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## Psychological well-being and quality of life of breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental

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**Abstract.** A happy existence is the goal of psychological well-being. It is the result of feeling well and doing well. Quality of life entails developing one's potential, having some influence over one's life, overcoming their most challenging battles, and having a feeling of purpose. Hence, this paper described the psychological well-being and quality of life of breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental. Likewise, it explored the relationship between psychological well-being and breast cancer survivors' quality of life demographics such as age, educational attainment, years of survival, and living condition. A descriptive and correlational research design was used to assess breast cancer survivors' psychological well-being and quality of life in Negros Occidental. Purposive sampling was utilized to come up with 43 respondents for this study. The research instrument used was Ryff's (1989) Scale's Psychological Well-Being and Flanagan's (1982) Quality of Life Scale. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between breast cancer survivors' psychological well-being and quality of life. The study's findings revealed that breast cancer survivors' psychological well-being and quality of life are generally high. As to the relationship between psychological well-being and quality of life, the findings revealed a significant relationship between the two constructs; that is, when psychological well-being is very high, which means they have an excellent quality of life. This is to prove that breast cancer survivors are happy and able to function day to day.

**Keywords.** Breast cancer survivors, Psychological Well-being, Quality of life, Negros Occidental, Philippines

### Introduction

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women globally, accounting for one in every four cancer occurrences. It is the most common malignancy in both sexes and the leading cause of mortality from cancer in women. According to the anticipated 2.3 million new cases, breast cancer will be one of every eight malignancies diagnosed in 2020 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Because diagnosis and therapy have substantially improved over time, quality of life has become an essential outcome metric in breast cancer clinical research and survivorship studies, in addition to survival (Bottomley et al., 2019). Breast cancer had been diagnosed in 7.8 million

women in the previous five years as of 2020, making it the most common cancer in the world, as reported by World Health Organization (WHO, 2021).

Asia is the world's biggest continent, accounting for around one-fifth of all human beings. Breast cancer is the most frequent cancer and the second biggest cause of cancer-related deaths in Asian women, accounting for 39 percent of all breast cancers diagnosed globally (Fan et al., 2015). In 2018, the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology reported that the Philippines has the highest prevalence of breast cancer in Asia and the ninth highest in the world today. Despite significant fertility reduction and lifestyle changes among Filipino women, inadequate awareness about breast health has contributed to the highest prevalence of breast cancer in Asia. This is due to a lack of resources, high expenditures on diagnostic testing and hospitalization, a lack of education, and a lack of knowledge about breast cancer (Argenal et al., 2019).

Due to a lack of resources and health centers for breast cancer in Negros Occidental, the government built the first cancer care center in Negros Island to provide more Negrenses access to cancer diagnosis and treatment last 2018. Several risk factors have been linked to the development of breast cancer: sex, age, family history of cancer, and smoking history; however, the latter is still being researched. Females outnumbered males, and most patients were between the ages of 40 and 59, with no known family history of cancer and who did not smoke. Carandang et al. (2019) studied that women have a range of attitudes and behaviors that try to handle the strains of home and office jobs revolving around the convergence of faith, family, and expected future, both directly and indirectly.

There has been a dearth of studies on the level of psychological well-being and quality of life among breast cancer survivors; hence the study determined the level and relationship between psychological well-being and quality of life. Some studies assessed breast cancer survivors' quality of life and mental health compared with non-cancer. The study example is from (Carreira et al., 2021). The aim is to compare patient-reported outcomes between breast cancer survivors and women with no history of breast cancer. A study by Biederman et al. (2020), their study was to psychometrically tested a body image scale for breast cancer survivors (BCS). Lastly, the study of Kamen et al. (2017) focused on the association between childhood trauma exposure, cortisol, and cognition in a sample of breast cancer survivors.

This study aimed to investigate the psychological well-being and quality of life of breast cancer survivors. The study's findings served as the foundation for the planned Psychological Well-Being Intervention Program and how it would work in the breast cancer survivors' battle against the threat of psychological well-being.

### **Framework of the study**

The study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological well-being and life satisfaction. This study will also look into the capacity of breast cancer survivors' psychological well-being and quality of life to predict their survival. It will explore the relationships and levels of these constructs of demographics, namely age, educational attainment, years of survival, and living condition. The conceptual framework model in Figure 1 shows the interaction of the variables and the expected outcome of this undertaking. Conceptually, the paper was anchored on Ryff's (1989) early work on the aspects of well-being, which include autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance.

Flanagan's (1982) scale is covered by five domains: physical and material well-being, relations to others, personal development, and fulfillment. The data was analyzed to see the relationships between the two constructs.

Furthermore, this will also explore how the psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors is correlated with their quality of life. In this regard, the level of psychological well-being and quality of life will be measured to determine the capacity of their demographic characteristics as determinants of such psychological well-being and quality of life.

As an output of the study, the data were utilized as a baseline for the proposed psychological well-being wellness program for breast cancer survivors, which will benefit the foundation, support group, and the rest of the populace.

### **Methodology**

This study utilized the quantitative research design using a descriptive and correlational approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), descriptive research involves the identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis or the exploration of the correlation between two or more phenomena, while correlational research design describes and measures the degree of association or relationship) between two or more variables or sets of scores. The descriptive and correlational research was used to measure the relationship between psychological well-being and quality of life of breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental.

The respondents of this study were 43 breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental. They were determined using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling that is selected based on the population's characteristics and the study's objective (Crossman, 2020). The researcher collects the information from the best-fit participants, which are the breast cancer survivors. The inclusion criteria for selecting the participants were: they shall be foundation members, undergoing treatment (alternative medicine/medical), and residents of Negros Occidental.

### **Results and discussion**

#### **Profile of the Respondents**

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table I. The total number of breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental constituted the study's respondents.

Regarding age, most respondents were young, 51.2% (f=22). As per the support group, one survivor is added every month. On the other hand, the remaining 48.8% (f=21) were older survivors.

Concerning educational attainment, years of survival, and living conditions, the majority of the respondents were from college 62.8% (f=27), survivors who survived longer years 58.1% (f=25), and living with their families 79.1% (f=34).

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Age		
Younger	22	51.2
Older	21	48.8
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	2	4.7
High School	11	25.6
College	27	62.8
Graduate Studies	3	7.0
Years of Survival		
Shorter	18	41.9
Longer	25	58.1
Living Condition		
Living with Family	34	79.1
Living with Relatives	8	18.6
Living Alone	1	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **Level of Psychological Well-Being of Breast Cancer Survivors in Negros Occidental**

As presented in Table 2, the psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental is very high ( $M=186.09$ ;  $SD=16.53$ ). The result indicates that breast cancer survivors are experiencing a high level of psychological well-being and manifest a clear sense of purpose in life. Despite one's limitations, he/she can overcome challenges and live a satisfying, productive, and happy life. It has become an exciting subject and a growing concern, especially for those who go through unfavorable life situations (Sablaon & Madrigal, 2020). The condition of psychological well-being that individuals feel is a psychological condition that causes a person to be able to live a prosperous and comfortable life based on the life experiences that have been experienced and how individuals can assess and interpret these experiences based on their abilities (Handayani et al., 2022)

Regarding age, the findings show that the younger ( $M=182.82$ ;  $SD=19.54$ ) and older survivors ( $M=189.52$ ;  $SD=12.21$ ) experience a very high level of psychological well-being. The six-factor models, autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life, resulted as high, while the other factors, such as personal growth and positive relations, scored very high. This data implies that well-being among adults, including older adults, is essential. Attention should be focused on improving population health and functioning and on encouraging younger and older people to develop and maintain social support networks and engage in social activities. This is supported by the Statistics Young Survival Coalition (2015); among younger women, cancer diagnoses are most likely to be of the breast than any other cancer. These findings suggest that older populations, although less healthy and less productive in general, may be more satisfied with their lives and experience less stress, worry, and anger than middle-aged people.

In the educational attainment, it revealed that the elementary ( $M=183.50$ ;  $SD= 9.19$ ), high school ( $M=187.64$ ;  $SD= 18.34$ ), college ( $M=183.37$ ;  $SD= 13.29$ ) and graduate studies ( $M=206.67$ ;  $SD=31.09$ ) have a very high level of psychological well-being. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2021), good quality education is the foundation of health and well-being. To lead healthy and productive lives, people need the knowledge to prevent sickness and disease. This indicates that more exposure in the academe field will result in being more experienced in coming up with clear decisions, thus being independent and capable of standing.

In terms of years of survival, the findings show that it is either shorter ( $M=189.44$ ;  $SD=22.83$ ) or longer years ( $M=183.68$ ;  $SD=9.73$ ) they experience a very high level of psychological well-being. Hajian et al. (2017) identify breast cancer survivors' cancer-related experiences and their coping strategies as essential in developing and appropriately targeting interventions for these patients to optimize health promotion in survivors. This means that breast cancer survivors can adapt quickly to the struggle of breast cancer, help a person's independence and strength, and possess that enthusiastic personality to make up their minds.

Finally, in terms of the living condition of breast cancer survivors, it revealed that those who lived with families ( $M=186.18$ ;  $SD= 16.87$ ), relatives ( $M=184.88$ ;  $SD= 17.01$ ) and alone ( $M=193.00$ ;  $SD=0.00$ ) scored very high. This shows that breast cancer survivors are contented, and connection with their loved ones makes them stronger and perceived. This finding agrees with the claim of Li et al. (2018) both family resilience and breast cancer survivors' resilience may ease the caregiver burden among the principal caregivers of breast cancer survivors, and family resilience tends to promote the survivors' resilience. Therefore, family and individual resilience should be enhanced for breast cancer survivors and their families to ease the principal caregivers' caregiver burden.

**Table 2. Level of Psychological Well-being among Breast Cancer Survivors in Negros Occidental**

Variable	Psychological Well-being			Autonomy			Environmental Mastery			Personal Growth			Positive Relations			Purpose in Life			Self-acceptance		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Age																					
Younger	182.	19.	V	29.	4.4	Hi	29.	2.0	H	30.	4.6	V	33.	5.0	V	28.	3.1	Hi	31.	4.7	V
	82	54	H	55	3		32	1	i	55	3	H	91	5	H	09	9		41	7	H
Older	189.	12.	V	29.	3.6	Hi	28.	3.2	H	34.	3.4	V	34.	3.6	V	28.	3.0	Hi	33.	2.8	V
	52	21	H	90	6		81	8	i	29	2	H	67	4	H	76	6		10	8	H
Educational Attainment																					
Elementary	183.	9.1	V	29.	0.0	Hi	29.	1.4	H	32.	5.6	V	35.	2.1	V	28.	1.4	Hi	30.	1.4	Hi
	50	9	H	00	0		00	1	i	00	6	H	50	2	H	00	1		00	1	Hi
High School	187.	18.	V	30.	4.7	V	29.	1.5	H	33.	4.5	V	34.	5.3	V	28.	3.1	Hi	31.	4.2	V
	64	34	H	18	9	H	55	1	i	91	7	H	18	4	H	55	4		27	0	H
College	183.	13.	V	29.	3.2	Hi	28.	3.0	H	31.	4.0	V	34.	4.1	V	27.	2.6	Hi	32.	3.6	V
	37	29	H	11	1		78	7	i	30	2	H	11	2	H	93	0		15	7	H
Grad Studies	206.	31.	V	34.	7.5	V	30.	3.6	H	36.	5.5	E	35.	5.8	V	32.	5.8	V	38.	3.6	E
	67	09	H	00	5	H	00	1	i	67	1	H	33	6	H	67	6	H	00	1	H
Years of Survival																					
Shorter	189.	22.	V	30.	5.2	V	29.	3.5	H	33.	5.5	V	35.	5.1	V	28.	3.4	Hi	32.	5.1	V
	44	83	H	33	9	H	33	6	i	39	9	H	44	2	H	56	7		39	1	H
Longer	183.	9.7	V	29.	2.8	Hi	28.	1.8	H	31.	3.3	V	33.	3.6	V	28.	2.9	Hi	32.	3.0	V
	68	3	H	28	4		88	8	i	64	7	H	44	4	H	32	0		12	9	H
Living Condition																					
with Family	186.	16.	V	29.	4.1	Hi	29.	2.9	H	32.	4.5	V	34.	4.2	V	28.	3.3	Hi	32.	4.1	V
	18	87	H	82	1		18	3	i	29	8	H	21	8	H	50	9		18	1	H

with	184.	17.	V	29.	4.1	Hi	28.	1.6	H	32.	4.5	V	34.	5.1	V	28.	1.9	Hi	32.	4.0	V
Relatives	88	01	H	13	2		63	0	i	63	0	H	13	9	H	00	3		38	7	H
Alone	193.	0.0	V	31.	0.0	V	29.	0.0	H	33.	0.0	V	38.	0.0	E	29.	0.0	Hi	33.	0.0	V
	00	0	H	00	0	H	00	0	i	00	0	H	00	0	H	00	0		00	0	H
<i>As a Whole</i>	<b>186.</b>	<b>16.</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>29.</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Hi</b>	<b>29.</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>32.</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>34.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>28.</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>Hi</b>	<b>32.</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>V</b>
	<b>09</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>07</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>H</b>

Note: Hi=High, VH=Very High, EH=Extremely High

### **Quality of Life of Breast Cancer Survivors in Negros Occidental**

As presented in Table 3, the quality of life of breast cancer survivors in Negros Occidental is pleasing ( $M=98.09$ ;  $SD=5.90$ ), which means that the quality of life of breast cancer survivors refers to social development. It is an individual's sense of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, as well as concerning their objectives, expectations, standards, and worries. The result indicates that breast cancer survivors are very active in social involvement. This is observed in their ability to communicate and how they were able to participate in and enjoy live events. Studies show that positive emotions contributed to all aspects of subjective quality of life, while negative emotions were necessary for the determination of happiness and subjective well-being (Sălceanu & Călin, 2022)

In terms of age, the findings show that the older survivors ( $M=98.71$ ;  $SD=6.29$ ) experience the highest quality of life. The younger survivors ( $M=97.50$ ;  $SD=6.29$ ) have a high relationship with others and social, community, and civic activities. This shows that the timeline of years as to their survival and innate character fully implies that they have this strong character and respond to uncontrollable changes in their surroundings. This is how they can come braver and firmer. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) does not depend only on physical health but also on mental, social, cultural, and spiritual functioning. Staying socially active can bring the elderly benefits in terms of a better self-assessment of health and physical functioning. It can also help prevent depression and cognitive disorders since it provides intellectual and emotional stimulation and consequently improves their quality of life assessment.

Regarding educational attainment, it revealed that graduate studies ( $M=105.00$ ;  $SD=5.20$ ) got the highest quality of life. This indicates that more exposure in the academe field will result in being more experienced in coming up with precise decisions, thus being independent and capable of standing on your own. As we all know, the high school stage is where students rely more on the external changes happening, being able to adjust and fall into mistakes. This ends with learning and training, valid for the following stages of academia. This finding agrees with the claims from Eurostat (2021) that education affects individuals' quality of life in many ways. People with limited skills and competencies have worse job opportunities and economic prospects. At the same time, early school leavers face higher risks of social exclusion and are less likely to participate in civic life.

Further, those who belong to shorter years of survival ( $M=98.83$ ;  $SD=6.78$ ) appeared to have the highest score; it manifested characteristics of having a positive mind and well-being. The result shows that breast cancer survivors are trying to learn something new daily, stay active, and be grateful for what they have. On the other hand, there are times that if they cannot handle the situation, they are apart from their support group of loved ones. American Cancer Society (2020) support groups bring together people with similar situations. People can share their concerns in these groups and learn how others have coped. Support groups can help people deal with their feelings and the side effects of treatment. They may also help members make decisions by sharing what they have learned. Support groups might also help a person figure out how to deal with family concerns or day-to-day issues like work and money concerns.

Finally, in terms of living conditions, it revealed that living with family ( $M=98.79$ ;  $SD=5.86$ ) has the highest quality of life. This shows breast cancer survivors are more determined, attached, and learning new things for their better quality of life. Breast cancer survivors are trying

to learn something new every day, stay active, and be grateful for what they have. On the other hand, if they cannot handle the situation, they are apart from their support group of loved ones. They are beyond happy living with their families because they have support, primarily from mental, physical, emotional, and emotional support, and spiritual aspects. As supported by Vrontaras (2018), a family member diagnosed with cancer affects the entire family. This study looks into how cancer patients view changes in their families and the forms of assistance they get.

**Table 3. Quality of Life of Breast Cancer Survivors in Negros Occidental**

Variable	Material Physical Well-being		and Int	Relationship with other people		Int	Social, Community, and Civic Activities			Personal Development and fulfillment			Recreation			Quality of Life Scale		
	M	SD		M	SD		M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Age																		
Younger	12.05	1.65	Pl	25.14	1.52	De	12.27	1.67	Pl	29.23	2.07	De	18.82	1.10	De	97.50	5.59	Pl
Older	12.43	1.40	De	23.67	3.92	Pl	13.05	1.32	De	30.10	2.14	De	19.48	1.25	De	98.71	6.29	De
Educational Attainment																		
Elementary	10.50	0.71	Pl	26.00	1.41	De	12.50	2.12	De	30.00	0.00	De	20.00	1.41	De	99.00	4.24	De
High School	11.73	2.10	Pl	23.73	3.55	Pl	11.91	2.17	Pl	29.18	2.56	De	19.64	1.21	De	96.18	6.60	Pl
College	12.48	1.16	De	24.30	2.89	Pl	13.00	1.18	De	29.44	1.67	De	18.81	1.11	De	98.04	5.20	Pl
Graduate Studies	13.00	1.73	De	27.00	1.00	De	12.33	1.15	De	33.00	2.65	De	19.67	1.53	De	105.00	7.81	De
Years of Survival																		
Shorter	12.33	1.91	De	24.89	3.25	De	12.72	1.60	De	29.61	2.70	De	19.28	1.36	De	98.83	6.78	De
Longer	12.16	1.21	Pl	24.08	2.83	Pl	12.60	1.53	De	29.68	1.65	De	19.04	1.10	De	97.56	5.27	Pl

Living Condition

Living with Family	12.26	1.62	Pl	24.88	2.80	De	12.76	1.44	De	29.68	2.23	De	19.21	1.23	De	98.79	5.86	De
Living with Relatives	12.00	1.20	Pl	22.88	3.40	Pl	12.25	2.05	Pl	29.75	1.83	De	19.00	1.20	De	95.88	5.84	Pl
Living Alone	13.00	0.00	De	21.00	0.00	Pl	12.00	0.00	Pl	28.00	0.00	De	18.00	0.00	Pl	92.00	0.00	Pl
<b>As a Whole</b>	<b>12.23</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>Pl</b>	<b>24.42</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>Pl</b>	<b>12.65</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>De</b>	<b>29.65</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>De</b>	<b>19.14</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>De</b>	<b>98.09</b>	<b>5.90</b>	<b>Pl</b>

Note: Pl=Pleased, De=Delighted

### Relationship between Psychological Well-being and Quality of Life

Results in Table 4 show a significant relationship between psychological well-being and quality of life ( $p(41)=0.332$ ,  $p=0.030$ ). It implies that breast cancer survivors, despite their battles, have sustainable well-being. They were able to manage negative emotions, and they showed engagement, interest, and affection towards other people. The findings were supported by Uzaina (2019). The results also revealed that the higher the score on psychological well-being, the better the quality of life.

Overall, the findings confirmed that psychological well-being influences one's quality of life. It appears that the level of psychological well-being is very high, which means they have an excellent quality of life. This is proof that breast cancer survivors are feeling happy and able to function day to day. When it comes to their relationship with their families, relatives, friends, and support groups, they were able to keep in touch, they are happy with the people they are comfortable with, and they create deep connections with people. Studies have discovered that people with higher psychological well-being are more likely to live healthier and longer lives. They are also more likely to enjoy a better quality of life (Kubzansky et al., 2018).

The high psychological well-being of breast cancer survivors can be a starting point for developing their new skills and engagement. It affirms the role of support groups in guiding breast cancer survivors properly. According to Morin (2022), thinking positively improves your psychological well-being. As your psychological well-being improves, it becomes easier to think positively and feel good overall. Fortunately, you can begin creating that positive cycle with a few simple strategies. Here is an overview of the ways you can increase positivity in your life. As she observed, the breast cancer survivors are improving and they feel and function better. Like they know their purpose by helping others and encouraging others to be strong and brave.

The findings imply that having good well-being has a good relationship with other people, willing to learn new things, and being active in daily activities.

With all these findings and results, breast cancer survivors are contented and living their life to the fullest. According to Davis (2019), well-being is something sought by everyone because it includes so many positive things — feeling happy, healthy, socially connected, and purposeful.

**Table 4. Relationship between Psychological Well-being and Quality of Life**

Variable	r	df	p
psychological well-being x quality of life *	0.332	4	0.03
		1	0

*Note:* the correlation is significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

### Conclusion

Breast cancer survivors' psychological well-being and quality of life indicates that they are happy and contented with their lives. This also implies that breast cancer survivors can adapt swiftly to the fight against breast cancer, which has dramatically increased people's independence and strength. Survivors looked to have grown inner strength and acceptance as a result of the difficult life of a cancer survivor. The findings also show that breast cancer survivors, despite their difficulties, were resilient and capable of balancing negative thoughts.

The current study's most important findings indicate that breast cancer survivors who are comfortable and joyful and can develop themselves and enjoy life's events have a more positive attitude on their arduous path as cancer survivors. The current study's findings suggest that, to boost survivors' confidence, skills, acceptance, and potential career opportunities, programs should focus on improving psychological well-being and quality of life by removing self-doubts that undermine their sense of happiness.

### **Recommendation**

The researcher highly recommends that mental health practitioners/advocates they may use this study's findings to understand better the relationship between psychological well-being and quality of life among breast cancer survivors. They are encouraged to use these to create a program that will cater to the needs of breast cancer survivors. Breast cancer survivors support groups. They may develop a program to help breast cancer survivors live and participate more in their activities. Also, coordination with other support groups is recommended to build a more robust program for the survivors. Future researchers. They may replicate the study in other active foundations or support groups to assess the survivors' level of psychological well-being and quality of life. They may even venture into more specific analyses of the categories in the study. Since there is a dearth of evidence using breast cancer survivors as respondents, further studies involving other breast cancer foundations or support groups in Negros Occidental will render this endeavor's novelty.

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