

## Aging Enjoyment: A Grounded Theory Study

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The aim of this study was to investigate the factors contributing to enjoyment in old age.

**Method:** To this end, this research used a qualitative exploratory research design known as grounded-theory research. Seventeen elderly participants (aged 65-85 years), comprising 11 men and 6 women, were selected using purposive sampling. A semi-structured interview was used as the data collection instrument. The method proposed by Corbin and Strauss was employed to design the interview questions. In this study, data analysis was interpretive using phenomenological analysis, which was done through open, axial, and selective coding.

**Results:** The results indicated that the new emergent construct – ageing enjoyment – consisted of five categories and 19 subcategories. These categories include present moment awareness, liberating past, psychosocial safety, ultimate purpose for being, and self-peace. Subcategories include: Vitality, Family solidarity and intimacy, Occupational Adequacy, Economic wisdom, Social Acceptability, Healthy society, Talent flourish, productive experiences, Physical well-being, Willingness to develop, Mindfulness, satisfaction, Moralization, Adaptability, Benevolence, Acceptance, Desire to live, Meaningfulness, Religiosity.

**Conclusion:** These categories suggest that present moment awareness, liberating past, as well as having psychosocial safety help the elderly experience ageing enjoyment. Hence, they are likely to reach self-peace through an ultimate purpose for being as they deal with challenging life issues. Practical implications of the findings are further discussed.

**Key words:** *Aging; Enjoyment; Psychosocial Support; Awareness; Qualitative Research*

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In the last decades, increased life expectancy and decreased fertility rates have resulted in aging in global population (1). This pattern of demographic change will continue among most countries around the world during next decades (2) and the management of this old population will be a priority for health and social welfare policy makers. Based on a report by the United Nations Population Division, Iran is the second country with the highest percentage point increase in population 60+, from 2015 to 2050. According to this estimation, 31% of Iranian population will be 60 years old and over by 2050 (3).

As most societies have experienced an increase in mean ages and proportions of old citizens in the last few decades, programs that promote caring for the elderly are becoming increasingly important. Given the importance of this issue, professions like geriatric/geriatric medicine (GM) have emerged (4). In addition to promoting health and managing complex medical, cognitive, social, and psychological issues that older people may face, this group of specialists also plays a crucial role in promoting social inclusion for older people (5). The geriatricians believe that ageing is a new period of growth since some psychological phenomena emerge in this period, which warrants a course of action and comprehensive investigations. In addition, a literature review suggests a change in approach due to positive psychology. Positive psychology focuses on elderly capacities for maximum efficiency rather than pathology; it aims to authorize individuals to develop their capacities and improve their well-being (6). Research on age perception and mental patterns has shown that well-being and a positive attitude towards old age are important supportive factors against the inhibiting effects of ageing (7, 8). According to Hill, through learning new rehabilitative strategies, the elderly can modify the degree of their positive acceptance and adjust their expectations (9). Thus, the term “positive ageing” is used to describe the process of 1) maintaining a positive attitude, 2) having a good feeling about oneself, and 3) being healthy and fully involved in life as one ages.

On the other hand, concepts such as successful ageing and active ageing have been developed to explain why some people in old age are healthy, happy, satisfied, and adaptable to different conditions while others are not (10, 11). These concepts also identify the mechanisms leading to these differences. Successful ageing is one of the new concepts in the study of the elderly concerning their well-being in their transition to young ageing.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the implementation of successful ageing policies not only makes people live longer but also improves their health and quality of life. In principle, successful ageing and active ageing are the two main constructs in the field of geriatric research and policy and, to a lesser extent, include concepts such as positive

ageing, productive ageing, healthy ageing, and gerotranscendence (12).

Given positive psychology and the view that ageing satisfaction is a manipulable phenomenon, it seems that as age increases, a new interpretation of a better life can emerge in the lives of the elderly (13). Results of a survey study of 1400 Australian citizens aged 55 to 74 demonstrated that they recognized many aspects of positive ageing, including having more freedom and time, being able to do what they want, enjoying experiences, and gaining wisdom and knowledge.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Seligman believes that although the elderly faces many inevitable problems, life experiences can serve as a powerful supportive coverage against hardships and protect the person from undergoing negative experiences and various diseases (14). On the other hand, Seligman and Csikszentmihaly hold that focusing on strength, power, and important human virtues at any age could change the nature of unique human capabilities and provide a new definition for intellectuals (6).

In addition to a wide array of theories and research studies on ageing, the positive aspects of ageing have received increasing attention in the last decade. This has led to the advent of new constructs such as positive, successful, healthy, active, productive, and transcendent ageing. However, by examining various dimensions of these constructs and the related theories – such as self-actualization, Erickson’s sense of coherence, happiness and hedonism (15), ageing satisfaction and wisdom– it becomes obvious that this subject has remained understudied. In fact, few theorists have focused on potential factors contributing to enjoyment in old age. Informed by positive psychology, the present study’s basic assumption is that enjoyment in old age could comprise a specific combination of elements that exist in successful, positive, active, productive, and transcendent ageing. Thus, the present study aimed to investigate the elderly’s lived experiences of enjoyment in old age and address the above assumption. The potential findings of the study could contribute to the general understating of the final stage of the human life cycle.

## Materials and Methods

This grounded-theory research study followed a qualitative exploratory research design. The study population included all elderly individuals in the city of Tabriz who had experienced pleasant ageing based on their lived experiences. The research sample included 17 educated elderly people (aged 65-82 years; mean age = 69.64 years), consisting of 11 males and six females (Table 1). The sample was homogeneous, and the data saturation method was used to estimate the sample size. The sampling method was purposeful sampling, as proposed by LeCompte and Preissle (16), in which ageing enjoyment was the criterion for the selection of the subjects; data collection was not possible without lived experiences of ageing enjoyment.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Elderly Participants to Investigate the Factors Contributing to Enjoyment in Old Age**

Interviewed Participants	Gender	Age (Years)	Marital Status	Educational Status	Occupational Status	Job
1	Male	65	Married	PhD	Employed	Civil Engineer
2	Male	70	Married	MA	Employed	Instructor
3	Male	65	Married	BA	Employed	Master sculptor
4	Female	73	Married	MA	Retired	Manager
5	Male	65	Married	Diploma	Employed	Musician
6	Male	65	Married	Diploma	Employed	Musician
7	Male	66	Widowed	BA	Employed	Musician
8	Male	82	Widowed	Grade 6	Employed	Businessman
9	Male	71	Married	PhD	Employed	professor
10	Male	65	Married	PhD	Employed	professor
11	Male	76	Married	BA	Retired	Engineer
12	Female	65	Married	BA	Retired	Teacher
13	Female	71	Widowed	Grade 6	Employed	Founder of Charity
14	Male	73	Married	MA	Retired	Military
15	Female	80	Married	AA	Retired	Teacher
16	Female	65	Married	BA	Employed	Employee
17	Female	67	Widowed	Diploma	Employed	Housewife

The data collection procedure in this study was a semi-structured interview that was conducted face-to-face by the researcher. The main point of these interviews was to collect data regarding the lived experiences of the participants. The method proposed by Corbin and Strauss<sup>22</sup> was employed to design the interview questions. These questions were as follows:

- 1) What do you think ageing enjoyment means? (Description of the subject)
- 2) In general, what conditions are necessary to create the experience of ageing enjoyment? (The context of the subject)
- 3) What factors enhance ageing enjoyment in the elderly? (Effects)
- 4) In your opinion, what factors prevent the experience of ageing enjoyment in the elderly? (Effects)
- 5) In your opinion, what are the consequences of having this type of enjoyment at old age? (Consequences of the subject)

All interviews were done by a trained psychologist based on a predefined protocol. At the beginning of the interview session, which usually took place at the interviewee's workplace or home, the same questions were asked of the interviewed participants. These questions included getting acquainted, assuring the confidentiality of information, obtaining their informed consent about recording the statements, the five questions noted above, and a series of supplementary questions appropriate for the participant's level of education and understanding of subjects. Interviews were audio-recorded, and after recording the

conversations, their content was carefully listened to and accurately translated from Turkish into Persian. Considering the type of data in this study being textual/contextual analysis, lived experience as a unit of analysis, and the process of representing descriptive/textual reports, textual/contextual data were analyzed in the form of observations, interviews, and oral reports, especially introspection and review. In this study, data analysis was interpretive using phenomenological analysis, which was done through open, axial, and selective coding. At the beginning of the data analysis, the texts were carefully examined and were segmented based on semantic units to perform open coding. Each semantic unit then became a concept or code. Therefore, a total of 100 concepts were found after reviewing the interview content for all participants. Simultaneously, the process of small unit placement in large units was continuously started, and concepts that had common semantic content were included under one category. For each category, a title containing the features of the whole set was selected. The categorization process continued along with sampling until each category was saturated. During the categorization process, 100 extracted concepts were included under 19 subcategories. The researchers tried to determine the role of each category and its relationship with other categories based on categories' dimensions and features, as well as the identification of the context, conditions, strategies, and consequences associated with this subject. This procedure was conducted in the form of both an inductive procedure to restructure the

subcategories and deductive procedures, such as frequent text revision and matching the categories with the raw data in order to test the validity and confirm the categories. Then, in accordance with the cues in the text

and the commonalities between the categories, the most relevant categories were incorporated in the main categories such that, ultimately, five major categories were developed (Table 2).

**Table 2. Main and Sub-Categories of the Structure of Ageing Enjoyment**

The Main Category	Subcategories	Concepts
Psychosocial Safety	Vitality	Having happy friends Trying to avoid sadness Optimism and positivity Humor and positive energy transfer
	Family solidarity and intimacy	Intimate family and marital relationship Prudent marriage Authority in parenting Having competent children Intimacy with children Family integration Safe emotional environment
	Occupational Adequacy	Job eagerness Professional responsibility Pragmatism and diligence Application of knowledge and experience Self-reliance Feeling of self-efficacy
	Economic wisdom	Economic management Financial security Lack of materialism Perception of one's properties
	Social Acceptability	To be respected Trust and social popularity To enjoy socializing The peace of honesty Efficient social relationships
Liberating past	Healthy society	Facilitating living conditions Promoting art and culture Improving morality Efficient education system Appropriate macro-policies Appropriate social attitudes about ageing
	Talent flourish	Innate talent Talent training Parental and teacher support Having excellent parents Influential childhood experiences Modeling of great masters Social class and date and place of birth Distinct mode of thinking and character from the majority

	productive experiences	Having a useful life Pleasant memories from youth Previous positive experiences
	Physical well-being	Physical and mental health care Self-control in need satisfaction Exercise and physical awareness Healthy diet No severe weakness or illness
Present Moment Awareness	Willingness to develop	Willingness to develop and progress Acquisition and knowledge transfer New learning Extensive interests The pleasure of expanding the boundaries of science and art
	Mindfulness	Living here and now Experience tranquility and minimal stress Tranquility and peak experiences Having no need of sth and open mindedness Getting a deeper understanding/ Deepening understanding insight to seek and to enjoy the unknown
	satisfaction	Contentment No regret and no concern Wish fulfillment Self-acceptance Satisfaction with fulfilling one's life assignment
Ultimate Purpose for Being	Moralization	Honesty Conscientiousness The pursuit of rights and Justice Tolerance and Magnanimity
	Adaptability	Ability to adapt Multidimensional life Maturity flexibility Innovation
	Benevolence	Altruism Understanding/Regarding the suffering of others Consolation/Comforting others
Self-peace	Acceptance	Accepting failures Accepting ageing changes Rational thinking Problem-based coping Acceptance of death Endurance and resilience Patience

Desire to live	Hope Not feeling old and burnout Ability to enjoy Be active Endurance
Meaningfulness	Strong connection with nature Ontological The desire for immortality Making sense out of suffering To understand the power of suffering
Religiosity	Belief in superior power Trust/Reliance Thanksgiving Contentment/being thrifty To act according to GOD Strong relationship with GOD

The strategy of referring to the interviewees after exploring the categories was followed to validate the data. Based on the model proposed by Corbin and Strauss,<sup>22</sup> the main extracted categories of the subject by itself (main idea), context (activating conditions), contributing factors (facilitators and obstacles), causes (major developing factors), strategies (procedures dealing with a problem or a situation), and consequences (outcome of interaction in a given situation) were introduced (Figure 1). The credibility of the findings was ensured by simultaneously returning the concepts and

categories to three experts and each of the 17 interviewees to check the consistency of the findings. Conformability was examined by comparing the findings with the information obtained from the interviews. Dependability was checked by having other seniors review the results and having the researchers re-analyze the data. Concerning transferability, the different occupations and groups included in the sampling and research process were provided with a thorough explanation.

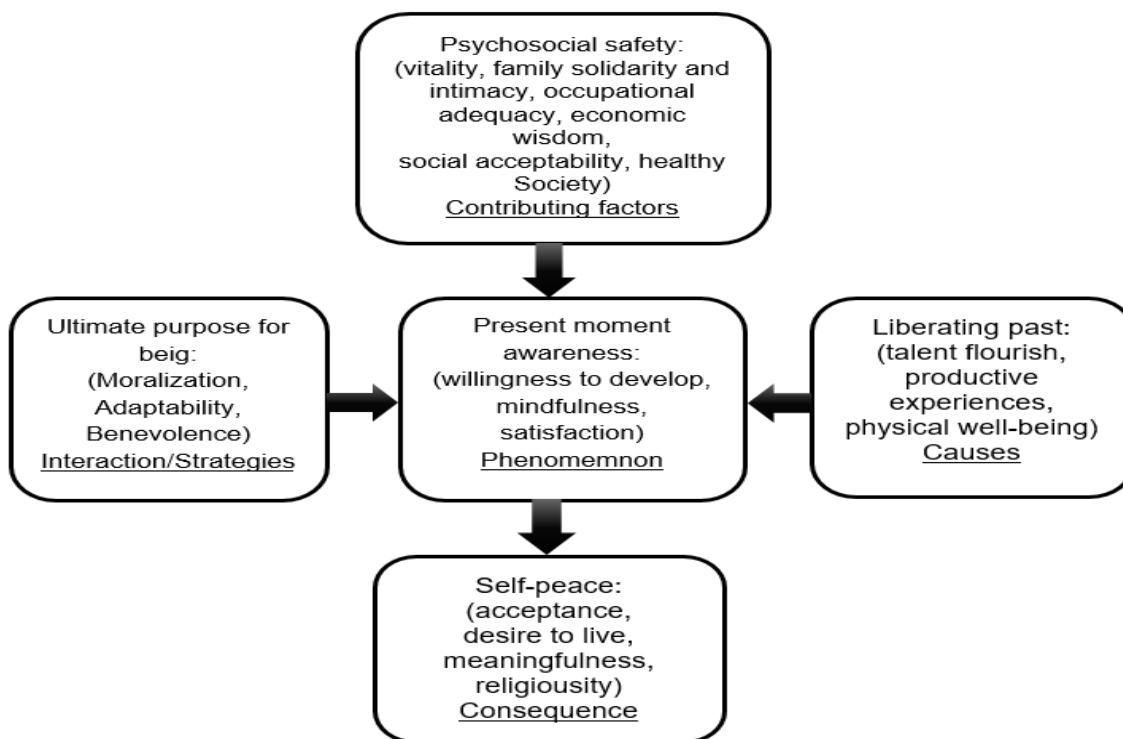


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Ageing Enjoyment

**Ethical considerations:**

This research was conducted in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, with the ethics ID IR.IAU.TABRIZ.REC.1399.060 in 02/09/2020 approved by the ethics committee.

**Results**

In this study, five main categories were extracted as follows: present moment awareness, liberating past, psychosocial safety, ultimate purpose for being, and self-peace (Table 2). These categories, subcategories, and examples from the interview context are described below.

**Present Moment Awareness**

Present moment awareness means living in the present; it has to do with understanding, experiencing the present moment, and being in a state of tranquility due to the satisfaction of one's performance with no special concerns that leads to calmness. Additionally, present moment awareness is related to changing and developing one's prior opinions, refusing to be a self-centered and narrow-minded person, gaining new insights, improving self-awareness, increasing one's knowledge, and acquiring a broader understanding of various issues. Its subcategories are mindfulness, satisfaction, and a desire to upgrade.

**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness has to do with being fully present, strengthening one's character, meeting the highest-level needs, being here and now, searching inside oneself, creating peak experiences, being open-minded, considering new ideas, and gaining insights into different aspects of life.

"I eat with certain tranquility and I enjoy it because I do it while engaging all my five senses and reviewing my previous experiences."  
(m, 56 years old)

"Everyday activities like walking with my granddaughter may seem unimportant, but they give me lots of motivation."  
(m, 56 years old)

**Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is about the pleasant feeling due to doing what is proposed that every human being should do in his/her lifespan (i.e., not having regrets or concerns rather having a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment of wishes).

"I've done whatever I could do and neglected no more."  
(f, 80 years old)

"I am not dissatisfied with my family and residence life, wealth and financial savings, and I have no concerns even about the period after my death."  
(m, 76 years old)

**Willingness to Develop**

Willingness to develop has to do with a desire for superiority, evolution, and excellence, extensive interests in various fields of science, art, society, culture, and spirituality, a tendency to learn new things, to acquire new knowledge and skills until the last years of life, and transference of knowledge.

"I even ask one of my students who regularly attends courses and workshops around the world about new science, technology and knowledge related to my field."  
(m, 56 years old)

"I am very interested in many arts, including painting, music, visual arts, literature and poetry. I study a lot in these fields."  
(m, 56 years old)

**Liberating Past**

Liberating past signifies living a happy life as a result of appropriate fulfilment of needs and successful talent actualization, having appropriate education and support of parents, gaining useful experiences and making efforts to maintain physical and mental health from a young age. The results of all the above-mentioned factors could be wonderfully observed, especially in the last years of life. Its subcategories are as follows: productive experiences, talent flourishing, and physical well-being.

**Productive Experiences**

Productive experiences have to do with a happy and healthy transition from childhood, play, curiosity, and experience in a safe and positive family environment, appropriate fulfilment of needs as one grows, and the maximization of happy and joyful memories.

"My life does not lead to nonsense and I have benefited from the efforts that I have made in my life."  
(f, 80 years old)

"I believe I have done and decided to do everything I could or to decide, and normal life conditions helped me to achieve desired goals."  
(f, 65 years old)

**Talent Flourishing**

Talent flourishing is associated with the actualization of innate potential as a result of coordination of parenting styles, as well as attention and support of parents and teachers and their coordination with individual talents from childhood. It also relates to the appropriateness of the individual's life context with his/her talents, recognition of individual differences, and having special family abilities and privileges.

"When I was a university student, I chose professors who could yield me higher productivity than I had before."  
(m, 70 years old)

"I believe that desired goals are not achieved only with the parents' efforts, training, and obligation.

Certainly, the child's own talent and acquisition should be observed and must be taken into consideration."(m, 65 years old)

### ***Physical Well-Being***

Physical wellness encompasses caring for physical and mental health from a young age through exercise, adhering to a healthy diet, avoiding neglect or excess in meeting needs, acquiring and maintaining positive habits, as well as appropriately treating illnesses and raising health awareness.

"By observing the slightest symptom of an illness, I immediately considered the relevant therapy in order to prevent the exacerbation of the illness." (f, 73 years old)

"I have always tried to eat fresh fruits, vegetables and proteins; I have no freezer; I avoid preservatives and do not eat ready-made meals and fast food." (f, 65 years old)

### ***Psychosocial Safety***

Psychological safety has to do with being assured of one's psychological comfort in individual, familial, and social contexts. One part of psychosocial safety depends on one's own efforts, including maintaining vitality, fostering family cohesion, establishing stability in occupational fields of interest, attaining financial independence, and gaining social prestige. The other part has to do with a kind of endowment, such as the opportunity to live in healthy social conditions. The subcategories of psychological safety are vitality, occupational adequacy, economic wisdom, family solidarity and intimacy, social acceptability, and a healthy society.

#### ***Vitality***

This subcategory has to do with trying to maintain one's sense of vitality and vivacity, being lively and joyful, keeping oneself away from sadness, joking, spending time with happy and positive friends, and being lenient and positive.

"I am powerful to impede the interference of negative thoughts and negative obsessions as well as their repetition." (m, 65 years old)

"If we try to be happy, it leads to happiness as well. Having empathetic and happy friends leads to the prevention of grief." (f, 73 years old)

#### ***Occupational Adequacy***

Occupational adequacy is related to assuming job responsibility, continuing a chosen career, showing perseverance and sustainability despite difficulties and obstacles, acquiring skills, relying on one's abilities, demonstrating dedication and seriousness in line with

one's goals, converting knowledge into work and practical skills, flourishing talents due to continuous working, and being successful in one's profession.

"I am able to assert that over the course of 50 years, the pleasure and satisfaction that I derived from my job has not been matched by any other sources." (m, 70 years old)

"I believe that I am able to do whatever I want." (f, 71 years old)

#### ***Economic Wisdom***

Economic wisdom pertains to being prudent about financial issues, valuing independence from materialism, having balance in wealth accumulation, having financial independence, being free from debts, and possessing the ability to manage one's money throughout life's ups and downs and life challenges.

"I have always tried to live with one-third of my income and save two-thirds, and thus never was I dependent on anyone." (f, 67 years old)

"Materialism hasn't been considered my main concern. Hence, I haven't been involved with materialistic issues." (m, 65 years old)

#### ***Family Solidarity and Intimacy***

This aspect relates to the experience of having loving and intimate interpersonal relationships, an emotionally secure environment, safe attachments, appropriate boundaries, receiving parents' encouragement and love, observing sincere relationships between parents, experiencing marriage satisfaction, experiencing family relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect, having competent and successful children, existing sincere relationships between parents and children, and looking for pleasure in the family.

"I had parents who were tenderhearted and compassionate. Their love was from the bottom of the heart and sincere. Seemingly, they had endless love." (m, 65 years old)

"The existence of my life partner neutralizes the meaning of sadness, and thus far, there has been no record of separation between us." (f, 80 years old)

#### ***Social Acceptability***

Social acceptability relates to popularity, good reputation, social prestige, respect due to courteous behavior, the pleasure of socializing in order to achieve motivation, vitality, and gaining experience from others. It also pertains to the ability to use an effective communicative competence with others, children, and people with various social statuses, being trustworthy due to honesty, sincerity, and punctuality, as well as



being sensitive in social relationships and keeping away from hooligans.

“Being dignified by others is regarded as pride and success for me.” (m, 73 years old)

“Mutual respect inside the family leads to great satisfaction. Although I’m not considered a wealthy person, I am really trusted by businessmen due to sensitivity in paying back my debts.” (m, 82 years old)

### **Healthy Society**

Healthy society pertains to experiences of and opportunities for living in a society with acceptable living norms, a society that has economic, social, and cultural distinctive features. It also includes appropriate policy-making and macro-planning in all areas, especially in order to support ageing people’s rights and improve their welfare and quality of life, and the maximum usage of their capabilities, as well as the existence of accurate public attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and perceptions about the potentialities and capabilities of old age. In addition, this aspect relates to understanding the importance and recognizing the precise position of the country’s education system in terms of developing the personalities, talents, and capabilities of young generations.

“Nowadays, the preparation of the cheapest living place and vehicle has become a dream for young people.” (f, 65 years old)

“The observation of immoralities in the society, ignoring poor people, and hypocrisy annoy me.” (f, 71 years old)

“In a restricted society, due to not considering art, music, and lack of opportunities for some other issues, development is blocked.” (m, 65 years old)

### **Ultimate Purpose for Being**

Ultimate purpose for being is associated with the ability to solve the most complicated problems in life and make the least behavioral mistakes owing to one’s flexibility, foresight, and adherence to moral values. It also relates to having personal rules and principles, considering other peoples’ rights, having compassion, and making constant efforts to develop well-behaved personality traits. Its subcategories include adaptability, moralization, and benevolence.

### **Adaptability**

Adaptability signifies the ability to find the right solution to predicaments, the ability to reform one’s approach, and flexibility in unexpected life circumstances. It also has to do with dealing with problems in an innovative way instead of withdrawing and having lenience, tolerance, maturity, and avoidance of dichotomy in life.

“Never give in difficulties, rather one should change his/her attitudes.” (f, 73 years old)

“As we get older, we become better listeners. Thus, our attitudes about issues get moderated, and they lead to the emancipation of some pleasures at old age.” (m, 65 years old)

### **Moralization**

Moralization pertains to adherence to moral principles as well as familial, occupational, social, and humanistic obligations; it also relates to law observance, fairness, and conscientiousness, justice and fighting against oppression, as well as avoiding hypocrisy and deception.

“I dare to defend and protect the rights and principles I believe in, even if it leads to severance or rejection. Hence, most people ask me for help, judgment and dispute resolution, since I do not support oppression and tyranny.” (f, 71 years old)

“I have never lied, even to my youngest child.” (m, 82 years old)

### **Benevolence**

Benevolence is associated with support for humanity, altruism, beneficence, and empathy; it’s about behaving nicely toward human beings, having magnanimity, forgiveness, lenience, and humility, as well as avoiding resentment and jealousy.

“I have always understood and helped others; I was extremely annoyed with their sufferings and I have informed others about deprived, poor, and oppressed people.” (m, 65 years old)

“When I come across people who are seeking food in the city waste bins, I become extremely upset and regretful.” (m, 65 years old)

### **Self-peace**

Self-peace is related to satisfaction and contentment with one’s performance throughout life. It encompasses self-acceptance, the absence of inner conflict, readiness for dealing with forthcoming challenges, relaxation and tranquility, connecting oneself with the real world, giving affirmative responses to life, and not having feelings of emptiness and disappointment. Its subcategories are acceptance, the desire to live, meaningfulness, and religiosity.

### **Acceptance**

Acceptance is a characteristic tied to the ability to be realistic when dealing with problems, acceptance of limitations and failures. It has to do with accepting physical ageing, mood and cognitive changes, and the reality of death. Additionally, acceptance is related to

applying problem-based instead of emotion-based approaches in crises, adopting rational approaches and the absence of self-deception and denial. Acceptance also includes stability, patience, endurance, and resilience and, consequently, taking responsibility for one's problems. Additionally, it encompasses the implementation of all potentialities and available solutions as well as sustaining one's motivation and mood.

"In my opinion, it's an erroneous idea to dye hair when it turns gray, since it is a kind of self-deception."  
(m, 65 years old)

"Failures and frustrations are considered as just part of life, even death; but I must go on."  
(f, 73 years old)

### ***Desire to Live***

This aspect has to do with the desire and willingness to live exuberantly, to experience life as a unique and enjoyable phenomenon, to enjoy and consider different life experiences, to get involved with new experiences even at an old age, and to have an inner desire and interest in activities. It also relates to experiencing no depression, feeling young despite old age, vitality, no feeling of tiresome, desire to be active, never giving in, being optimistic about the future, and being determined that difficulties are temporary.

"Ageing and physical appearance changes are only noticeable when looking in the mirror; otherwise, never do I feel ageing."  
(m, 65 years old)

"There is no benefit in retirement for me; retirement is meaningless for me when I am able to work; I have resisted retirement so far."  
(f, 65 years old)

### ***Meaningfulness***

Meaningfulness relates to alleviating suffering due to the emancipation of its meaning and understanding its concealed power. It involves believing in the certain consequences of one's endeavors, embracing kindness, being connected with the real world and philosophy of life, looking for the purpose of life, and understanding the principals of life. Meaningfulness also pertains to having a deep interest in nature, having a desire for immortality through the creation of everlasting works, and nurturing children, learners, and outstanding followers.

"Why am I sitting here at the moment? Why am I waiting for my learners? Because I want to be immortal. I want to create everlasting works in the world. My aim is the solidify my works, since an instructor never dies."  
(m, 70 years old)

"My main reason for being happy, joyful, and active could be attributed to my deep connection with nature."  
(m, 65 years old)

### ***Religiosity***

Religiosity is associated with caring for religious issues, having a close relationship with God, being hopeful about His help, support, and power, as well as finding assurance in his endless support and consequently having no feeling of helplessness. Additionally, religiosity is related to understanding the value of one's properties, refraining from being ambitious and thrifty, being thankful for God's blessings, carrying out actions in order to achieve His satisfaction.

"In spite of a physical problem that I have had in recent years, it is regarded as God's will."  
(f, 80 years old)

"There is no feeling of loneliness and helplessness in dealing with problems due to my close relationship with God. I'm strongly assured that God is the greatest power and support."  
(f, 67 years old)

### ***Discussion***

The present study aimed to investigate ageing enjoyment. The results suggested five main categories: present moment awareness, liberating past, psychosocial safety, ultimate purpose for being, and self-peace.

Present moment awareness, as the main subject, means living in the present moment and relaxing due to general satisfaction and, consequently, modifying previous attitudes, improving awareness, and gaining new insights. Havighurst, who is one of the first researchers of successful ageing, concluded that inner satisfaction can be considered a useful indicator or criterion in the description and measurement of successful ageing (17). Regarding transcendent ageing, Tornstam also emphasized the possibility of individuals' potentiality, which is somehow related to the subcategory of the desire for development (18). Furthermore, by adding the "lifelong learning" subscale, active ageing refers to the opportunity to acquire and update knowledge and skills in order to be highly connected and assured about one's privacy.

Liberating past, regarded as a cause, means having spent one's previous days of life positively as a result of the appropriate fulfilment of one's needs, talent flourishing, having appropriate parental support and parenting style, having useful experiences, and trying to improve physical and mental health from an early age. According to the World Health Organization (19), considering the life span approach, healthy ageing involves recognizing the impact of early life experiences on ageing among populations.

Psychosocial safety, regarded as a contributing factor and context, means to be assured due to psychological comfort in individual, familial, and social contexts. Part of it depends on one's own efforts, and the other part has to do with a kind of endowment. Research indicated that contributing factors in positive ageing could be regarded as active socio-economic status, self-reliance, good physical and psychological performance, social support, a safe living environment, and adequate facilities (18). These factors are highly associated with subcategories of vitality, occupational adequacy, economic wisdom, family solidarity and intimacy, social acceptability, and a healthy society.

Regarding healthy ageing, global cooperation to improve health has been emphasized in addition to factors associated with health and social care that have a significant effect on health and well-being (19). The present study emphasized the role of society through the modification of public attitudes, macro policy, and the education system as a healthy society subcategory.

The ultimate purpose for being, as a strategy, means the ability to solve the most complicated problems of life and make the least behavioral mistakes due to having flexibility, foresight, and adherence to moral values to respect other peoples' rights. According to Flood's (2005) proposed model, one of the indicators of successful ageing is the ability to cope with physical and functional changes (20). Furthermore, regarding successful ageing, Baltes (22) emphasizes individuals' adaptation and responsibility for the reduction of social, psychological, and physical characteristics. They believe that through achieving a balance between personal growth and loss in late life, the elderly adapt to old age. In addition, Baltes and Freund observed moral norms as one of the four features of wisdom (22).

Self-peace, regarded as the result and outcome, means satisfaction and contentment with one's performance throughout life, the absence of inner conflict, readiness for dealing with forthcoming challenges, connecting oneself with the real world, and not having feelings of emptiness and disappointment.

According to Erickson, the ultimate development of ageing is achieving ego-integrity, which is the result of one's contemplation on his/her life. In the eighth and final stage of development across the lifespan, an elderly person should be able to review and evaluate their life and accept it so that they can accept the approaching death (23).

Floud's theory on successful ageing also suggests that older adults with chronic diseases or functional limitations could experience satisfaction through their ability to cope and adapt, as well as through a continuous search for meaning in life (20). In addition, according to the model proposed by Ryff and Keyes (24) on positive ageing, positive self-evaluation and one's past life, as well as the belief that life is meaningful, are two prominent features of an adult's psychological well-being. Moreover, spirituality and transcendence are

considered parts of the dimensional conceptual framework for positive ageing (24).

The elderly seems to be able to experience ageing enjoyment, the main aspects of which include present moment awareness, respecting life's moments owing to an improved understanding of the true value of life, self-awareness, self-discovery, satisfaction, and social adjustment. The main cause of this phenomenon is the factor liberating past. However, without psychosocial safety, it could not be possible. In other words, living in a healthy family and social context, having an appropriate occupational and economic status, as well as social popularity, help an individual to flourish their talents, achieve productive experiences, and maintain physical well-being.

The next important issue is the role of strategies in dealing with specific situations and the individual's interactions with the environment. The results demonstrated that, when dealing with specific situations, elderly individuals manifest ethics, altruism, and adaptation, which are referred to as the ultimate purpose for being. The result of these strategies, interactions, and responses leads to self-peace (i.e., the acceptance of one's decisions, failures, and mistakes; spirituality and meaningfulness; connection with the real world; and the desire to live). Self-peace is the result of our main phenomenon (subject). It means deep relaxation and tranquility, non-existence of inner conflict, hopefulness, and an affirmative response to life. Ageing enjoyment is the result of the association and dynamism of all these categories.

## Conclusion

The present study suggests that the elderly can experience the joy of old age through cultivating present awareness, experiencing a liberating past, basking in the enjoyment of psycho-social security, being able to face the problems of life, and reaching peace with oneself through wise reflection. The main phenomenon in this study is consciousness. Consciousness is an element of the joy of old age and is placed in the center of the structure. Psycho-social security, including vitality, family solidarity and intimacy, professional sufficiency, economic reason, social acceptability, healthy society, appears in the role of context and conditions involved in the joy of aging and has a direct impact on the state of consciousness. On the other hand, liberating past with the sub-categories of talent flourishing, fruitful experiences, and physical well-being, serves as the cause and creator of the phenomenon; it creates the phenomenon directly and without intermediaries. In the strategy and behavior of elderly people in facing life situations and responding to problems, wise purposeful thinking embodies moralism, adaptability, and benevolence. The final result of the interactions and consequences of these factors results in psycho-social security, liberating past, pursuing wise thinking as a goal, cultivating present awareness, and achieving peace

with oneself. Peace with oneself includes acceptance, desire to live, meaningfulness, and religion. The set of these factors and intra-structural relationships and interactions between them is called the joy of aging. Perhaps the most important advantage of this study is that it emphasizes the positive aspects of ageing and suggests that governors and administrators provide the necessary conditions to ensure the health, vitality, well-being, and hopefulness of ageing populations.

### Limitations

This study followed a qualitative exploratory research design. Therefore, despite using diversity sampling, the difficulty in generalizing the results is considered a limitation of the study. Moreover, conducting the study, sampling procedure, and interviewing during the Covid-19 pandemic could have restricted data collection. It might have influenced the subjects' mood and point of views as well.

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### Conflict of Interest

None.

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