

OPTIMISTIC IMAGES OF ELDERLY

EkATERINA LYUTSKANOVA

SENIOR ASSISTANT, PHD IN DEPARTMENT "SOCIAL PEDAGOGY"
AT "KONSTANTIN PRESLAVSKY" – UNIVERSITY OF SHUMEN

BULGARIA

LUCKANOVA_E@ABV.BG

ABSTRACT: IN THIS ARTICLE ARE EXAMINED AND COMPARED THE SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS OF YOUNG ADULTS (MEAN AGE=25) AND OLD ADULTS (MEAN AGE=65). THE SELECTED SAMPLES ARE FROM TOWN SHUMEN, BULGARIA. THERE IS NOT SIGNIFICANT STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN LEVEL OF HAPPINESS WITHIN THE TWO GROUPS.

KEY WORDS: OLD AGE, YOUNG PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE, HAPPINESS, WELL-BEING, LIFE SATISFACTION

WE usually imagine old age associated with decline of intellect, weakening of motivational incentives amplification anxiety and neuroticism. This overview allows Pollack define old age as "age of the worst adaptation" [4, p.5-6]. These are such characteristics of aging resulting from socio-biological changes in personality.

GERONTOLOGISTS distinguish two periods in life after middle age - late maturity (60-75 years) and old age after 75-80 years. According to other classifications to "old age" refers to people aged 65 to 79 for men and 60 to 79 for women [3, p.16]. Based on a systematization of Erik Erikson eight stage of the life cycle is the last "old age" - over 65 years. In each classification distinction is relative, because of the diversity of gerontological or other criteria. Therefore, conditional will hereinafter people over 60 years, "adult", "people in the late maturity", "the elderly" or "elderly". Finally, referring to them - summarized as a group is only conditional, with the understanding and belief that the elderly are not a homogeneous substance that differ not only by place of residence and gender, but also in education, occupation, level of preservation of cognitive sphere, personality characteristics, value orientation and others.

THE recent trend has a negative image of old age is replaced by a more optimistic. Increasing the number of researchers who view aging as a process of adaptation, which requires each individual adoption of strategies for dealing with mental and physical changes associated with old age. Come to those who describe old age as entirely positive stage of life in which the individual may: to acquire new knowledge, to seek pleasant experiences, to realize its potential, which brings with it high levels of subjective well-being and life satisfaction [7]. The authors state that "subjective well-being" and "life satisfaction" are interchangeable and are often associated with the concept of "happiness". According to Cummins (1998) "This makes heuristic analysis methods and measuring them separately useless". In fact, all three constructs refer to "someone assessment of the quality of life of someone" [12]. Venhoven (1995) makes one of the largest studies in this area by setting people in 148 countries, the question "How happy you are in your life right now, taking everything into account?". Defines happiness or well-being as "assessment of any degree of

favorability in someone's life," which includes affective and cognitive component (Diener,2000; Diener,2003; Triandis, 2000; Ychida,2004; Venhoven, 2000 по C. Sotgiu [12]).

THE cognitive component is present in the assessment of life satisfaction, and refers to the process of comparison in which the individual judge the quality of life on the basis of its own standard. The affective component is represented by mood and emotion. This is the balance between negative and positive affect experienced by the individual. [8]

THE challenge is to understand how a person chooses standards by which to make such an assessment, and what factors are important for setting global life satisfaction of individuals. Whether highest grade is: product of personality traits (neuroticism, extroversion, introversion); or on the basis of the full achievement of their objectives; or is the result of evaluation of further conditions and other standard [1] is particularly important for the study of psychological confidence in the last stages of life, but not the focus of our study.

IN support of the above, happiness (according to Bulgarian dictionary) is a "spiritual contentment and success in life; honor dobrochestie, well" and being a" prosperity, success, happiness" [2].

IN this paper we consider "happiness" as "subjectively assessment of life" specifying that the using "Prosperity", "satisfaction" and "happiness" as synonyms.

STUDIES show that "people become happier with age, a decline of negative affect, enhance or stabilize the positive feelings and increase life satisfaction in the last stage of his life" [9]. However, often not appreciated joys that come with age.

ON the one hand young people mistakenly predict the degree of happiness in old age and believe that aging reduces the welfare and life satisfaction [8, 9]. By envisaging the reduction of physical functioning and health that accompany aging, imagine late maturity as less pleasant. On the other hand older internalized negative stereotypes, lower their self-esteem.

BELIEFS about aging are important - the mistaken expectation of "bad" life in old age can lead to risky health behavior, and according to J. Gary and M. Lohan (2011) that applies "especially for men". Specific insight into the aging process can act as a major obstacle to behave "prudent" to protect the health and actually reach late maturity.

PROVOKED by the above problems we aim to test reduces you happiness in later adulthood. Object of the study is a subjective assessment of happiness in adults (60-75 years) and younger (20-35 years) people.

SUBJECT of this study is life satisfaction and psycho-biological being of the elderly. Our hypothesis is that despite the natural personality, functional and social changes, people over 60 years are less happy than people 30. Abdel-Khalek examine 3300 scientific publications and concludes that the methodology of measuring happiness contain at least two types of instruments [6].

FIRST, there are multi-items scales questionnaires as Oxford scale of happiness; scale "Depression-Happiness" Lewis and McKolam; scale of happiness of Newfoundland University (Kozma & Stones,1980 on Abdel-Khalek, 2006). These are scales and others containing on average from 10 to 30 items.

SECOND, many studies use one-item self-rating scales mainly 5 to 7 degrees, although elections can vary from 2 to 100. Kumins and Gulon focus on the 5 point scale to measure the

subjective quality of life. Criticized in January mainly due to its lack of sensitivity and perceived as the most successful scale from 0 to 10 with a definite end.

MULTI-ITEMS rocks often include aytemi that touch the properties or qualities other than happiness, in terms of his overall life satisfaction. One reason to prefer one-item scale is that people can easily judge how far this concept fit in and where not.

IN this study for the measurement of subjective happiness using one-item sliding scale evenly distant intervals, with a minimum of "0" and a maximum of "10": "Set on a scale of 0 to 10 how much you happy." Method is borrowed from Venhoven and Kaleko.

THE scale is included in the questionnaire designed for collecting and recording of empirical information. The questionnaire includes: about age; indoor unofficial question - „How do you rate your general health?" where respondents should indicate a response in 5 point scale: "Excellent" -5 "Very good" -4 "Good" -3 "Satisfactory" -2 "Bad" -1; open question - "Specify what determines your happiness" (starting from the most important to you).

ATTACHED are the methods of direct and indirect profile to ensure high reliability of the information. Data from the questionnaires were processed by methods based on statistical values. Used a method of checking statistical hypotheses by comparing the averages with t-criterion of Student. The study was conducted with non-stochastic (deliberate) sample selected "according to availability" and the resulting information is not intended to representativeness, and is only valid for the respondents.

INTERVIEWEES were selected from "Konstantin Preslavsky" – University of Shumen, random pensioner's club and random people on the residence of the interviewers who appear to meet the criterion age "from-to". Age limits "from 20 to 35 years" are determined based on the stage of psychosocial development Erikson, where "youth" is the sixth stage of the socio-psychological development and covers age from 20 to 35-40 years.

THE number of questionnaires distributed in University of Shumen and the club pensioner was approximately the same as that obtained in the two groups have equal numbers of participants. After initial treatment have reduced the groups, as they involved individuals who were outside the age limits. After reducing the total number of respondents was 52, 26 in a group.

DATA from the age distribution in the groups is presented in Table 1, where X is the average age, S - standard deviation, As - asymmetry coefficient and Ex - excess. The values of the latter two shows the distribution in both samples is within the normal range (Table 1).

Table № 1
Descriptive statistics of the distribution of age in both groups

groups	age	X	S	As	Ex
From 20 to 35		25 г.	3,97	0,62	-0,28
From 60 to 75		66 г.	3,58	0,58	-0,29

THE results of self-assessment of happiness show that in the group of 20-35 years of life satisfaction (arithmetic mean) is 7.15, while in the group of 60-75 is 6.15 (Table 2).

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics of subjective happiness in both groups

happiness groups	X	S	As	Ex
From 20 to 35	7,15	1,43	-0,19	-0,11
From 60 to 75	6,15	2,12	0,45	-0,15

THE proposed scale on which respondents have to determine subjective happiness is interval from "0" to "10", with ten equally wide range. The median of the scale - "5" indicates where the middle and 11, 64% of all placed in this space. Measured average "happiness" in both groups over "5".

RESPONDENTS aged 60-75 years, indicating the highest degree of happiness represent 15.38% of this age sample. From the group 20-35 years 3.84% estimated his fortune at the highest. Looking at the highest level of happiness - "10" we can say that 9.61% of all respondents consider maximum satisfaction from your life (Table2).

THE lowest level that is specified by the group of 60-75 year olds is "2" and constitute 3.84% of the group and of the entire population. In the group of 20-35 year lowest level is referred to "4" and also from the group of 3.84%. The most high percentage of elderly people - 38.46 percent cited "6" and the group of 20-35 years, as follows: 30.76% - "7". We can conclude that in both age groups was observed prevalence rates of "6" and "7", which are above average scale - "5".

TO compare the two averages, reflecting the degree of life satisfaction in both groups using t- Student criterion, given the level of significance $\alpha=0,05$. The analysis is structured two statistical hypotheses. In the first null hypothesis assume that the result appears under the influence of random factors. According to her, do not expect differences between the levels. The alternative hypothesis suggests that there are differences and they are due to consequential reasons.

THE empirical value of the t-distribution is $t(\text{emp})=1,960$ in theoretical critical value $t(t)=2,01$ with degrees of freedom $k=50$. The result shows that $t(\text{emp}) < t(t)$, giving rise to the acceptance of the null hypothesis and can not be argued that there is no statistically significant difference between the two averages. This means that the affiliation of the respondents to a particular age period not test determines the level of subjectively happiness.

WE asked respondents to write factors which determine their happiness as the start of the most important. All identified as most important factor "health". Other specified factors: income, family, friends, work, good relationships and more. are graded differently in each of the respondents, as it is completely natural to change their position of importance in the course of the life cycle. The factor analysis is not the aim of this study and therefore did not comment on the dynamics in the hierarchy of the determinants of well-being. Was discussed briefly "health" because it is out of all the most important. Answers to the question "How do you rate your general health?" are encrypted from 1 to 5, where 5 was "excellent" 4 - "very good", 3 - "good", 2 - "satisfactory" and 1 "bad".

OVERALL, the group of 60-75 year general health calculated average was 2.81 (which falls between "good" and "satisfactory") and 20-35 year olds is 3.38 (falls between "good" and "very good"). Using the same method for determining the difference between the averages - t-

criterion of Student and in the parameter "happiness." The empirical value of the split was $t(\text{emp})=8,143$ was higher than the theoretical critical value $t(m)=2,01$. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two values that describe the average, general health status (subjectively appreciated).

The results of the study make it possible to make the following summaries and conclusions:

1. There is no significant difference in the degree of life satisfaction among people at a young age and elderly people within the sample, regardless of the decline in health of the elderly, which is referred to as the most important factor that determines happiness;
2. It is justifiable to old age is associated with a reduced health and financial resources, as well as bereavement or other social losses.
3. The fact that happiness does not suffer from these declines objective was illogical enough to be called by the researchers "paradox of prosperity" [9] or "paradox of aging" (Nakgawa, 2010 no Nakahara, J.,2013) [11]. Remarkable is the ability of people to adapt to a variety of circumstances (and not nice), but equally impressive e inability to recognize their own adaptation [11].

THE presented summaries and conclusions can not be considered definitive and general for all older people, because the samples are limited in volume and the instruments used can be improved. In future research may increase the sample size and to focus on the factors that determine and increase life satisfaction of the elderly.

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