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Psychological Resources as Predictors of Health Promoting Behaviours among Elderly

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Abstract: The present study aimed to examine the relationship between psychological resources and health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals. A correlational research design was employed. The study comprised 300 elderly individuals aged 60 years and above residing in urban areas of Punjab, India. Participants selected based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and individuals with chronic diseases were excluded. Data collected using standardized questionnaires assessing health promoting behaviours, and psychological resources (self-efficacy, optimism, and sense of coherence). Correlation and stepwise multiple regression analyses employed to examine the relationships and predictive contributions of the selected variables. The findings revealed positive relationships between psychological resources and the dimensions of health promoting behaviours. Stepwise multiple regression analysis indicated that psychological resources collectively explained 35.4% of the variance in health promoting behaviours. Optimism emerged as the strongest predictor (β = .345), followed by self-efficacy (β = .240) and sense of coherence (β = .153). The findings highlight the importance of psychological resources in understanding health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals. The study suggests that strengthening positive psychological characteristics may be beneficial for encouraging healthier lifestyle practices and promoting overall well-being during old age.

Keywords: *Health Promoting Behaviours, Psychological Resources, Self-Efficacy, Optimism, Sense of Coherence, Elderly.*

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1. Introduction

India is experiencing a significant demographic transition, with a steady increase in its elderly population due to improved life expectancy and declining fertility rates. In India, individuals aged 60 years and above generally considered elderly. According to the India Ageing Report 2023, approximately 149 million people, representing 10.5% of India's total population, were aged 60 years and above in 2022. This proportion projected to rise to 20.8% by 2050, reaching nearly 347 million elderly individuals (UNFPA & IIPS, 2023). This rapid growth presents several challenges related to physical health, psychological well-being, financial security, and social support. Elderly individuals are particularly vulnerable to age-related health problems, social isolation, and reduced independence. Consequently, promoting healthy lifestyles, psychological well-being, and active ageing has become increasingly important. Understanding the factors associated with health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals is therefore essential for improving their quality of life and overall well-being.

Health promoting behaviours refer to the actions and lifestyle practices individuals adopt to maintain, improve, and enhance their physical, psychological, and social well-being. According to Walker et al. (1987), health promoting behaviours involve a multidimensional pattern of activities directed towards improving health, personal fulfilment, and overall well-being. These behaviours extend beyond disease prevention and emphasize the development of healthy lifestyle habits that contribute to long-term health and quality of life. Health promoting behaviours include six major dimensions: health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, and stress management (Walker & Hill-Polerecky, 1996). Engaging in these behaviours is particularly important among elderly individuals, as advancing age may bring changes in physical functioning, psychological well-being, and social relationships. The World Health Organization (2015) emphasized the importance of maintaining functional ability and well-being throughout older adulthood. Adopting health promoting behaviours may help older adults maintain independence, support psychological well-being, and improve their overall quality of life. Therefore, understanding the psychological and behavioural factors associated with health promoting behaviours is essential for encouraging healthy and active ageing among elderly individuals.

Psychological Resources (Self-Efficacy, Optimism, and Sense of Coherence)

Psychological resources refer to positive psychological characteristics and personal strengths that help individuals cope with life challenges, manage stressful situations, and maintain their overall well-being. These resources play an important role in influencing

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individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, particularly those associated with maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Among various psychological resources, self-efficacy, optimism, and sense of coherence are considered important factors associated with health promoting behaviours and psychological well-being, especially among elderly individuals.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks, overcome difficulties, and achieve desired outcomes. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy influences how individuals think, feel, motivate themselves, and respond to challenging situations. Individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate confidence, persistence, and motivation when adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyle behaviours. Bandura (2004) further emphasized that self-efficacy plays a central role in health behaviour change by influencing individual's intentions, efforts, and ability to maintain behavioural changes. Among elderly individuals, stronger self-efficacy may encourage regular physical activity, healthy dietary practices, effective stress management, and greater responsibility for personal health. Therefore, self-efficacy is considered an important psychological resource associated with health promoting behaviours and healthy ageing.

Optimism

Optimism is a positive psychological characteristic that reflects an individual's general tendency to expect favourable outcomes in life. Scheier and Carver (1985) described dispositional optimism as generalized positive outcome expectancies that influence how individuals respond to challenges and stressful circumstances. Optimistic individuals tend to maintain a positive outlook, adopt constructive coping strategies, and demonstrate greater persistence when facing difficulties. Rasmussen et al. (2009) reported that optimism was positively associated with physical health outcomes, highlighting its relevance to overall well-being. During old age, optimism may help individuals cope with age-related changes, maintain emotional stability, and remain motivated to engage in health promoting activities. Thus, optimism may serve as an important psychological resource that supports adaptive coping, healthy lifestyle practices, and psychological well-being among elderly individuals.

Sense of Coherence

Sense of coherence is a psychological orientation introduced by Antonovsky (1987), which reflects the extent to which individuals perceive life as understandable, manageable, and meaningful. It consists of three major components: comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility refers to perceiving life experiences as structured and

understandable; manageability reflects the belief that sufficient resources are available to deal with challenges, and meaningfulness represents the extent to which life demands are considered worthy of effort and engagement. Eriksson and Lindström (2006) reported that a stronger sense of coherence was associated with better perceived health, particularly psychological well-being. Among elderly individuals, a strong sense of coherence may help them adjust to age-related transitions, manage stressful experiences, and maintain a positive attitude towards health. Consequently, sense of coherence may contribute to healthier lifestyle practices, psychological adjustment, and overall well-being in later life.

2. Review of Literature

Relationship of health promoting behaviours with psychological resources among elderly individuals

Self-efficacy and Health promoting behaviours

Previous research has highlighted a positive relationship between self-efficacy and health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals. Giena et al. (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 333 older adults with hypertension in Indonesia and found that self-efficacy was a significant positive predictor of health promoting behaviours ($\beta = 0.321$, $p < .001$). The study further revealed that self-efficacy, along with education, health knowledge, perceived barriers, social support, and situational influences, explained 36.9% of the variance in health promoting behaviours.

Similarly, Changizi et al. (2022) examined 382 elderly individuals in Iran and reported a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and health promoting lifestyle behaviours ($r = .246$, $p < .001$). Their findings indicated that elderly individuals with greater confidence in their ability to manage health related activities were more likely to report healthier lifestyle practices. These findings suggest that self-efficacy is an important psychological resource associated with the adoption and maintenance of health promoting behaviours during old age.

Optimism and Health promoting behaviours

Existing literature suggests that optimism is positively associated with healthy lifestyle practices and health-related behaviours among older adults. Steptoe et al. (2006) investigated 128 community-dwelling individuals aged 65–80 years and found that higher dispositional optimism was associated with favourable health behaviours, including nonsmoking, brisk walking, and greater participation in physical activities. Their findings

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also demonstrated that health behaviours partially accounted for the relationship between optimism and healthy ageing.

In the same way, Giltay et al. (2007), in the Zutphen Elderly Study involving 773 older men in the Netherlands, reported that higher optimism was significantly associated with greater physical activity, nonsmoking, and healthier dietary habits, including increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain bread. These findings indicate that optimistic elderly individuals may be more inclined to engage in positive health practices and maintain healthier lifestyles. Therefore, optimism may represent an important psychological resource associated with health promoting behaviours and overall well-being in later life.

Sense of coherence and Health promoting behaviours

Research has demonstrated that sense of coherence is an important psychological resource associated with health promoting behaviours and healthy ageing. Chang et al. (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 452 community-dwelling older adults living in empty-nest households in China to investigate the relationships among social capital, sense of coherence, and health promoting lifestyles. Their findings revealed that sense of coherence significantly mediated the relationship between social capital and health promoting lifestyle ($\beta = 0.367$, 95% CI [0.246, 0.509]), accounting for 52.7% of the total effect.

Additionally, Koelen and Eriksson (2022), in their review of salutogenic ageing, emphasized the importance of sense of coherence and community resources in supporting psychological well-being, healthy ageing, and quality of life among older adults. These findings suggest that elderly individuals with a stronger sense of coherence may be better equipped to manage age-related challenges and engage in behaviours that support their health. Thus, sense of coherence represents a potentially important psychological resource associated with the maintenance of health promoting behaviours in later life.

3. Objectives of the study

- **i.** To assess the relationship between psychological resources (self-efficacy, optimism, sense of coherence) and health promoting behaviours.
- **ii.** To assess the role of psychological resources in predicting health promoting behaviours.

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4. Hypotheses of the study

H1. There will be a positive relationship between following psychological resources and dimensions of health promoting behaviours (Health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships and stress management).

H1a. Self-efficacy and dimensions of health promoting behaviours.

H1b. Optimism and dimensions of health promoting behaviours.

H1c. Sense of coherence and dimensions of health promoting behaviours.

H2. There will be a positive contribution of psychological resources in predicting health promoting behaviours.

5. Method

5.1 *Research Design and Participants*

The present study adopted a quantitative, correlational research design to examine the relationships among health promoting behaviours, and psychological resources among elderly individuals. The sample consisted of 300 elderly individuals (170 male and 130 female) aged 60 years and above residing in urban areas of Punjab, India. Participant selected based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and individuals with chronic diseases excluded from the study. A correlational research design considered appropriate to investigate the nature and strength of relationships among the selected variables without manipulating them. Health promoting behaviours considered the dependent variable, while psychological resources namely self-efficacy, optimism, and sense of coherence are predictor variables. Data collected using standardized questionnaires after obtaining written informed consent from the participants. Socio-demographic information, including age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status also collected. Socioeconomic status assessed using the modified kuppuswamy socioeconomic status scale. As the study was non-experimental, it aimed to identify associations and predictive relationships rather than establish causal relationships.

5.2 *Tools used in the study*

1. Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile II (Walker et al., 1995) consists of 52 items assessing six dimensions of health promoting behaviours and using a 4-point Likert scale. The overall scale has demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.94.

2. Self-Efficacy Scale: The scale assesses individual's confidence in their ability to manage challenges, perform tasks, and achieve desired outcomes. It has 10 items and using a 4-point Likert scale. The Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) has reported Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.76 to 0.90.

3. Optimism Scale: It was developed by Pedrosa et al. (2015) and the scale measures individual's general expectations of positive outcomes and their optimistic outlook towards life. It has 9 items and each item scored on a 5-point Likert scale. It has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.78.

4. Sense of Coherence Scale: The scale, developed by Antonovsky (1987), assesses three dimensions: comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. The 29-item sense of coherence scale has reported Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.92 (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005).

5. Modified Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Status Scale: The scale assesses socioeconomic status based on education, occupation, and monthly family income.

6. Results

Table 1. *Showing the Correlation between Psychological resources (Self-efficacy, Optimism and Sense of coherence) and the dimensions of Health promoting behaviours [N=300]*

Correlation Matrix										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Self-efficacy	—									
Optimism	0.49**	—								
Sense of coherence	0.34**	0.46**	—							
Health responsibility	0.31**	0.32**	0.20**	—						
Physical activity	0.28**	0.27**	0.18**	0.54**	—					
Nutrition	0.28**	0.30**	0.12*	0.42**	0.50**	—				
Spiritual growth	0.44**	0.58**	0.50**	0.42**	0.29**	0.27**	—			
Interpersonal relationships	0.42**	0.50**	0.47**	0.38**	0.23**	0.29**	0.66**	—		
Stress management	0.28**	0.35**	0.27**	0.47**	0.62**	0.45**	0.53**	0.36**	—	
Health promoting behaviours	0.46**	0.53**	0.39**	0.77**	0.75**	0.66**	0.72**	0.66**	0.78**	—
Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, **										

Self-efficacy significantly correlated with all dimensions [health responsibility (r =0.31, p < 0.01), physical activity (r =0.28, p < 0.01), nutrition (r =0.28, p < 0.01), spiritual growth (r =0.44, p < 0.01), interpersonal relationships (r =0.42, p < 0.01) and stress management (r =0.28, p < 0.01)] of health promoting behaviours, as well as the composite score of health promoting behaviours (r =0.46, p < 0.01).

Optimism was also significantly correlated with all dimensions [health responsibility (r =0.32, p < 0.01), physical activity (r =0.27, p < 0.01), nutrition (r =0.30, p < 0.01), spiritual growth (r =0.58, p < 0.01), interpersonal relationships (r =0.50, p < 0.01) and stress management (r =0.35, p < 0.01)] of health promoting behaviours as well as the total score of health promoting behaviours (r =0.53, p < 0.01).

Sense of coherence positively correlated with all dimensions [health responsibility (r =0.20, p < 0.01) , physical activity (r =0.18, p < 0.01), nutrition (r =0.12, p < 0.05), spiritual growth (r =0.50, p < 0.01), interpersonal relationships (r =0.47, p <0.01), and stress management (r =0.27, p < 0.01)] of health promoting behaviours and it has a significant positive correlation with the total health promoting behaviours (r =0.39, p < 0.01).

Table 2. *Model summary of stepwise multiple regression analysis of different predictors (Self-efficacy, Optimism, Sense of coherence) in Health promoting behaviours.*

Models		B	95%CI[LL, UL]	β	R^2	ΔR^2
1	**(Constant)**	67.74**	[53.28, 82.21]			
	Optimism	2.06**	[1.69, 2.44]	.532	.283	-
2	**(Constant)**	46.46**	[30.11, 62.82]			
	Optimism	1.56**	[1.15, 1.97]	.403		
	Self-efficacy	1.20**	[0.71, 1.68]	.265	.336	.054
3	**(Constant)**	41.69**	[25.20, 58.18]			
	Optimism	1.34**	[0.90,1.77]	.345		
	Self-efficacy	1.09**	[0.607, 1.57]	.240		
	Sense of coherence	0.114**	[0.036, .193]	.153	.354	.018
a. Dependent Variable: Health promoting behaviours						

*** p < .05, ** p < .01, ****

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive contributions of optimism, self-efficacy, and sense of coherence to health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals. In Model 1, optimism emerged as a significant positive predictor (β = .532, p < .01), explaining 28.3% of the variance in health promoting behaviours (R^2 = .283). In Model 2, the inclusion of self-efficacy increased the explained variance to 33.6% (R^2 = .336, ΔR^2 = .054), with self-efficacy showing a significant positive contribution (β = .265, p < .01). In Model 3, the addition of sense of coherence further increased the explained variance to 35.4% (R^2 = .354, ΔR^2 = .018), with a significant positive contribution (β = .153, p < .01). In the final model, optimism (β = .345) remained the strongest predictor, followed by self-efficacy (β = .240) and sense of coherence (β = .153).

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Overall, the findings indicate that all three psychological resources were positively associated with health promoting behaviours, collectively explaining 35.4% of their variance among elderly individuals.

7. Discussion

H1. Relationship between Psychological resources and dimensions of Health promoting behaviours.

The findings of the present study supported H1, indicating positive relationships between psychological resources (self-efficacy, optimism, and sense of coherence) and the dimensions of health promoting behaviours, including health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, and stress management. These findings suggest that positive psychological resources are associated with healthier lifestyle practices among elderly individuals.

H1a. Self-efficacy and dimensions of Health promoting behaviours

The findings supported H1a, indicating a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the dimensions of health promoting behaviours. This suggests that elderly individuals with greater confidence in their abilities are more likely to engage in healthy lifestyle practices. These findings are consistent with Giena et al. (2018), who identified self-efficacy as a significant predictor of health promoting behaviours among older adults. Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) reported positive associations between self-efficacy and various dimensions of health promoting behaviours among middle-aged and elderly individuals. Bandura (2004) also emphasized that self-efficacy plays an important role in initiating and maintaining health related behaviours. Thus, the present findings highlight the importance of self-efficacy in promoting healthy lifestyles among elderly individuals.

H1b. Optimism and dimensions of Health promoting behaviours

The findings supported H1b, demonstrating a positive relationship between optimism and the dimensions of health promoting behaviours. This indicates that elderly individuals with positive expectations about life tend to report greater engagement in health promoting activities. These findings are consistent with Steptoe et al. (2006), who found that optimism was associated with healthier behaviours, including physical activity, among older adults. Similarly, Giltay et al. (2007) reported that higher optimism was associated with increased physical activity and healthier dietary practices among elderly men. The present findings therefore suggest that optimism may serve as an important psychological resource associated with the maintenance of healthy lifestyle behaviours during old age.

H1c. Sense of coherence and dimensions of Health promoting behaviours

The findings supported H1c, revealing a positive relationship between sense of coherence and the dimensions of health promoting behaviours. This suggests that elderly individuals who perceive their lives as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful are more likely to adopt positive health practices. These findings are consistent with Chang et al. (2023), who demonstrated the important role of sense of coherence in health promoting lifestyles among older adults. Similarly, Eriksson and Lindström (2006) reported that a stronger sense of coherence was associated with better perceived health and psychological well-being. Thus, the present findings highlight the relevance of sense of coherence in supporting healthy lifestyle practices and well-being among elderly individuals.

H2. Contribution of Psychological resources in predicting Health promoting behaviours

The findings supported H2, indicating that psychological resources positively predicted health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that optimism emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .532$), explaining 28.3% of the variance in health promoting behaviours. The addition of self-efficacy increased the explained variance to 33.6%, while the inclusion of sense of coherence further increased it to 35.4%. In the final model, optimism ($\beta = .345$) remained the strongest predictor, followed by self-efficacy ($\beta = .240$) and sense of coherence ($\beta = .153$). These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of psychological resources in health related behaviours (Bandura, 2004; Giena et al., 2018; Steptoe et al., 2006; Chang et al., 2023). Overall, the findings suggest that optimism, self-efficacy, and sense of coherence are important psychological factors associated with health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals.

8. Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study have important implications for understanding and promoting healthy ageing among elderly individuals. The positive relationships between psychological resources (self-efficacy, optimism, and sense of coherence) and health promoting behaviours highlight the importance of psychological well-being in maintaining a healthy lifestyle during old age. The findings suggest that elderly individuals with greater confidence in their abilities, positive expectations towards life, and a stronger sense of coherence tend to engage more frequently in health promoting activities. These findings may help healthcare professionals, psychologists, counsellors, and community health workers develop programmes that focus on strengthening psychological resources among older adults.

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Interventions involving confidence-building activities, positive thinking, stress management, and meaningful social engagement may encourage elderly individuals to adopt healthier lifestyle practices. Furthermore, the findings may assist policymakers and healthcare organisations in developing community-based health promotion programmes that address both the physical and psychological needs of the elderly population. The study also provides a foundation for future research examining psychological resources and behavioural determinants of healthy ageing, particularly among elderly individuals in the Indian context.

9. Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the relationships between psychological resources and health promoting behaviours among elderly individuals residing in urban areas of Punjab. The findings revealed positive relationships between psychological resources, including self-efficacy, optimism, and sense of coherence, and the dimensions of health promoting behaviours, namely health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, and stress management. Furthermore, hierarchical multiple regression analysis demonstrated that psychological resources collectively explained 35.4% of the variance in health promoting behaviours, with optimism emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by self-efficacy and sense of coherence. These findings highlight the importance of psychological resources in understanding healthy lifestyle practices among elderly individuals. The study suggests that strengthening positive psychological characteristics may be beneficial for encouraging healthier behaviours and improving overall well-being during old age. However, as the study adopted a non-experimental, correlational research design, causal relationships cannot be established. Overall, the findings contribute to the existing literature on healthy ageing and emphasize the relevance of psychological factors in promoting health, independence, and quality of life among elderly individuals.

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