of generational gap on well-being of older adults. This study comparatively inspects the both genders for the severity of the effects of generational gap. Themes were emerged after completing the analysis, which are; Generational Gap and Diverse Relationships, Role of Communication, and effects on Well-being, Coping mechanism and Technical

influence on social communication, Generational Gap and Circle of life, Abysmal effects of Generational Gap on Sphere of Life, Multitudinous effects of Generational Gap.

The first theme emerged after analysis which is; "Generational Gap and Diverse Relationships", this theme covers the effects on relations including, family, social and the technological influence. Speaking generally, today's generation prefers online communication. Generations communicate differently, and technology continues to affect those preferences, in a recent survey in Korea. (Gen, 2021). Technology affects the relations and creates boundaries in relations. Reported by one participant as; "Today's generation is so different. They do everything so differently. In our age everything was so simple. people used to communicate with each other and they used to respect each other and everything was so simple but now everything is so complicated". Another participant reported; "Communication gaps cause so much conflict and things turn around the other way. I mean things could be better, problems could be solved with better communication but if there is a communication gap like in generations in parent and child relationship. things go the other way down and it can be distressful". 3ʳᵈ participant reported as; "Yes when we will not talk to each other and we will not communicate to each other things will get complicated and everyone will be distant and it will affect our relationships negatively, like in these days everyone is busy in their mobile and they do not sit together, they do not talk to each other and it really affects our relationship negatively". Participants reports proved that lack of communication or hurdle in to communicate a daily life discussion creates problems and these issues has worse effects on mental health and well-being of older adults and they felt isolated because of this as Three of participants reported "Yes, it affects our mental health negatively like when we do not sit together and we cannot talk to each other we cannot communicate properly with the family members and with children so it causes so much anxiety, stress and loneliness and due to generation gap yes many people feel alone and I too even sometimes and yes it is so painful sometimes".

"I totally agree with this and I feel technology is one of the biggest reasons people feel isolated these days and everything is digitalized and even I feel that our relationships are being digitalized and yes that's why I feel isolated more often now" .

"I feel when I am unable to fit into a situation or anything like group of people and when my grandchildren are talking to me in a language and using the word I am unable to understand or thye use the technology i am unable to understand I feel less and I have issues with my self-image yes I agree to this that generational gap does make me feel conscious about myself image and I think it does too many people of my age too".

This theme also covers the impact on social relations, how the generational gap and lack of communication and latest technology affects social relations. As 2 of participants reported; "I think the generational gap effects our social relationship and our social gathering. now digitalization has made everything so easy and so convenient which is strange for people of my age I mean in our age people used to sit together, they used to talk to each other, they used to visit each others homes like on different events and functions but now it's just a tap away like you call someone or you video call someone and you see them and you know the essence of the social gathering has been gone and its been long, so yes it is quite strange and distressful".

"Think both the generation should understand each other like our children should understand us and our values like why we are so and people of my age we should try to understand them and we should not feel guilty of being a misfit in this like modern society I think we have lived our life and we should understand this and we should start having different social gatherings and we should visit better so that we can give each other time and kindness we need".

The second theme was "Role of Communication, and effects on Well-being" which covers the importance of communication in every relation to keep it maintained or avoid any type of misunderstanding. And lack of communication affects the mental health of older adults in a very bad manner. Older adults face several physical and psychological problems such as hearing loss, vision loss, and memory loss, which diminish the quality of their communication. Poor communication in turn affects their psychological wellbeing and induces substantial depression, anxiety, and stress. The family has an important role in the mental health of older adults. (Ghazavi et al., 2016). As four of

participants reported; "I think generation gap is a difference of age and third process like how we see the world and how we see things around us and because of this generation gap different generations like people of different age groups it's just it causes so many misunderstandings between them and miss Communications I believe".

"Generational gap affects our daily lives so badly that I believe it is causing so many issues between parents and childrens and like parents are unable to understand that children and children are unable to understand their parents and it is causing so much stress and tension in our society".

'I think the generational gap has affected are social relationships and it has so negatively affected our lives I believe like we used to listen to our parents and apparents used to guide us now if we try to guide our children they would not listen to us like they want to experience things themselves and they want to experience new things and you know that I to do things on their own like in their way and that can you think for us and that is like difficult to accept we feel that we know better and we can get them better so yes this factor social radiation chips and this really affect communication negatively".

"Yes I believed that generational gap do affect our mental health because when our social relationships would be affected when we would not be happy we could not communicate to each other there are social periods there are communication barriers then yes obviously mental health would be on Stake and I do feel that I had battle through it I have faced it I have faced mental issues like stress anxiety and I have been there like feeling well and not so much interested to talk to us".

They also reported as they said;   "Feel technology is one of the reasons of this communication gap and the generational gap and I admit it and I accept it that technology is the need of the hour but I cannot negate the reality of it like how it has this time child from US and how Technology has just make everyone so busy that they do not have time for each other and to communicate socially and yes it as to the distance and I feel that it has negatively affected our lives".

"Think this is so personal, like if someone is very sensitive and emotional, the generational gap can affect their self-image negatively but if someone is strong or they don't care about much they should be okay I feel".

The third theme is "Coping mechanism and Technical influence on social communication", this theme is based on how technology affects social communication and what were their coping strategies to overcome their emotions or handle the problem. As one participant reported; "I believe generation gap affect our lives so bad because now with age and thoughts world has been changed everything has been changed now and today's generation I feel is more educated and more advanced and they know Technology better and life is so easy these days these things these changes also much difference between US and today's generation and it also causes so much miss understanding us like urgent feel like we don't understand them over we don't want to listen to them but at the same time we feel the same thing we feel that they don't understand my understanding is causing so much distance between the two generations'.

This participant continued as; "As I had expressed earlier that generation gap has a very negative effect on our social relationships even the parent child relationship is greatly affected by this because no one is able to understand other person and these things are getting serious in the society and have caused so much destruction to the family values".

Another participant revealed as "generatonal gap has a very negative effect on mental health because of this communication and the gap between the both generation like I want to do the best things from my child I want to guide him and I want to tell him the best way to live but he don't need me anymore he want to experiment with his life and he want to do what he wants not something I want him to do so this communication gap has cost so much to me and I feel more stressed because of this".

 Two of our participant talk about reason of isolation in this regard they revealed as ; "I do feel isolated because of generation gap because I feel I am unable to understand my children and my grandchildren and they are unable to understand me and they are so busy with their lives and with their work and they are such casuals that they don't have time for me and I spend most of my time alone with a few of my friends but my family it does not give me that much of time like my children does not give me that much of a time so yes, I feel isolated due to this communication gap".

Fourth theme was "Generational Gap and Circle of life", this theme mainly covers the relation between children and their parents, and the effects of internal and external factors on them. These factors might be anything other than relation, society role, or latest technology. Almost all participants reported as; "The generational gap is so prominent these days. This is the hour to discuss it and society is suffering a lot because of it and people are having so many issues regarding generation gap even parent child relationships are highly affected by this".

"Generation gap affect our lives so much like our children are so much into technology and even my younger son is some 6 years old and all he wants his mobile he wants to see cartoons and stuff and social media but I am unable to control him I feel I am unable to conversate properly or make them understand that this excessive use of technology is not good for them and yes it is affecting our life in negative way".

"Generation gap has affected are mental health so much on different levels I believe as a mother it has affected my mental health when I am unable to do conversation with my children and it has affected my children's mental health too like on social media when they see different things and different life style and they want to follow them but the couldn't, so it make them stressed about it and depressive I have felt in our home. yes generational gap has affected our mental health so much".

"I have said it earlier that as a mother generation gap has affected my mental health and I feel more lonely I feel my children are so busy in their lives with their work and daily life style that they don't have time for me I wait for them in evening I want them to sit with me and have some conversation I want them to tell me about the day and what they did they want to do but they don't have time for it clearly they come back home food rent and they just go straight into their rooms and yes I have helped isolated because of this".

"Technology does affect myself image as I told you that when my children does not give me time and they do not sit with me and conversation with me oh ask me but I have done to spend my day today I feel as a misfit and I feel Anwar the I feel that I am not ready after time that they are not chatting with me so yes it does affect my self-image".

Fifth and second last theme was "Abysmal effects of Generational Gap on Sphere of Life", as the name of this theme represents that this theme is about all areas of life, how the generational gap affects all areas of life and their impact on mental health.

Sixth and last theme which was extracted from the data was "Multitudinous effects of generational gap". This theme covers the multidimensional approach to generational gap and how it affects on different levels to different individuals. As participant 3 said: "I feel the generational gap does affect our self image but it is so person specific like I believe it for a sensitive it would be I think but for me it is not so much like I don't feel that much of I don't have such an image". Another participant expressed it as: "Technology has helped as in social connections like we can talk to our people like from far away being different country as it poles apart in the world but it has really affected negatively the family system It has affected face to face connectedness like I am sitting in my room alone and children are playing with their phones in their own rooms why cannot we have some good time together we can have some conversation about ourselves".

Participant six said: " Generation gap does affect our lives but it differs Individually like if there is a gap between children and parents about their views and parents and children are not ready to adjust these reasons can cause some serious problems to people"

"Yes generation gap could be a reason to feel isolated but I feel it is person specific because if you have a routine and your busy with your routine you will not feel that much alone but if you are free and waiting for children and see that unable to give you that time yes you will probably feel isolated because of it".

"I feel if someone is so emotional and sensitive about their relationships and how people treat them then they can feel doubtet of themselves and then generational gap can affect their self image negatively but for a strong person and mature person I don't think it should be big problem".

Conclusion

The generational divide also emphasizes the necessity of intergenerational cooperation and communication. Both older folks and younger people must work to close this gap. A more harmonious society where varied viewpoints are acknowledged and integrated might result from appreciating and recognizing the strengths of each generation. Intergenerational encounters can help transfer knowledge and skills, lowering the chance that important insights would be lost over time. The relevance of older individuals must be fully recognized in order for society to close the generational gap. This requires giving priority to programs that foster meaningful intergenerational relationships. Programs for education, community activities, and mentorship opportunities can offer venues for exchanging experiences and learning together. A culture of respect and inclusivity that spans generations can also promote open communication and a better understanding of one another's viewpoints.

To sum up all, because of their knowledge, wisdom, and contributions, older people play a crucial role in society. Communities are enriched by their presence, which also benefits society as a whole. The cumulative wisdom of older adults must continue to influence a lively and progressive society, so it is imperative to recognize and bridge the generational gap. We may achieve peaceful intergenerational cohabitation that benefits all generations by building intergenerational relationships and fostering mutual understanding.

Limitations
- The time was too short.
- Number of participants were not enough to generalized this research
- People were reluctant to share their feelings

Suggestions
- For future research, the number of participants should be large enough, so that it could generalize the results.
- In the future, this piece of research will add young adults to get a broader and detailed perspective.
- Should include participants from other cities, areas, provinces.

Implications
- This study will help to understand the psycho-social problems in older adults.
- It will help to move towards the solutions.
- It will work as a bridge towards a positive society for coming generations.

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