

ABSTRACT OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Title of dissertation:

Quality of life and lifestyles of retired teachers

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Introduction:

The inevitable process of human ageing and the dynamics of this phenomenon in Poland and around the world are reviving debates on old age, the ageing process in the context of people's life choices and the prosperity of their existence.

The increase in life expectancy and the process of accelerated demographic ageing of societies should be viewed by researchers, demographers, politicians and the social environment in terms of tasks and challenges.

Seniors' quality of life is increasingly the subject of empirical research. There is a worrying lack of such analyses in the context of retired teachers both in Poland and internationally. This problem mainly concerns the aspect of linking the various components of quality of life to the broader lifestyle. This is particularly desirable in relation to pedagogical concepts of, among others: lifestyle choice (Z. Żukowska, A. Siciński, A. A. Zych), lifelong development (A. Leszczyńska-Rejchert), old age (K. Uzar-Szcześniak), and the theory of continuity of life activities (R. C. Atchley). In this way, the paper fills a serious research gap in the social sciences on retired teachers. A review of the Polish and foreign literature on the subject, made it possible to conclude that no empirical analysis of such a multifaceted nature (linking various aspects and components of quality of life and lifestyle) has been conducted so far on such a large research sample (625 respondents), also in the context of meta-analyses. .

Leaning into the plight of the senior teacher in the context the quality of life and lifestyle is therefore motivating to undertake research effort. It is relevant and necessary, given the specific nature of the teacher's work, its conditions and the influence that the educator has on the formation of the young person's attitudes and personality. The situation and choices of the senior teacher cannot be considered in isolation from the socio-economic and social conditions and economic conditions accompanying his/her professional activity.

Aim of the study: To determine the relationship between the quality of life and the lifestyles of retired teachers.

Research sample: the research sample comprised a total of 625 individuals: 434 retired teachers affiliated to ZNP branches from all over the country and/or to senior institutions, and 191 non-affiliated respondents.

Research methods: diagnostic survey method, comparative method, pedagogical monograph method.

Research techniques: written survey, auditorium survey, standardised and non-standardised scales, analysis of documents and activity outputs.

Research tools: Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Life Sense Questionnaire (MLQ), Scheler Values Scale (SWS), Life Orientation Questionnaire (SOC-29), author's tools: Life Sense and Realization Scale, Survey Questionnaire: Lifestyle and Quality of Life.

Results:

- Sociodemographic variables differentiated the components of quality of life and lifestyles of senior teachers.
- There was a significant difference in lifestyle preference between retired affiliated and non-affiliated teachers. Unionised teachers had a higher preference for social and cultural-educational styles. Non-associated teachers, on the other hand, valued higher religious style, prolonging professional activity or doing other paid work, family style and predominantly passive style.
- The senior teachers' quality of life in terms of the components adopted was generally positive.
- Both affiliated and non-affiliated teachers were characterised by positive, but weak, associations between components of quality of life and life activities.
- The most common types of life activities were perceptual, social-integrative and home-family, followed by hobbyist and educational/cultural. The least common, on the other hand, were religious, political, occupational-earning, voluntary-helping and sport-recreational activities.

- There is a significant statistical relationship only between the assessment of general happiness and the type of life activity. Non-associated seniors rated this dimension of feeling happy higher than affiliated pensioners.
- The regularity of meetings within affiliated institutions played a significant, positive role in the components of senior teachers' quality of life.
- Retired teachers valued moral values, secular and religious sanctities and truths the highest. The lowest, in turn, were vitality (endurance), aesthetics, hedonism, and further vitality-fitness and physical strength. Moral and vital values (fitness and physical strength) were the most highly associated with components of quality of life.
- The most frequently positively associated life goal with components of quality of life was the realisation of passions and interests.
- The concept of "successful senior living" most often positively associated with components of quality of life was: self-development and the life and social activities undertaken. Negatively, on the other hand: the opportunity to live quietly with family, devotion to domestic duties, and inner spiritual improvement and immersion in religious values.
- The activities of seniors that prepare them for life in retirement most often positively related to components of their quality of life were: concern for health and fitness, and seeking ideas for developing their own passions and interests.

Conclusions:

The perceived importance of lifestyle choices in shaping the quality of life should be made clear to people from an early age and practised during their professional development and in retirement. This is especially true in the profession of a teacher who, as a guide, participates in the creation of a young person's personality. It is also important to practice permanent education. It is primarily associated with making lifelong efforts to account for the quality of one's own existence, especially including the ability to manage one's leisure time budget at every stage of life.

In the context of the conducted research, the evaluation of types of activity: formal and informal, as well as its types, should be approached with caution, deepening the diagnosis of its relation to the quality of life in the light of contemporary theories of old age and ageing. A

multimodal approach should be used in empirical analyses, looking for new predictors of the variables studied.

In assisting (institutional and non-institutional) older people, including retired teachers, to develop the quality of life in the context of their preferred lifestyles, their developmental potential should first be recognised. This includes internal predispositions, competences and interests. The decision-making autonomy of beneficiaries is also not without significance. The relational environmental context as a supportive factor in multifaceted activities is extremely important in this respect. The physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health resources of older people cannot be overlooked either.

Answering Ian Stuart Hamilton's question: "Which is the best lifestyle for a long-lasting and productive life?"¹ one should not go in the direction of explicitness and simplification. In the light of the research conducted and the conclusions reached, we should not centralise around one area of activity, aspiration or attitude. The results of the analyses obtained point in the direction of a balanced and varied lifestyle for senior citizens. It is characterised by a moderate level of activity, with a tendency to prefer complex (combined) life activities. It is characterised by a triad of goals aimed at: intra-self (self), inter- (other person and the world).

Keywords: quality of life, lifestyle, seniors, retired teachers

¹ I. S. Hamilton, *Psychologia starzenia się*, tłum. A. Błachnio, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2006, s. 16.