Exploring Driving Habits and Quality of Life in Older Adults

Introduction

This study investigated the personal experiences of drivers 45 and older to understand the impact driving has on their quality of life, daily activities, roles, and routines. The research focuses on identifying the values and beliefs of older drivers and how these perceptions impact their driving behaviors and quality of life. We aim to identify the factors that contribute to the quality of life of older drivers and how driving influences their ability to participate in meaningful activities.

Methods

This qualitative, phenomenological study was conducted by occupational therapy students and a research advisor. Participants were recruited from senior community centers in the state of NC, USA, through flyers and referral, and were interviewed in a semi-structured manner. The interviews included open-ended questions about the participants' driving experiences and the impact of driving on their quality of life. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Participants

Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Handedness</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Driving Habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Regular Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-80</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Limited Driver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 81-90 | Male | Right     | Married       | Driver 

FINDINGS

Driving Habits

- "Driving is independence. It allows me to be independent and do what I want to do. It means that I can connect with others to take care of them."
- "Driving gives me flexibility. I can do anything I want to do as long as I have a car."

- "Driving means everything. Without it, I would be alone."
- "Driving is life."

- Driving restrictions and limitations

- "I wouldn't be driving at all if I couldn't drive."
- "...if we didn't drive, we'd have to modify our lifestyle."

Social Participation

- "Driving was a huge part of my life."
- "I can't imagine not driving."

Safely Precautions

- "I'm more cautious now because of the age of the drivers in the community."
- "I'm more aware of my surroundings."

Emotional & Behavioral

- "I feel more relaxed when I'm driving."
- "I'm more anxious when I'm not driving."

- "Driving is not just a means of transportation, but a means of independence."

Discussion

Research findings show that driving had an impact on older adults' independence, engagement in daily activities, and overall quality of life.

- "Driving was found to be important for the participants."
- "Driving was found to be important for the participants' daily activities."

Limitations

- Participants may not have had a full understanding of the research.
- Data collection was limited to participants who were willing to participate.

Future Research

- Further research is needed to explore aspects of driving and independence.
- Further research is needed to explore aspects of driving and quality of life.

Conclusion

- The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of driving on the quality of life of older adults.
- Findings indicate that driving enhances independence and quality of life, and is an essential component of daily life.

For a complete list of references, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Collins at elizabeth.collins@winston-salem.edu