

EMPLOYMENT IN LATE ADULTHOOD: PSYCHOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS PRO'S AND CON'S

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ABSTRACT

The research participants were people aged 60-79. The research shows that higher employment status contributes to their psychological well-being, primarily to positive interaction with others and their ability to master the environment. The research has proved that higher education and confidence in financial well-being of employed people reduce the intensity of asthenic emotions, while in those unemployed it increases the intensity of asthenic emotions. The employed are more self-confident; their self-confidence contributes to their psychological well-being. Self-confidence of the unemployed people, while enhancing psychological well-being, increases sthenic emotions. It is shown that reticence as self-attitude modality plays a greater role in the personality structure of the elderly people who are unemployed. The conclusions are made on weak and strong points of employment in late adulthood.

Key words: employment, psychological well-being, self-attitude, emotions, late adulthood

INTRODUCTION

In late adulthood people have different opinions about employment: some people are strongly against it, as they were eagerly looking forward to the age pension, whereas others cannot imagine their life without everyday duty and going to work, while the third group obviously goes with the tide of not trying to overcome life circumstances.

Employment can be of different types: it can be related or not related to one's speciality obtained in youth and mature period of life. We were interested in employment irrespective of its relation to the speciality obtained. The issue of employment in late adulthood is becoming more and more topical for Ukraine and Europe in general, as we have a significant percentage of people who are over 60 and still have the right attitude to active life, good mind and high working performance. According to the data of Country Meters, in

Ukraine there are 15.5% of people aged 65 and over. To compare – in the US such people make up 13.1%, in Poland – 13.7%, in France and Switzerland – about 17%, in Germany – 20.6%, in Japan – 22.9% .

A lot of psychological researches stress the significant impact employment has on the psychological well-being of a person (Aleksandrova, 2002, pp. 101-125), adaptiveness (Krasnova, Lidars, 2002, pp. 159-175), health and financial condition evaluation (Nazarova, 1999, pp. 62-71). Employment that preserves a sense of life helps demonstrate competence and prevents social isolation, it is a powerful «antidepressant» in the old age. However, practice shows that the older a person is, the less employers want to employ such a person providing various reasons for rejection. Negative social stereotypes and ageism also play an important role.

Martin Greller (the US), while studying the role employment and career has in the process of ageing of a person came to the conclusion that an important factor that makes an efficient person aged 55 and over quit his/her job is social ageing. Attention is also paid to the social stereotypes which create conditions that make a person give up professional activity. People who despite this fact continue working in old age, better evaluate their health, observe improvement of their intellectual functions and increase in life satisfaction. A job becomes a source of stability, it means interaction with other people and these relationships can give a new sense of life. Therefore, there is an established opinion that in order to ensure positive well-being in old age a person should continue professional activity (Greller, 1996, pp. 55-60).

The aim of the research is to reveal weak and strong aspects of employment in late adulthood, namely: 1) what social and demographic factors influence psychological well-being and self-attitude of the employed and unemployed people; 2) whether there is a difference in the relations between psychological well-being and self-attitude in the employed and unemployed people; 3) what is the role of sthenic and asthenic emotions in the life of the employed.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Psychological well-being was measured by means of the Ryff scale of psychological well-being as adapted by Tetiana D. Shevelkova and Pavlo P. Fesenko (Istratova, Eksakusto, 2012, pp. 93-103), self-attitude – methodology by Volodymyr V. Stolin and Sergiy R. Pantyleiev (Romanova, 2009, pp. 360-366), sthenic/asthenic emotions – methodology by Vadym E. Milman (Milman, 1990, p. 23-43).

The data were analyzed separately for the groups of the employed and unemployed people. Reliability of the results obtained was checked by means of such mathematical and statistical analysis as: comparative (Student's T-tests with $p < 0.05$), correlational – according to r-Pearson (with $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$). The procedure of factor analysis (with $> .50$) consisted in determining the

key factors resulting from the procedure Varimax normalized for each of the groups.

The group of research participants consisted of 121 persons aged 60-79 that corresponds to the age period of late adulthood. Out of them there were 60 males and 61 females. 40% of the respondents are employed (mainly in medical, technical, economic and educational fields), 60% are unemployed. Below are the social and demographic characteristics of each of the groups.

The average age of the employed respondents who participated in our research is 65.8 years; 60% are males, 40% are females. The majority has higher education (62%) and have subordinate status at work (58%). 54% spent their childhood (age till 12 years) in the village, however, at the period of the research the overwhelming majority (72%) lived in cities. Significant number of the respondents (74%) live with a spouse; evaluate their health (60%) and financial situation (76%) as average. The average age of the unemployed research participants is 68.2 years and they are mainly females (57.7%). Almost half of the respondents have higher education (49.4%), a significant number (62%) spent their childhood in the village and now live in cities (66.2%). A little bit more than a half live with a spouse (56.3%). A substantial majority have evaluated their health (76.1%) and financial situation (76.1%) as average.

Thus, the major differences between the employed and the unemployed respondents as to their social and demographic data lie in the fact that among the elderly people employed, participating in our research, males prevailed, they are about two years younger, they are better educated, the majority of them migrated from villages to cities and the overwhelming majority preserved their families (they live with their spouses) as compared to those unemployed. Every fourth person employed evaluates his health as good and practically every fifth considers that his financial situation is good and these are higher indicators in comparison with the group of unemployed participants.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND EMPLOYMENT IN LATE ADULTHOOD

Psychological well-being of the employed people aged 60-79 is most significantly influenced by their status at work. Rise of a status from a subordinate to a person in charge has a positive effect on both general psychological well-being ($r=0.335$) and as such its aspects as positive relations with others ($r=0.301$) and environmental mastery ($r=0.316$). If an elderly person performs functions of a person in charge, it presages such qualities of this person as trustful attitude to others, empathy, affection and mutual understanding. Such people become more efficient with respect to controlling functions and tend to create favourable conditions for achieving their goals.

The key factor of self-realization and openness to the new experience in the elderly people irrespective of their employment is higher educational

level ($r=0.354$ for the employed, $r=0.453$ for the unemployed). Also education has a considerable impact on the goals which an employed person sets in life ($r=0.459$), as well as a place this person spent his/her childhood - in the village or in the city ($r=0.284$), and how a person evaluates his/her health ($r=0.280$). Giving a sense to their life, living through the unity of the past, present and future is more characteristic of those older people having a job, who have higher education, spent their childhood closer to cities and who more positively evaluate the condition of their health. The reverse is also true: the old-aged people who have not lost their life targets are of better opinion about their health (Figure 1).

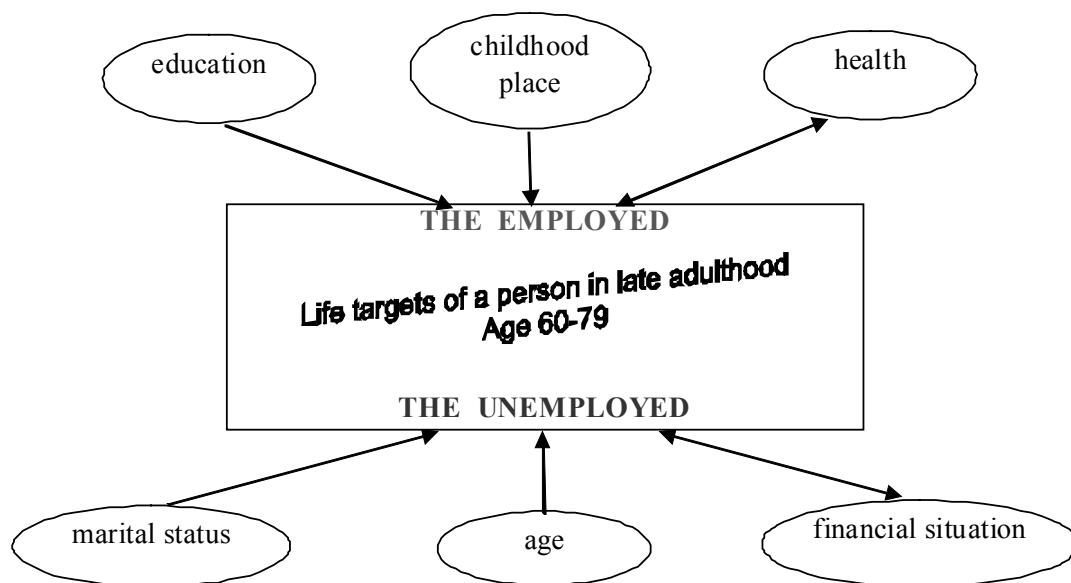


Figure 1. Social and demographic factors of a person's life targets in late adulthood.

Source: Author.

For the unemployed people of that age education, a place where childhood was spent and evaluation of their health are not related to their life targets. The sense and focus of their life is determined by the subjective evaluation of their financial situation ($r=0.234$), marital status ($r=-0.239$) and age ($r=0.258$): feeling that there is a focus in their life will grow with age in those people who have a family (live with a spouse) and better evaluate their financial condition. It is also likely that those people who are more satisfied with their financial situation are more determined in life (Figure 1).

The role of self-attitude in the factor model of psychological well-being is highlighted by the results of data analysis for the elderly people who are employed. The model is represented by six factors and accounts for 64.33% from the general dispersion of data. The rest of dispersions are stipulated by accidental impacts which are not considered in this model. The role of psychological well-being for the employed people in late adulthood is indicated

by the first factor that accounts for 25.41% from the general dispersion of data and includes such indicators of psychological well-being as a general indicator (0.821) positive relations with others (0.770), environmental mastery (0.736), personal growth (0.733), purpose in life (0.693), self-acceptance (0.680); such modalities of self-attitude as self-respect (0.864), self-value (0.740), self-confidence (0.714), mirror-like I (0.652), self-management (0.625) and auto-affection (0.561).

Psychologically advantaged employed people aged 60–79 years can be characterized as self-confident people who respect and value themselves and who are capable of self-management. They have positive feelings towards themselves and think that that people around are also have a positive opinion about them. These results are supported by correlation analysis, which, apart from the aforementioned, also indicates diminishing of inner conflict, self-accusations and self-abasement in psychologically advantaged elderly people who are employed. We pay attention to the lack of connection between the inner well-being and self-acceptance, self-affection and reticence (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between psychological well-being and self-attitude

Self-attitude modalities	The employed (N=50)	The unemployed (N=71)
Reticence	0.029172	0.452014**
Self-confidence	0.619804**	0.677173**
Self-management	0.432546**	0.499271**
Mirror-like I	0.450971**	0.559754**
Self-value	0.631102**	0.468062**
Self-acceptance	0.073294	0.285919*
Self-affection	0.068043	0.279996*
Inner conflict	-0.506361**	-0.505719**
Self-accusation	-0.432208**	-0.446277**
Self-respect	0.544019**	0.704667**
Auto-affection	0.464557**	0.439624**
Self-abasement	-0.518243**	-0.523884**

* with $p < 0.05$ ** with $p < 0.01$

Source: Author.

Factor model of psychological well-being for the unemployed is also presented by six factors which account for 66.23% from the general dispersion of data. This model does not consider dispersions which are caused by accidental impacts. Significance of psychological well-being is reflected in the first factor which explains 30.58% from the general dispersion of data. It combined such indicators of psychological well-being as a general indicator (0.862), positive relations with others (0.817), purpose in life (0.769), self-acceptance (0.718), environmental mastery (0.709), personal growth (0.687); such modalities of self-attitude as self-confidence (0.606) and self-respect (0.545). Thus, according

to the factor analysis, only two self-attitude modalities are important for the psychological well-being of the unemployed. This group of respondents can be characterized as psychologically advantaged self-confident unemployed elderly people who respect themselves.

Correlation analysis for this group confirms and expands the circle of interrelations indicating the role of all self-attitude modalities under research in improving psychological well-being of the unemployed people in the period of late adulthood (Table 1).

What is the role of personal autonomy in the self-attitude of the employed? Being one of the indicators of psychological well-being it characterizes a person as independent and autonomous, capable of resisting the stereotypes of surrounding people. For this group of elderly people autonomy did not get into any of the factors. As correlation analysis shows, autonomy growth leads to improvement of self-management ($r=0.378$) and diminishing of inner conflict ($r=-0.395$), self-accusations ($r=-0.339$) and self-abasement ($r=-0.406$).

For the unemployed people at this age autonomy has a broader spectre of influence. It is part of the fourth factor which accounts for 5.23% from the general dispersion of data. This factor has the following structure: autonomy (0.611), self-abasement (-0.917), self-accusation (-0.843) and inner conflict (-0.812). Thus, one can assume greater independence of those unemployed persons who are not inclined to negative self-attitude. It is also supported by the data of the correlation analysis. More independent and autonomous, able to resist the pressure of those around them and having their own criteria of self-evaluation are those elderly people who show higher self-confidence ($r=0.293$), self-respect ($r=0.256$), value themselves as personalities ($r=0.259$) and think that surrounding people also respect them and approve of their actions ($r=0.237$). Greater autonomy in late adulthood is peculiar to those unemployed people who are not inclined to inner conflicts ($r=-0.504$), feelings of guilt ($r=-0.405$) and self-abasement ($r=-0.498$), which means that they do not have negative attitudes towards themselves.

SELF-ATTITUDE AND EMPLOYMENT IN LATE ADULthood

As expected, employment in late adulthood positively influences self-acceptance of a person ($r=0.278$), and higher status of a person at work enhances his self-confidence ($r=0.283$) and self-value ($r=0.348$), decreasing the level of self-accusations ($r=-0.296$). More positive self-attitude of the employed is also caused by a place where one has spent his childhood and permanent residence: the closer childhood was spent to urban areas, the more positive is the attitude a person has towards himself ($r=0.303$) and the less a person blames himself for his failures and bad luck ($r=-0.316$); the closer to the urban area a person lives in old age, the less a person blames himself for his failures ($r=-0.310$) and the less such person tends to have negative self-attitude ($r=-0.306$).

It is supported by factor analysis. In particular, the fifth factor that accounts for 6.04% from the general dispersion of data, combined the following scales: childhood place (0.520), place of permanent residence (0.554), self-accusations (-0.836), self-abasement (-0.817) and inner conflict (-0.609). Thus, the employed people who spent their childhood years in cities and in old age also live not far from a city show reduction of negative self-attitude.

Self-attitude of the unemployed elderly people also proved to be related to the place where they spent their childhood which is shown by the third factor (accounts for 8.90% from the general dispersion of data). This factor includes a place where one's childhood was spent (-0.575), self-value (0.545), self-acceptance (0.570), self-affection (0.734) and self-affection (0.763). It allows us to make a conclusion that those unemployed people who did not spend their childhood in a village will show growth of positive self-attitude in old age.

Quite unexpected is the impact of the financial situation of the employed people on their self-attitude. If a person who receives a pension, while having an opportunity to be employed, evaluates his financial condition as good one, then his inner agreement with himself and approval of his plans and wishes goes down ($r=-0.285$). A person is likely to sacrifice his unrealized intentions to achieve a higher level of financial well-being, however, this assumption is to be additionally checked. On the contrary, higher evaluation of their financial situation on the part of the unemployed can be a source of integration of their creative life, inner activity, can reinforce their belief that their destiny is in their own hands ($r=0.237$).

The research failed to reveal a correlation between education level and self-attitude of the elderly people who are employed, although in the process of getting older they will try to give less and less information about themselves ($r=0.336$), as if protecting their inner world from external interference. Factor analysis allowed us to specify these data. As the sixth factor reveals (4.62% from the general dispersion of data), closely correlated are such variables: age (0.710), health evaluation (-0.633), financial situation evaluation (-0.654) and reticence (0.514). Thus, reticence of the employed is enhanced not only because of their age, but also because of dissatisfaction with their financial condition and health.

To compare, reticence of the unemployed depends on the level of education ($r=0.247$), and with age their self-respect and ability to self-management will grow ($r=0.316$ and $r=0.322$ respectively). These variables are combined in the fifth factor (4.75% from the general dispersion of data). It has the following structure: age (0.561), education (0.536), reticence (0.558), self-management (0.589), self-respect (0.565), sthenic emotions (0.697). Higher education and sthenic emotions will support self-management and self-respect of those unemployed elderly people, who are not capable or are not willing to reveal important information about themselves.

WHAT ROLE DO STHENIC AND ASTHENIC EMOTIONS PLAY IN THE LIFE OF THE EMPLOYED PEOPLE?

As to their intensity, sthenic/asthenic emotions of the employed and unemployed elderly people are not different. It was revealed that depending on the employment they will be influenced by different social and demographic factors (Figure 2). Higher status at work contributes to the appearance of sthenic emotions ($r=0.305$). General age tendency is the following: those elderly people who are employed with age will feel more and more emotions which weaken energy resources of the body (asthenic) ($r=0.281$), and those who are unemployed, on the contrary, will feel more emotions that will increase these resources (sthenic) ($r=0.271$). Higher education and higher evaluation of their financial situation in the employed will decrease asthenic emotions ($r=-0.374$ and $r=-0.397$ respectively), while in the unemployed will strengthen sthenic ($r=0.396$ and $r=0.403$ respectively). One can also expect that those employed people who have less asthenic emotions and those unemployed who have more sthenic emotions, are more satisfied with their financial condition.

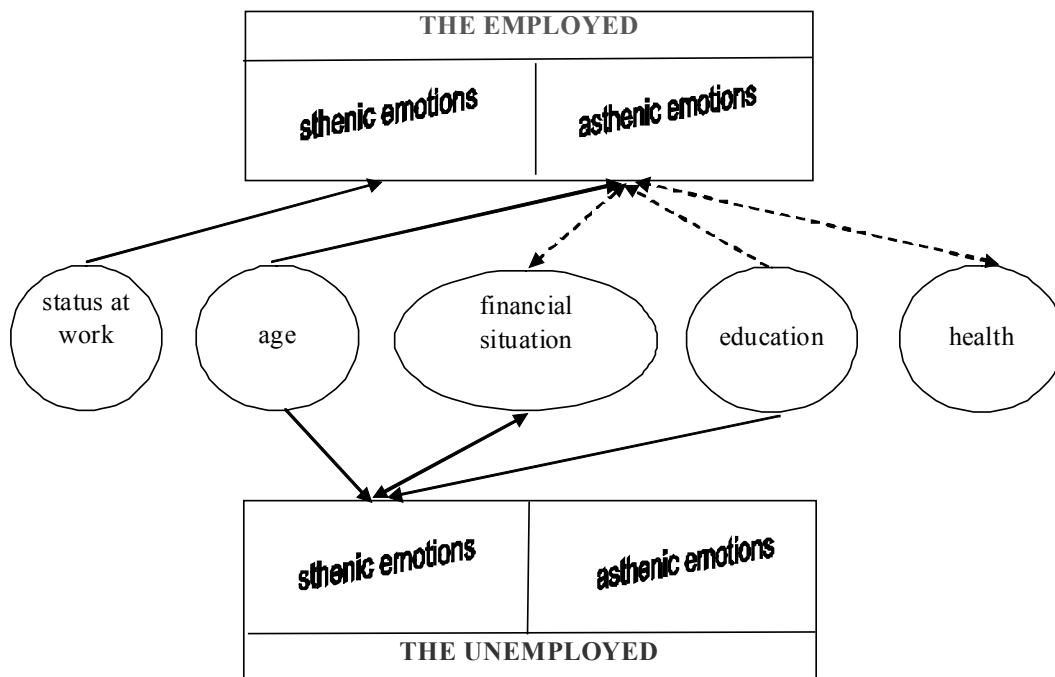


Figure 2. Social and demographic factors of sthenic and asthenic emotions of a person in late adulthood.

Source: Author.

Moreover, asthenic emotions of the employed people become weaker under the influence of the subjective health evaluation: lower level of asthenic emotions will be observed in those people who have higher opinion about their

health, and vice versa, those who are more satisfied with their health, will have less asthenic emotions ($r=-0.314$).

Domination of different emotions (sthenic/asthenic) intensifies different self-attitude modalities in late adulthood. Sthenic emotions, depending on the employment, contribute to self-management and self-respect (r is within the range from 0.311 to 0.497). With the unemployed people sthenic emotions also help self-confidence ($r=0.393$) and reticence ($r=0.386$). If elderly people have positive emotions and their inner resources are intensified, then irrespective of the fact whether they have the status of the employed person or not, such people will be convinced that the results of their activity will depend primarily on them. This, in its turn, will promote more positive evaluation of one's own «I». It is also possible to boost self-confidence of the unemployed, which, according to the data of our research, turned out to be a little bit lower than in the employed people ($t=-2.630$; $p=0.009$), by stimulating sthenic emotions. Experiencing these emotions it is easier for people to «doctor» information, they want to tell others about themselves.

If asthenic emotions of the employed are related to their self-acceptance ($r=0.309$), then those of the unemployed are related to experiencing of the inner conflict ($r=0.328$) and self-abasement ($r=0.289$). Thus, experiencing the so called passive emotions some elderly people (those who continue working) can start developing more positive attitude towards themselves, approving of their own plans and intentions; while the others (those who have already stopped working), on the contrary, can feel increase in negative self-attitude, doubts, feeling of guilt, inner tension.

CONCLUSIONS

Employment in late adulthood has its pro's and con's. The situation is particularly favourable when a person has a status, has higher education, lives throughout his life close to the city or in the city and generally is satisfied with his health. Such people will have good self-acceptance, self-confidence, lower level of proneness to inner conflict, self-accusations and self-abasement, as compared to others.

A serious forewarning for the elderly people who are employed is the fact that with age they show an increasing tendency to develop emotional «passiveness», which is expressed in experiencing asthenic emotions. In old age such emotions should not always be considered as negative demonstrations, as they can enhance self-acceptance of the employed person. Asthenic emotions can be opposed by high educational level and satisfaction with one's health; emotional resources can also be strengthened by the high status at work. An argument that can be used against employment of the elderly people is that satisfaction with one's financial situation can lead to diminishing of self-acceptance.

We do not observe similar peculiarities in the unemployed people. On the contrary, higher evaluation of the financial condition and elderly age positively influence self-management and goals that a person sets in life. The place where one has spent one's childhood and permanent residence place play a considerably lesser role in their psychological well-being and self-attitude, than in the employed people. Unlike the employed people, who tend to have an increase of asthenic emotions, with age the unemployed have more intensified sthenic emotions. In their turn, asthenic emotions enhance not the self-acceptance, which is the case with the employed, but inner conflict and self-abasement. Thus, one can speak about different directions of sthenic and asthenic emotions with the employed and unemployed people in late adulthood.

Education of a person and autonomy do not change their role depending on employment or unemployment. Irrespective of employment, higher education will support personal growth in late adulthood, while more independent and autonomous will be those elderly people, who are not inclined to negative self-attitudes.

Further research on the problem in question can be related to the more detailed study of the way employment can influence motivational structure of personality depending on the gender of a person.

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