

Peer-reviewed academic journal

**Innovative Issues and Approaches in
Social Sciences**

IIASS VOLUME 16 (2023)

Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences

IIASS is a double blind peer review academic journal published 3 times yearly (January, May, September) covering different social sciences: political science, sociology, economy, public administration, law, management, communication science, psychology and education.

| 2

IIASS has started as a Sldip – Slovenian Association for Innovative Political Science journal and is being published by ERUDIO Center for Higher Education.

Typeset

This journal was typeset in 11 pt. Arial, Italic, Bold, and Bold Italic; the headlines were typeset in 14 pt. Arial, Bold

Abstracting and Indexing services

COBISS, International Political Science Abstracts, CSA Worldwide Political Science Abstracts, CSA Sociological Abstracts, PAIS International, DOAJ, Google scholar.

Publication Data:

ERUDIO Education Center

Innovative issues and approaches in social sciences, 2023,
vol. 16

ISSN 1855-0541

Additional information: www.iiass.com

LIFESTYLE CHANGES OF OLDER ADULTS AND SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

Milan Ambrož¹, Mirjam Gartner²

| 6

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to reveal the factors that define the change or continuity of lifestyle of older adults after retirement. Grounded theory was the basis for examining the attitudes and experiences of 9 semi-structured interviews. Analysing the interviews, "life satisfaction" was set as a major category followed by four sub-categories: "social relations", "activity changes and slows down", "the meaning of life", and "healthy lifestyle". The participants in the study have life satisfaction as the main goal. They associate it with quality social relations with family and significant others and replacing or adding new activities to their lifestyle.

Slowing down the pace of their actions enables enough time to think about the meaning of life and can lead to a healthy and successful life. However, changes following retirement can negatively influence participants' life satisfaction or even push them to a negative view of life in old age. Therefore, the study suggests that older adults should plan for changes in their lifestyle after retirement to preserve life satisfaction and lead a healthy and satisfying life in old age.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, Lifestyle, Healthy Living, Organization, Social relations, meaning of life, Activities

¹ Dr. Milan Ambrož, professor emeritus, ECM, Maribor, ambrozmilan7@gmail.com

² Mirjam Gartner, Mirjam Gartner s.p. gb.mirjam@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In this article, we treat lifestyle as a combination of the meaning of life course proposed by Alvin as a "web of events and transitions" (2012).

Ageing is an inevitable, multifaceted, vague and complex physiological, social and psychological phenomenon, although many scholars and researchers have studied it for decades (Wong, 2018; Urtamo et al., 2019). As life expectancy is increasing and longevity is a reality, maintaining a healthy lifestyle for older adults presents a great challenge and is an extremely important factor in successful ageing (Atkins et al., 2013). The healthy living of older adults is closely related to their health and influences their lifestyle; as Visser et al. (2019) argue: a "healthy lifestyle benefits physical, psychological, cognitive, and social functioning up to very old age". Therefore, maintaining an active lifestyle, quality nutrition, good social relations, and mental activities are the prerequisites of a healthy lifestyle (Stuntz & Weiss, 2010).

Zantinge et al. (2013) found out that the transition to retirement is favourable and unfavourable, depending on various factors like the type of lifestyle and personal situation of the retiree. Physical, environmental, and interpersonal changes and social expectations generate tensions between past and contemporary behaviour patterns and create new possibilities for ageing (Breheny & Griffiths, 2017; Henning et al., 2019). Understanding the psychological and social factors that shape older people's lifestyle is essential to understanding the changes in older people's lives (Halaweh et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2015; Alvin, 2012).

Katz (2013) argues that lifestyle, in gerontological terms, promotes healthy and successful ageing through diverse ageing experiences and is the dialect between choice and constraint across the life course. Vigezzi et al. (2021) revealed that the transition to retirement independently impacts perceived health status, physical activity, and risky behaviours. Through the life course approach, we can identify key opportunities for lowering the risk and enhancing the protective factors through all life stages (Jones et al., 2019). Understanding individual changes of behaviour of retired older adults offer important perspectives that can inform forming the programs and practice for healthy living for older people at home and in aged care.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is multifaceted and always personal and is comprised of several factors such as employment status, education, social support, daily activities, health, cognitive quality (Papi & Cheragi, 2021); economic conditions and role change (Güven & Şener, 2010); health self-assessment (Kutubaeva, 2019; Lim et al., 2016); self-assessment of physical and mental health, and physical activity (An et al. (2020). Moreover, it is not uniform across different age groups and individuals.

Banjare et al. (2015) and Cheung and Lucas (2015) argue that life satisfaction is the subjective global evaluation of personal content and happiness and positively influences health and well-being (Nakamura et al., 2022). Conversely, life satisfaction is associated with life trauma and chronic stressors throughout the life span of people, especially after retirement (Ren et al., 2021).

Social relations

Antonucci (2001) and Kauppi et al. (2021) argue that people usually form a social convoy, which remains stable in old age but often lose outer social network circles during retirement, which constantly changes its structure (Comi, Cottini, and Lucifora (2022). Litwin and Tur-Sinai's (2015) main findings reveal that a strong tie with personal social network members substitutes for weak links of colleagues at work and influences the decision to retire. Sometimes social network even shrinks deliberately due to retirement or emergency health (Cherepanova, Tukhvatulina, and Mirza, 2016). Shwartz and Litwin's (2018) research report shows that women grow weak ties and reduce strong relations, representing lower family involvement. Moreover, Finchum and Weber (2000) argue that older adults can actively change their behaviour and establish and constantly re-establish their new friendship networks.

Activity changes and slows down.

The results of the retrospective judgment of the passage of time study by Droit-Volet (2019) showed no change with age. Robertson et al. (2015) study showed that merely priming older people with negative stereotypes about ageing walked slowly, and their perception was that time is slowing down. Namely, the perception of older people that time is slowing down is associated with structural and functional changes in the brain that correlate with declines in cognitive tasks that require quick response or decision-making

(Murman, 2019). Primarily, when older people feel that their activities are worthwhile, they age healthily, sustain meaningful relationships, and optimally use their time (Steptoe & Fancourt, 2019). Bejan (2019) understands time as "mind time", which is a sequence of images received from sensory organs. Older people obtain a lower rate of perceived images. However, "slower" days are more productive, active, and full of experiences because of the body and mind rest.

Meaning of life

Hallford et al. (2018) analysis indicate that life's purpose, well-being, and life satisfaction are related. Lin et al. (2020) research findings reveal a positive correlation between social support and the meaning of life with life satisfaction.

Derx et al. (2020) define life's meaning through two factors: communion, defined as connectedness and moral worth, and agency, described as control and self-worth, which have a significant role in experiencing meaning. Dewitte and Dezutter (2021) indicate that meaning reflectivity is an important process in searching for purpose in the life of older adults. According to Halama et al. (2021), retirees generally maintain relations with previous sources of meaning, like family and work (Breheny and Griffiths, 2017). Gohil & Charak (2013) found a negative association between retirement and the importance of life. The purpose of life of retired adults significantly increases after retirement, especially among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations and is primarily associated with living circumstances (Yemiscigil et al., 2021; Hupkens et al., 2016).

Healthy lifestyle

Successful ageing is not a new concept Wong (2018). Rowe and Kahn (1988) developed the successful ageing concept by assuming that successful ageing is more than the absence of disease. Healthy lifestyle behaviours like regular physical activity, quality nutrition, and sociodemographic characteristics like sex, age, marital status, education, and chronic disease influence life satisfaction (Phulkerd et al. (2021). According to Shafiee et al. (2020) younger, highly educated men with good financial income and healthy lifestyles age successfully. However, reduced self-care capacity, social, financial, mental, and physical aspects, loneliness, anxiety, and poor health influence reduce life satisfaction (Borg et al. 2005) and healthy adults

have family and good social relationships, can adapt quickly to new circumstances, and perceive a good quality of life (Llobet et al. 2011). Parra-Rizo & Sanchis-Soler (2020) argues that older adults who performed high physical activities perceived increased well-being and personal autonomy.

METHODS

Study design

To make sense of participants' social worlds through the narratives to explore the life course changes of older adults we conducted semi-structured interviews (Chippendale, 2013). Study research questions led us to use a qualitative method based on Ragin's (2007, 101) qualitative research approach. Ragin (2007) argues that qualitative research advantages lay in the open approach to the research subject with a relatively small number of topics, based on the selection of the research field, locations, and cases.

Sample and recruitment

We followed the suggestions from Creswell (1998), who suggests 5 to 25 participants. To choose participants, we conducted the snowball method, where one participant suggests another according to pre-set characteristics like being older than 57 years and retired and being an attendee of the regular session of the program for older adults in one of the Slovene municipalities. Three participants refused to participate in the study due to the direct semi-structured interview method. Of the twelve participants included in the study, nine of them agreed to participate. We arranged a meeting in vivo with participants. Those who signed written consent to participate in a study attended the semi-structured interviews.

Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, we gathered basic data about the participants in the research ($n = 9$) who were retired and aged from 67 to 79. Of the nine participants, four were married, four were divorced, and one was widowed. Three participants had one child, three had two children, and three had 3 children. We informed participants in writing and verbally about the study's goals and answered all their questions.

Qualitative method and data analysis

For the study, we developed key interview questions about participants' lifestyles and sent the questions to the participants. Research questions asked about satisfaction with life and the quality

of life, social relations, activities and slows down the meaning of life, and healthy life.

Data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analysed using a grounded theory approach based on a precise and rigorous analytical process. We formed theoretical assumptions about lifestyle changes and developed a new conceptual model (Charmaz, 2009). To analyse the data from the study, we used the contents analysis suggested by Lamut et al. (2002), which consisted of:

- Gathering and verifying data.
- Coding the data.
- Setting the conceptual categories and re-iterating the types.
- Furthermore, building a new concept.

Analysing the narratives of older adults, we made sense of their own real-life experiences and developed a deeper understanding of the complexity of lifestyle adoption.

We openly coded segments and quotations from semi-structured interviews using Atlas. Ti software 7.0 followed by axial coding to conceptualise the codes. In the next phase, we identified, described, and combined related findings into categories and sub-categories to develop similar concepts and associations between codes. Next, we constructed diagrams and network views. In the third phase, we integrated types to develop the theoretical concept of the study (Creswell, 2011). Two reviewers constantly assessed and compared data during the analysis. We discussed different views resulting in seeking agreement and extra coding. In the fourth phase, we constructed and explained the model of the study with a storyline.

RESULTS

Qualitative analysis

As a result of the main stage, five categories emerged from the content analysis: "Satisfaction with life", "Social relations", "Activity changes and slowdowns", "Meaning of life", and "Healthy life". The coding process combined interview data in one super category: satisfaction with life. Data analysis yielded 64 codes.

Table 1: Contents of the hermeneutic unit

Categories	Codes	Number of codes
Life satisfaction – super category	View of ageing	3
	Self-image	8
	View of life	7
Social relations	Social network	2
	Helping others	3
	Loneliness	4
	Self-worth	4
Meaning of life	Personal vision	4
	Different view	3
	Spirituality	6
Activity changes and slowdowns	Activity changes	7
	Slow pace	8
Healthy life	Body maintenance	3
	Non-stressed living	2

We linked sub-codes, codes and categories to research questions to develop the conceptual model of a study. We show the results in Table 2.

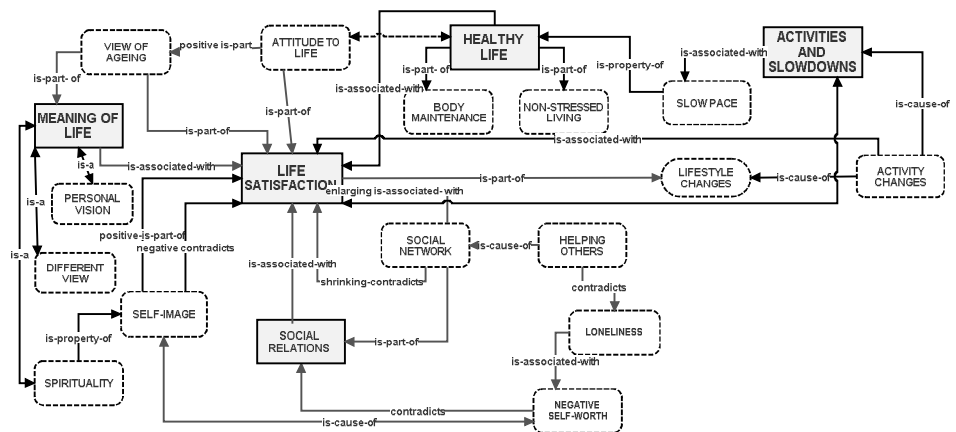
Table 2: Relations between research questions and categories

Research questions	Categories	Codes	Sub-codes
How does life after retirement affect your life satisfaction?	Life satisfaction	life satisfaction right future direction, ageing awareness, feeling young, taking care of oneself, positive living, positive self-concept, sensing no life changes, life is superb, negative self-concept, quality of life is bad, losing social convoy, feeling unwell, comfortable with strangers	
What influenced your social relations after retirement?	Social relations	helping others, being healthy, expanding social network, loneliness, missing job, social isolation, desire to meet new people	
How has retirement changed your activities?	Activity changes and slows down	slows down, time for oneself, learning new things, ageing body changes, accepting changes, new activities, replacing one job with another, non-dramatic changes	doesn't matter being slower, keeps forgetting,
How do you see	Meaning of	calming down,	

your life in the future?	life	finding future purpose in life, spiritual development, resilient to life events, deepening, working on oneself, seeing things differently oneself, analysing life	
Do you live a healthier life after retirement?	Healthy life	taking care of an ageing body, eating healthy, relaxed and unconcerned life	

We present a conceptual model of lifestyle changes using associations between categories, codes and subcodes in Figure1. Further, we present a detailed explanation of a conceptual model of lifestyle changes.

Figure1: Conceptual network on changes in the lifestyle



Perceived life satisfaction

Maja, the first participant in a study, expressed satisfaction with life: "I am satisfied. I know I am going in the right direction. I am aware of

changes due to the ageing process. Still, I am young by heart and feel satisfied. I must take care of my health to follow my future path."

Barbara is enthusiastic about her contemporary life: "It is something beautiful, positive. I accept all that life offers me. I live for today, not for tomorrow. Last few years, I have maintained a very positive image of myself". Simon shares her enthusiasm: "I feel great. I am satisfied with my life; I have no complaints. I would repeat my life in the same way." Erna has similar thoughts: "My life is superb, although I am most of the time without money. I love myself and enjoy myself. I would not change my life no matter what."

Monika expresses great dissatisfaction with her life: "Image of myself suffers, it is much worse than it was in previous years. I used to laugh a lot, telling jokes. My marriage collapsed; my feeling changed. I am not comfortable in the presence of other people because they discreetly avoid me. So, you do not feel well. I feel comfortable only in the company of people I do not know, and they do not know me. I feel terrible."

In summary, being satisfied with contemporary life after changes in the lifestyle of participants in the study is the most important category. It describes the attitude of older adults that have gone through changes in their lifestyle triggered by important life events like retirement, divorce, illness, psychological distress and the effects of ageing. Satisfaction with life provided motivation to embrace changes and set future goals or to dive into depression followed by deep dissatisfaction with life.

Changes in social relations

Older adults experience changes in their social network, which reduces and diminishes. In addition, extraordinary events with emotional consequences, like the death of a spouse or family member, divorce, retirement, moving to a different place, and illness, usually negatively influence the social network of older people. Retirement and some other life events facilitate the need for participants to preserve their social relations and build new connections with other people to preserve their self-esteem and reduce their feelings of loneliness.

We describe two life experiences that imposed negative changes in their social relations and the process of establishing a new social

network. First, Monika was divorced, radically changing their habits and lifestyle along with her retirement. As a result, she alienated herself from her social network. She struggles to establish new social relations, but with limited success:" I do not know. All of a sudden, you are alone. Nobody needs you anymore. There is no job, and children have their own life.

Anita had a similar experience taking care of her ill mother, losing her job, and her daughter leaving home:" I had to take care of my sick mother. All my activities were related to her illness. As a result, I lost my job, and my daughter left home."

Maja thinks more positively: "I will try to help people when I have the opportunity. My social network is larger because I have the privilege to babysit my grandson." Fani has a similar goal:" If I am healthy, I intend to help older people. I want to visit them, do some household activities, and supply them with necessities."

To widen their social network, participants in this study renewed their social convoy. In this way, new members of their social network, allowing them to be in contact with other people; as Maja stated: "I got involved in sports activities, mountaineering, and cycling, travelling. My social network widened substantially". On the other hand, Monika experienced sudden loneliness because divorce severely reduced her social convoy. Therefore, she had to renew it: "I have a strong desire to make more of myself and to find people to travel with me, to go to the theatre and movies."

Anita had to take care of her ill mother and forgot about her social relations with other people resulting in negative consequences: "It made me sad and lonely for years."

Understanding the notion of time

Participants understand the notion of time differently. They know the ageing process is slowly taking place due to structural and functional changes. One of the interviewees, Fani described the contemporary notion of time: "My age is perhaps the reason that I do everything with a slower pace; I have a feeling there is no rush". Erna perceives a different time structure, saying: "Now I have much time for myself so that I can create and learn different skills".

The notion of time appeared in three sub-categories that solidify different perceptions of time: (i) slowdown: Barbara argues, "I am slower in doing household activities. It doesn't matter. I can postpone it till tomorrow." (ii) perception of ageing: Marko observes his behaviour: "I am less skilful at my work. I need much more time to do the work." (iii) cognitive incursion: Simon is aware of the ageing changes: "Things change... One keeps forgetting, begin to work at a slower pace." Fani experiences cognitive and physical changes: "Body is ageing. It operates slowly." Monika shares a similar experience: "My reasoning changes, my body changes, I become slower."

Participants in the study want to be useful and add some value to society, but differently. Although the participant's activities changed after retirement, they all felt the need to replace their work and daily routines with new, mostly different activities. However, some participants wanted to preserve some continuity of their lifestyle, like accepting a new job after retirement. One of the participants, Vlado, and his spouse even planned major events and changes after retirement: "My wife retired before me and changed her activities." adding a plethora of new activities to their lifestyle: "We added new ones like maintaining family relations, sports activities, travel, mountaineering, outdoor activities and attending the University for the third age". The other two participants are highly motivated to continue their lifestyles after retirement.

Simon just replaced one job with another to preserve the continuity of his lifestyle. He argues: "I became a keeper of a mountain hut after retirement." The other is determined to add minor changes to her lifestyle: "I am going to continue all my contemporary activities and add another like learning of a foreign language."

Monika tries to beat her loneliness by adding new activities in her life: "I am a member of a drama group, attend an English language course, and I am responsible for the administration of professional society."

All life events cause changes and necessitate a certain effort to live an active life. Sometimes, Fani, a female participant demonstrates that lifestyle changes radically "After retiring, I got involved in several unique activities. I am a member of the Women's country club and attend computer and gymnastics courses. I lead several classes on

cooking and baking. I am fully involved in these activities. In summer, autumn and winter, I work on goblins."

Some older adults maintain the continuity of their lifestyle regarding major events in their life. Vlado did not dramatise his retirement. He even felt some relief letting go of job duties: "Retirement is nothing dramatic. No more job duties."

Although the participants varied in their responses to major life events, a range of benefits ensued from continuity, activity change, new jobs, education, and learning. Many expressed excitements because of the changes in their lifestyle, providing unique opportunities to enjoy life. For example, Fani was very proud that she got a new chance: "I babysit my daughter's 19 months old twins."

Changes in the meaning of life

Slowing down after retirement balanced the pace of participants in the study. As a result, they had more time to think about their life's meaning. Changes or balancing their lifestyle urged the need to go on a journey to a new phase of spiritual development.

Maja: "I must calm down to find the future meaning in my life. I take care of my spiritual development. I want to be resilient whatever happens to me".

Anita has similar thoughts about her life: "When I deepen myself, I feel calm, think and analyse my life. I must say I look forward to my future life gaining its meaning".

Marko emphasised the importance of spiritual development: "Working on myself changed me when I participated in the course for spiritual development. After several years of work, I am a transformed person".

Monika widens her view of life: "You see some things differently. For example, I perceive nature in a very different way and see some things never before."

Participants feel a strong need to go on the journey of spiritual development. They joined educational courses on spiritual growth and spent much time thinking about the meaning of their life and

future. The spiritual journey was a new phase in the quality of their life.

Participants in a study emphasise a healthy lifestyle. They need to be physically active in the natural environment and eat healthily. Maja narrates: "I have to take care of my Body because it is ageing. I realised that I ate unhealthy food and changed it radically."

Erna wants to change her living environment: "I want to move to the countryside to live a more relaxed and unconcerned life in nature".

Fani connects a healthy lifestyle with close attention to her Body: "I constantly take care of my body, keep it clean and functional".

DISCUSSION

The study's findings revealed that participants express high satisfaction with life and connect it with the overall quality of their life by exploring cognitive, psychological, social, and physical activity capacities. Furthermore, participants are satisfied with their lives because they are active, live healthily, learn new skills, work actively on their social network, and grow spiritually. These findings correspond with the conclusions of Phulkerd et al. (2021), who argue that healthy lifestyle behaviours, physical activity, and healthy nutrition improve the satisfaction with life of older adults.

Participants in the study identified two dimensions of life satisfaction caused by important life events. Those participants who had positive life experiences felt good, had a positive image of themselves, were satisfied with their past life, and tried to live for today. These findings are similar to Inal et al. (2007) research results that life satisfaction is subjective, and is the global personal evaluation of content life, satisfaction with life, and emotional feeling of happiness (Cheung and Lucas, 2015). Conversely, those participants that have stressed experiences with important life events perceive negative satisfaction with life. Singh and Mishra (2009) report similar findings, associating depression and loneliness with the lack of close family ties and non-participation in community activities. Extraordinary events with strong emotional responses negatively influence participants' social networks and sometimes radically change their habits and lifestyle, causing alienation from their social network, loneliness, and depression.

Similar research results from Comi, Cottini, and Lucifora (2022) and Kauppi and colleagues (2021) show that major life events like retirement change the structure of a retiree's social network and have a positive influence of the large social network on the satisfaction with life of older adults 50+ (Tomini and Groot, 2016).

Participants in our study discriminate between the time before and now and are aware of the abundance of time for sports, outdoor activities, travel, participating in associations, arts, and making small products. Therefore, they try to adapt and control the ageing process by implementing new functional roles to slow down all activities, primarily developing social functions that maintain their feeling of usefulness and functionality.

Participants develop a primarily slows down approach, and they experience results in adding new activities and abandoning the old. McDonald and colleagues (2017) had similar findings, not detecting consistent patterns of movements. The transition of the lifestyle of older adults facing activity changes has favourable and sometimes unfavourable effects depending on personal factors (Zantinge et al., 2013).

In conclusion, changing activities, new life circumstances, major life events, and variations in social convoy usually result in a changed worldview. These changes empower the desire to be involved in more spiritual activities and seek the meaning of life. The abundance of time allows for personal exploration and new exciting journeys into spiritual development as a unique quality of their existence. The desire to search for the meaning of life connects with new circumstances that allow more time for thinking about more abstract and moral aspects of the importance of life. It is revealed as associated with a quality environment close to nature and an unconcerned and relaxed life. Participants notice that calming down, surfaces new views on their existence, and working on revealing their true selves shows some notions of their future. These results are consistent with Dewitte and Dezutter's (2021) research, which indicates that reflective thinking and life review (Mallete & Oliver, 2006) have an important role in seeking meaning in the life of older adults. In addition, results support Hupkens et al. (2016) findings that the meaning of life is primarily associated with living circumstances and human relations.

Participants especially emphasised caring for the ageing body, keeping it clean and functional, and healthy nutrition. Phulkerd et al. (2021) similarly found that healthy lifestyle behaviours, personal characteristics and absence of chronic disease results in a positive and healthy life.

Changes due to the slowing pace of life to changes as consequences of ageing and changes in lifestyle lead participants on a more spiritual journey. Participants notice that calming down, surfaces new views on their existence, and working on revealing their true selves shows some notions of their future.

Overall, the current study supported Elder et al. (2003) framework that outposts five broad meaning categories: ageing is a lifelong process, individual construction of life course, historical events that shape life experience, consequences of life transitions, the realisation of life satisfaction through a network of shared relationships.

The knowledge from the study can improve the understanding of motivations for healthy lifestyle changes and reveal potential implications for individual prerequisites to healthy ageing. Additionally, health-promoting ageing and lifestyle counselling can adjust individual needs.

Finally, this study has important implications for developing the strategy of coping with the consequences that result from the major events that triggered changes in the lifestyle of older adults. It is important to facilitate adjustments to new circumstances often imposed by major life events, which lead to healthy ageing. Adapting strategies for older adults develop an understanding of the most major life events changes and smoothly transit between life events. It is important to ensure that older adults act independently and build self-management events-sensitive strategies.

Limitations and further research

This study has limitations. The sample is small. It evenly distributes gender and sets cultural, geographical and professional limits. A large selection of older adults should widen the knowledge about the lifestyle of older adults after retirement. Further research should include a larger sample of participants, distributed geographically by age and profession, and the influence of life events on the lifestyle of

participants. Further research could also benefit from analysing more closely the strategies that older adults implement to cope with major life changes.

CONCLUSION

Thus, older adults' life course concepts are multifaceted and strongly connected to major life events, ageing, health, social convoy, activities, and spiritual development and deeply impact emotions resulting in life satisfaction and action change.

Major events and other circumstances resulting in changes are only sometimes beneficiary. For example, Breheny and Griffiths (2017) found that older adults want to maintain their behavioural patterns regardless of cost because changes generate tensions between past and contemporary behaviour and affect life satisfaction. Nevertheless, changes generate new opportunities, which some older adults want to avoid embracing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: We thank all retired older adults for participating in the study.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The authors argue that there is no conflict of interest.

FUNDING: We conducted the study without funding.

ETHICAL APPROVAL: We applied the ethical principles Code of ethics in medical and social care in Slovenia (2014). All personal data concerning participants in the study were anonymised.

RESOURCES

Abel T. (1991): Measuring health lifestyles in comparative analysis: theoretical issues and empirical findings. *Soc Sci Med.* Vol.: 32, No.: 8, p.: 899-908. DOI: 10.1016/0277-9536(91)90245-8. PMID: 2031206.

An, H. Y., Chen, W., Wng, C. W., Ynag, H. F., Huang, W. T. (2020): The Relationships between Physical Activity and Life Satisfaction and Happiness among Young, Middle-Aged, and Older Adults. [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#). Vol.: 17, No.: 13: 4817

Antonucci, T. C. (2001): Social Relations: Examining Social Networks, Social Support, and Sense of Control. Fifth ed. In Handbook of the Psychology of Aging, edited by J. E. Birren and K. W. Schaie: 427–453. San Diego, California: Academic Press.

Atchley, R. C. (1999): Continuity and adaptation in ageing: Creating positive experiences. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Atchley, R. (2008): Spirituality, Meaning, and the Experience of Aging. *Generations* 2: 12-16.

Atkins, J., Naismith, S. L., Luscombe, G. M., Hickie, I. B. (2013): Psychological distress and quality of life in older persons: relative contributions of fixed and modifiable risk factors. *BMC Psychiatry*. Vol.:13: 249-259.

Banjare, P., Dwivedi, R. and Pradhan, J. (2015): Factors associated with life satisfaction amongst the rural elderly in Odisha, India. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 13:201 DOI 10.1186/s12955-015-0398-y

Bejan, A. (2019): Why the Days Seem Shorter as We Get Older. *European Review*. Vol.: 27, No.: 2: 187–194.

Borg, C., Hallberg, I. R., Blomquist, K. (2006): Life satisfaction among older people (65p) with reduced self-care capacity: the relationship to social, health and financial aspects, *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. Vol.: 15: 607–618.

Breheny, M., Griffiths, Z. (2017): »I had a good time when I was young”: Interpreting descriptions of continuity among older people, *Journal of Aging Studies*. Vol: 41: 30-43.

[Charmaz, K. \(2006\)](#). Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis. Sage, London.

Cherepanova, N., Tukhvatulina, L., Mirza, N. (2016). Social networks of older people in contemporary society, SHS WebLitwin of Conferences, Vol.:28: 1-4.

Cheung, F., & Lucas, R. E. (2015). When does money matter most? Examining the association between income and life satisfaction

over the life course. *Psychology and Aging*. Vol: 30, No.: 1: 120–135. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038682>

Chippendale, T. (2013): Elders' Life Stories: Impact on the Next Generation of Health Professionals, *Current Gerontology and Geriatrics*, Vol.: 1-7:1- 8 <https://doi.org/10.1155/2013/493728>

Comi, S., Lorena, Cottini, E., and Lucifora, C. (2022): The effect of retirement on social relationships, *German Economic Review*. Vol.: 23, No.:2: 275-299. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ger-2020-0109>

Creswell, J. W. (2009): *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches: Third Edition*, SAGE, New York.

Cumming, E. and William E. Henry, W. E. (1961): *Growing Old, the Process of Disengagement*. New York: Basic Books.

Derkx, P., Bos, P., Laceulle, H. and Machielse, A. (2020): Meaning in life and the experience of older people. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*. Vol. 14, No: 1: 37-66.

Dewitte, L., Dezutter, L. (2021): Meaning Reflectivity in Later Life: The Relationship Between Reflecting on Meaning in Life, Presence and Search for Meaning, and Depressive Symptoms in Older Adults Over the Age of 75. *Front. Psychol.* Vol.:12: 1-11.

Dong, H. J., Larsson, B., Dragioti, E., Bernfort, L., Levin, L. Å., & Gerdle, B. (2020): Factors Associated with Life Satisfaction in Older Adults with Chronic Pain (PainS65+). *Journal of pain research*. Vol.:13: 475–489. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JPR.S234565>

Droit-Volet, S. (2019). Time does not fly but slows down in old age. *Time & Society*. Vol: 28, No.: 1: 60–82.

Elder, G. H., Kirkpatrick, M. J., and Crosnoe (2002): The emergence and Development of Life Course Theory: 3-23 in R. Mortimer, Y. T. Shanahan, M. J. eds. (2002): *Handbook of the Life Course*. Kluwer Academic Publishers. New York.

Fincham, T., Weber, J.A. (2000): Applying Continuity Theory to Older Adult Friendships. *Journal of Aging and Identity*. Vol.: 5: 159–168. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009513304519>

- Gohil, E., Charak, R. (2013): Meaning in life, life satisfaction, and positive and negative affect in older adults: Effect of gender and type of residence. *Indian Journal of Psychology*. Vol.: 4, No.:1: 55-59.
- Güven, S., Şener, A. F. (2010): Factors affecting life satisfaction in old age. *Turkish Journal of Geriatrics*, Vol.: 14, No.: 2: 179-186.
- Halama, P., Záhorcová, L., Škrobáková, Ž. (2021): Meaning-making in retirement transition: a qualitative inquiry into Slovak retirees. *International journal of qualitative studies on health and well-being*. Vol.: 16, No.: 1) <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2021.1985414>
- Hallford, D.J., Mellor, D., Cummins, R.A., McCabe, M.P. (2018): Meaning in Life in Earlier and Later Older-Adulthood: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Correlates of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire. *J Appl Gerontol*. Vol.:37, No.:10:1270-1294. DOI: 10.1177/0733464816658750. Epub 2016 Jul 8. PMID: 27401437
- Halaweh, H., Dahlin-Ivanoff, S., Svantesson, U., Willén, C. (2018): Perspectives of Older Adults on Aging Well: A Focus Group Study. *J Aging Res.*: 1-9 :9858252. D: 10.1155/2018/9858252. PMID: 30533224; PMCID: PMC6247475.
- Havighurst, R.J. (1963): Successful ageing. In *Process of Aging*; Williams, R.H., Tibbits, C., Donahue, W., Eds.; Atherton Press: New York, NY, USA: 299–320.
- Henning, G., Stenling A, Bielak, A. A. M, Bjälkebring, P., Gow, A. J., Kivi, M., Muniz-Terrera, G., Johansson, B., Lindwall, M. (2021): Towards an active and happy retirement? Changes in leisure activity and depressive symptoms during the retirement transition. *Ageing Ment Health*. Vol.: 25, No.4: 621-631. doi: 10.1080/13607863.2019.1709156
- Hupkens S., Machielse, A., Goumans, M., Derkx, P. (2018). Meaning in life of older persons: An integrative literature review. *Nurs Ethics*. Vol.25, No.: 8: 973-991. DOI: 10.1177/0969733016680122. PMID: 30871429

Inal, S., Subasi, F., Ay, S. M., Hayran, O. (2007): The links between health-related behaviours and life satisfaction in elderly individuals who prefer institutional living. *BMC Health Services Research*: 7-30.

Jones, N. L., Gilman, S. E., Cheng, T. L., Drury S. S., Hill, C. V., and Geronimus A. T. (2019): Life Course Approaches to the Causes of Health Disparities. *Aetiology science, Supplement 1. Vol.:109, No.: 51: 548-555.*

Kauppi, M., Virtanen, M., Pentti, J. (2021): Social network ties before and after retirement: a cohort study. *Eur J Ageing. Vol.: 18: 503–512.*

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-021-00604-y>

Kutubaeva, R. Z. (2019): Analysis of life satisfaction of the elderly population in the example of Sweden, Austria, and Germany. *Population and Economics. Vol.: 3, No.: 3: 102-116.*
<https://doi.org/10.3897/popecon.3.e47192>

Lamut U. (2012): Kvalitativna vsebinska analiza z računalniškim programom Atlas.ti. In: Adam F., Hlebec V., Kavčič M., et al., eds. *Kvalitativno raziskovanje v interdisciplinarni perspektivi. Ljubljana: Inštitut za razvojne in strateške analize: 130–131.*

[Lemon, B. W.](#), [Bengtson, V. L.](#), [Peterson, J.A.](#) (1972): An exploration of the activity theory of ageing: Activity types and life satisfaction among in-movers to a retirement community. *Journal of Gerontology. Vol.: 27, No.: 4: 511-523*
DOI: [10.1093/geronj/27.4.511](https://doi.org/10.1093/geronj/27.4.511) PMID: 5075497

Lim, H. J., Min, D. K., Thorpe, L. and Lee, C. H. (2016): The multidimensional construct of life satisfaction in older adults in Korea: a six-year follow-up study. *BMC Geriatrics. Vol.: 16, No.:197 DOI 10.1186/s12877-016-0369-0*

Lin, Y., Xiao, H., Lan, X., Wen, S., Bao, S. (2020): Living arrangements and life satisfaction: mediation by social support and meaning in life. *BMC Geriatrics- Vol. 20, No. 136: 2-8.*
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-020-01541-8>

[Litwin, H., and Tur-Sinai, A. \(2015\): The Role of the Social Network in Early Retirement among Older Europeans. *Work, Aging and Retirement*. Vol.:1, No.: 4:340-349. DOI: 10.1093/worker/wav013](#)

Llobet, M. P., Rodríguez, N. A., Farràs, J., Canut, M. T. L. (2011): Quality of life, Happiness, and Satisfaction with Life of Individuals 75 Years Old or Older Cared for by a Home Health Care Program. *Rev. Latino-Am. Enfermagem*. Vol.:19, No.: 3: 467-75.

Longino, C. F., Kart, C. S. (1982): Explicating Activity Theory: A Formal Replication, *Journal of Gerontology*. Vol.: 37, No.: 6: 713–722.

Malette J., Oliver L. (2006). Retirement and existential meaning in the older adult: A qualitative study using life review. *Counselling, Psychotherapy, and Health*. Vol.: 2, No.: 1:30-49.

McDonald, S., Vieira, R., Godfrey, A. (2017): Changes in physical activity during the retirement transition: a series of novel n-of-1 natural experiments. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*. Vol.:14, No.:167. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-017-0623-7>

Marsillas, S., De Donder, L., Kardol, T., van Regenmortel, S., Dury, S., Brosens, D., Smetcoren, A. S., Braña, T., & Varela, J. (2017): Does active ageing contribute to life satisfaction for older people? Testing a new model of active ageing. *European Journal of ageing*. Vol.: 14, No.:3: 295–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-017-0413-8>

Motegi, H., Nishimura, Y., Terada, K. (2016): Does Retirement Change Lifestyle Habits? Does Retirement Change Lifestyle Habits? *Japanese Economic Review*, Vol. 67, No: 2:169-191.

Nakamura, J. S., Hong, H. J., Smith, J., Chopik, W. J., Chen, Y., Vander-Weele, T. J., Klm, E. S. (2022): Associations Between Satisfaction with Aging and Health and Well-being Outcomes Among Older US Adults. *Public Health*. Vol.: 5, No. 2: 1-14.

Nilsson, I. (2006): Occupational engagement among older people: evaluation, repertoire, and relation to life satisfaction. Umeå University medical dissertations. New Series No. 1043 – ISSN 0346-6612 – ISBN 91-7264-145-2.

- Papi, S., & Cheraghi, M. (2021): Multiple factors are associated with life satisfaction in older adults. *Przegląd menopauzalny = Menopause review*. Vol.: 20, No.2: 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.5114/pm.2021.107025>
- Parra-Rizo, M. A., Sanchis-Soler, G. (2020): Satisfaction with Life, Subjective Well-Being and Functional Skills in Active Older Adults Based on Their Level of Physical Activity Practice. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Vol.: 17: 1299-2009.
- Phulkerd, S., Sasinee Thapsuwan, S., Chamratrithirong, A. and Rossarin Soottipong Gray, R. (2018): Influence of healthy lifestyle behaviours on life satisfaction in the ageing population of Thailand: a national population-based survey. *BMC Public Health*. Vol. 21, No.:43: 1-10.
- Ragin C. C., (2007). *Družboslovno raziskovanje: Enotnost in raznolikost metode*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede: 101–103.
- Ren, Q.; Jiang, C.; Jiang, S. (2021): Stressful Life Events and Satisfaction among Chinese Older Adults: The Role of Coping Styles. *Healthcare*. Vol.: 9: 1620. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9121620>
- Rivadeneira, M. F., Mendieta, M. J., Villavicencio, J., Caicedo-Gallardo and J., Buendía (2021): A multidimensional model of healthy ageing: proposal and evaluation of determinants based on a population survey in Ecuador. *BMC Geriatrics*. Vol.: 21, No.: 615: 1-11.
- Robertson, D.A., Savva, G.M., King-Kallimanis, B.L., Kenny, R.A. (2015): Negative Perceptions of Aging and Decline in Walking Speed: A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. *PLoS ONE*. Vol.: 10, No.: 4: e0123260. doi:10.1371/ journal. pone.0123260
- Sánchez, W. M., Sánchez, C. A., Bonete-López, B., Litago, U. J. D., Meja, M.J.M (2021): Physical Activity and Life Satisfaction: An Empirical Study in a Population of Senior Citizens, *Front Psychol*. Vol.: 12: 636914. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.636914

- Shafiee, M., Hazrati, M., Motalebi, S.A., Gholamzade, S., Ghaem. H., Ashari, A. (2020): Can a healthy lifestyle predict successful ageing among Iranian older adults? *Med J Islam.* Vol.: 34-139. <https://doi.org/10.47176/mjiri.34.139>
- Schwartz, E., & Litwin, H. (2018): Social network changes among older Europeans: the role of gender. *European Journal of ageing.* Vol.: 15, No.:4: 359–367. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-017-0454-z>
- Silva, L.M., Silva, A.O., Tura, L. F. R., Silva, M. A., Moreira, P., Nogueira, J. A., Cavalli, S. (2015): Changes and events over the life course: a comparative study between groups of older adults. *Rev. Latino-Am. Enfermagem.* Vol.: 23, No.: 1: 3-10 DOI: 10.1590/0104-1169.0144.2518
- Singh, A., & Misra, N. (2009): Loneliness, depression, and sociability in old age. *Industrial psychiatry journal.* Vol.: 18, No.:1: 51–55. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-6748.57861>
- Stephoe, A., Fancourt, D. (2019): Leading a meaningful life at older ages and its relationship with social engagement, prosperity, health, biology, and time use. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.* Vol.:116, No.: 4:1207-1212.
- Stuntz, C. P. and Weiss.M.R. (2010): Motivating Children and Adolescents to Sustain a Physically Active Lifestyle, *Kinesiology.* Vol.: 4, No.: 5: 433-444.
- Tomini, F., Tomini, S.M. & Groot, W. (2016): Understanding the value of social networks in life satisfaction of elderly people: a comparative study of 16 European countries using SHARE data. *BMC Geriatr.* Vol: 16, No.: 203. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-016-0362-7>
- Urtamo, A., Jyväkorpi, S. K., Strandberg, T. E. (2019): Definitions of successful ageing: A brief review of a multidimensional concept. *Acta Biomed.* Vol.: 90, No.: 2: 359-363.

- Yemiscigil, A., Nattavudh Powdthavee, N., Whillans, A. V. (2021): The Effects of Retirement on Sense of Purpose in Life: Crisis or Opportunity? *Psychological Science*. Vol.. 32, No: 11: 1856–1864.
- World Health Organization. (2018): Ageing and Health, <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>
- Wong, R.Y.M. (2018): Older people present to acute care hospitals. In *Oxford Textbook of Geriatric Medicine*; Michel, J.-P., Beattie, B.L., Martin, F.C., Walston, J.D., Eds.; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, Vol. 2: 247–254.
- Wong, R.Y.M. (2018): Strategies to promote the broad-based implementation of Acute Care for Elders (ACE) units. *Geriatrics*. Vol.:3: 58.
- Vigezzi G. P., Giovanni, G., Gianfredi, V., Frascella, B., Gentile, L., d'Errico, A., Stuckler, D., Ricceri, F., Costa, G., Odone, A. (2021): Transition to retirement impact on health and lifestyle habits: analysis from a nationwide Italian cohort. *BMC Public Health*. Vol. 21: 1670.
- Zantinge, E.M., Matthijs van den Berg, Smit, A. H., Picavet, H. S. J. (2013): Retirement and a healthy lifestyle: opportunity or pitfall? A narrative review of the literature, *European Journal of Public Health*.