

Older people's pleasant events and subjective well being

Prática de atividades prazerosas e bem-estar subjetivo em idosos

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the prevalence and relationships between subjective well being and involvement in pleasant events in a sample of 156 community-dwelling older people without cognitive impairment. The Brazilian version of The California Older Person's Pleasant Events Schedule assessed the involvement in pleasant events, and subjective well-being was assessed by the Life Satisfaction Scale and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale. The sample showed higher levels of positive affect compared to negative affect, higher frequency of Contemplative activities and lower frequency of Intellectual activities. Significant relationships were observed between the constructs in general, suggesting that the higher the Involvement of older people in Pleasant Events the higher their Subjective Well Being. Social and Competence activities as well as Contemplative activities showed stronger associations with Subjective Well Being. These findings are relevant for the development of interventions and public policies focused on older people's mental health.

Keywords: Aging; Leisure activities; Mental health.

Resumo

Este estudo objetivou investigar prevalência e relações entre Bem-estar Subjetivo e Prática de Atividades Prazerosas em 156 idosos da comunidade sem comprometimento cognitivo. Foram utilizadas a versão brasileira adaptada do California Older Person's Pleasant Events Schedule para avaliar prática de atividades prazerosas, a Escala de Satisfação com a Vida e a Escala de Afetos Positivos e Negativos. A amostra apresentou média superior para afetos positivos do que negativos,

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Support: Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais (Edital nº 01/2017).

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How to cite this article

Ferreira, H. G., & Suzuki, S. M. (2022). Older people's pleasant events and subjective well being. *Estudos de Psicologia* (Campinas), 39, e200092. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0275202239e200092>



maior frequência nas atividades contemplativas e menor frequência nas atividades intelectuais. Foram observadas relações significativas entre os constructos, indicando que quanto mais idosos praticam atividades prazerosas, mais experimentam Bem-estar Subjetivo. As atividades sociais e de competência e as contemplativas foram as que mais se associaram ao Bem-estar Subjetivo. Esses achados são relevantes para a elaboração de intervenções e de políticas públicas voltadas à saúde mental de idosos.

Palavras-chave: Envelhecimento; Atividades de lazer; Saúde mental.

The older population in Brazil has grown very rapidly. In 2050 it is forecasted that 30% of the population will be composed of individuals aged 60 years or more (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2018). Life expectancy at 60 years has increased by around 9 years during a period of five decades in Brazil, with evidence that in most regions of this country it is possible to find older people living a healthy life for a greater number of years (Camargos et al., 2019).

The notion of aging as a succession of losses is incompatible with the adoption of actions aimed at maintaining well-being during all life stages, that are influenced by psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, environmental and economic aspects, culminating in different trajectories and outcomes during aging (Pinto & Neri, 2017). In that regard, the number of studies in the literature covering the positive aspects of old age is increasing, and these studies seek to propose and implement measures to promote quality of life and adapt the individual to the complexity of active aging (Cachioni et al., 2017; Ferreira & Barham, 2011). With this in mind, researchers started to investigate the variables related to successful aging, as well as ways to promote it based on environmental and individual resources (Ferreira et al., 2019; Mantovani et al., 2016).

Among the different aspects that ought to be considered in successful aging, we should include the perceptions of the older elderly people about their own experiences, their satisfaction with life and their emotions (Mantovani et al., 2016). This individual perception is called Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and is defined as the singular judgment about quality of life in general, considering cognitive and emotional aspects, including positive feelings, such as joy and pride, and negative feelings such as shame, guilt, sadness, anger, among others. The cognitive component drives the way oneself evaluate their own life, that is, the satisfaction with some specific life domains. With regard to emotions, that are evaluations including positive or negative emotional reactions (Diener et al., 1985).

The SWB is an important construct to be evaluated in older adults, as it highlights individuality and allows the development of interventions in a more subjective way, based on the individual perception about what needs to be done to improve quality of life (Mantovani et al., 2016). In addition, studies indicate that SWB is associated with increased longevity and improved immune response (Sadler et al., 2011), in addition to being associated with greater social involvement (Miranda Neto et al., 2012).

When there is a balance between positive and negative affects, as well as the variability of positive and negative emotional experiences and the ability to deal with more complex emotional experiences, it can be said that older adults experience adequate levels of SWB (Cachioni et al., 2017; Miranda Neto et al., 2012). Variables such as age, social status, education level, gender, physical capacity and family constitution can significantly affect the SWB; in addition, older people's willingness to choose positive targets for affective and cognitive investments, such as involvement in physical, cultural, intellectual, social and family activities, may also be related to SWB (Cachioni et al., 2017).

Thus, there seems to be a relationship between SWB and the activities practiced by older persons. Some authors point out that, for the activity to provide well-being, it must bring some meaning to the older person's life, make sense of his/her experience and promote satisfaction (Ferreira & Barham, 2011). In this sense, activities that generate pleasure can have positive effects on mental health, that is, once the older person considers a particular event as pleasant and gets involved in it, he/she experiences positive consequences

and a greater chance of enjoying well-being and less probability of experiencing negative feelings (Ferreira & Barham, 2011; Mantovani et al., 2016). The idea that pleasure is an important component for older people's well-being has brought to the literature the concept of Involvement in Pleasant Events (IPE) which can be understood as the practice of activities or experience of events that bring positive feelings to the older person (Ferreira et al., 2019). The IPE takes into account the frequency of activities and the pleasure experienced. A pleasant activity brings a subjective experience of pleasure, be it leisure, work, intellectual activity, or of any other type (Ferreira & Barham, 2011; Ferreira et al., 2019).

Studies about older people's involvement in pleasant events are relevant, as IPE is related to lower levels of depression and higher levels of functionality, being an important factor to be taken into account for the prevention and treatment of late life depression (Ferreira & Barham, 2018). Likewise, the SWB is related to relevant aspects of older people's physical and mental health (Mantovani et al., 2016; Miranda Neto et al., 2012; Sadler et al., 2011). Therefore, IPE and SWB are important constructs to be investigated as they integrate important dimensions of the aging process, especially successful aging.

However, the relationships between SWB and IPE have not yet been directly investigated, especially the relationships among the domains of each construct. The SWB can be understood as a construct composed of three domains, namely: life satisfaction, positive and negative affects (Diener et al., 1985). The IPE covers four domains of potentially pleasant activities: (1) social and competence activities; (2) contemplative activities; (3) practical activities; and (4) intellectual activities (Ferreira & Barham, 2017). Understanding how IPE and SWB are related to life satisfaction and positive and negative affects can help in the planning and implementation of interventions aimed at promoting older people's well-being and promoting their quality of life, besides contributing to the development of public policies that consider the complexity and specificity of the aging process (Ferreira & Barham, 2011; Mantovani et al., 2016). Still, research on how and if older Brazilians are experiencing healthy and pleasant aging is still incipient (Camargo et al., 2018), and the present study intends to fill part of this gap.

Therefore, the main objective of the present study is to investigate the relationships between older people's SWB and IPE. The specific objectives are: (1) to describe the levels of SWB and IPE in the sample; and (2) to investigate the relationship between life satisfaction, positive and negative affects, with the different types of pleasant events (social, contemplative, practical and intellectual activities).

Method

Participants

This is a convenience sample of 156 non-institutionalized older people from the city of Uberaba, Minas Gerais State. The mean age of the participants was 69.72 years, ranging from 60 to 88 years and with a standard deviation of 6.77. Regarding gender, 83.3% of the sample was female and 16.7% male. A total of 14.2% of the sample qualified themselves as illiterate. All participants achieved at least the minimum score on the Mini Mental State Exam according to their education level (Brucki et al., 2003), indicating that everyone had the cognitive ability to respond to the instruments.

Taking into account that the total population of non-institutionalized older people without cognitive impairment in the city where the study was carried out (which constituted the sample inclusion criteria) was not known, but that it was a finite population of up to 100,000 individuals, a formula for sample calculation was applied (Callegari-Jacques, 2003) considering a 90% confidence level, maximum estimate error of 0.05 and homogeneous distribution of the investigated variables (85/15 ratio), reaching a sample size of at least 138 participants.

Instruments

Sociodemographic questionnaire – a questionnaire designed to collect sociodemographic information from participants (age, gender, education, marital status, income, etc.), general physical health conditions (medical history, presence of diseases, etc.) and self-rated health. For self-rated health, participants had to rate their health as “excellent”, “very good”, “good”, “reasonable” or “poor”, based on the question “in general, would you say your health is:”.

The Brazilian version of the California Older Person’s Pleasant Events Schedule (OPPEs) BR (Ferreira & Barham, 2017) – the Brazilian version of the instrument was adapted and validated for people between 60 and 93 years of age, comprising 67 items that describe activities that older people tend to find enjoyable. The respondent must indicate the frequency with which he performed such activities in the last month, according to the following scoring scale: 0 (never); 1 (1 – 6 times), and 2 (more than 7 times). The respondent should also rate the subjective pleasure he/she experienced while performing each activity, or that he/she would have experienced if they had performed it, using the following scoring scale: 0 (it was not or would not have been pleasant), 1 (it was or would have been reasonably pleasant) and 2 (it was or would have been quite pleasant). OPPEs-BR discriminates four domains of activities: Social and Competence Activities, Contemplative Activities, Practical Activities and Intellectual Activities. The Social and Competence Activities domain comprises activities that describe interactions of the person with their environment and with other people; these activities are essentially social, but also bring a sense of competence, usefulness and autonomy to older adults. Contemplative activities include contact with nature and expression of positive feelings towards other people, under a more introverted and contemplative framework. Practical Activities describe activities of involvement with the community, as well as domestic activities, that is, events in which the person remain involved in actions that are important to them and that may have reflections in the community. Intellectual Activities, in turn, include activities that require the ability to read and write. The instrument also has significant correlations with depression, indicating evidence of external validity and excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.95$) among all the items (Ferreira & Barham, 2017).

The *Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)* (Diener et al., 1985) and *Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)* (Diener & Emmons, 1984) to assess Subjective Well-Being – both have been translated to Brazilian Portuguese by Albuquerque and Tróccoli (2004) and adapted for use with older Brazilians aged 60 to 80 by Albuquerque et al. (2010). The SWLS allows for a more global assessment of the individuals’ personal satisfaction in relation to their life, while the PANAS assesses the emotions experienced by people. The SWLS is composed of 4 statements that the respondent should answer on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 10 (totally agree), regarding their satisfaction with life. The PANAS, on the other hand, is composed of ten different affects (positive and negative), and the respondent should answer on a scale of 1 (nothing) to 10 (extremely), how much he/she has been experiencing each affect lately. Both scales have good internal consistencies for the present sample: SWLS ($\alpha = 0.78$); Positive Affects ($\alpha = 0.81$); and Negative Affects ($\alpha = 0.72$).

Procedure

Participants were recruited from places that provide public services to the older people, namely: *Unidade de Atenção ao Idoso* (Older People Care Unit), *Universidades Abertas à Terceira Idade (UATI)*, Open Universities for the Older People), Public Hospital, *Centro de Estudos e Pesquisa em Psicologia Aplicada* (Center for Studies and Research in Applied Psychology) and at the *Centro de Atenção Integral à Saúde* (Center for Comprehensive Health Practice). When contacting the person, the objectives and conditions of the survey were explained, and, if they agreed to participate, they received the Informed Consent Form to be signed. After this stage, the older person responded first to the Mini-Mental State Exam. After verifying

if the score on this instrument indicated no cognitive impairment, the participant responded to the other instruments. The survey occurred in the institutions where the older person was contacted and was carried out by previously trained Psychology students.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values). The distribution of variables was verified and it was found that they had a non-normal distribution, and therefore the Spearman correlation coefficient was used to investigate the association between IPE and SWB. The data were analyzed using the IBM®SPSS® 20.0 statistical analysis software.

The present study was developed from the research project "Indicators of mental health of older people living in Uberaba: a descriptive study" that was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the *Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro*, having been approved (CAAE n° 65813417.9.0000.5154).

Results

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants. The majority of the sample was female (83.3%), aged between 60 and 70 years (57.7%), and able to read and write (85.8%). Regarding self-rated health, most participants rated their health as being good/reasonable (68.4%).

Table 1
Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Variables	%
Gender	
Female	83.3
Male	16.7
Age	
60-70	57.7
71-80	33.3
81-90	9.0
Education	
Illiterate	14.2
Can read and write	85.8
Self-rated health	
Excellent/Very good	23.2
Good/ Reasonable	68.4
Bad	8.4

Table 2 shows the descriptive data for the domains of SWB (satisfaction with life, positive and negative affects) and IPE (Frequency and general pleasure in activities, in addition to the types of pleasant activities). It should be noted that the average of positive affects was higher than the average of negative affects. The most frequent positive emotional states were "cheerful", followed by "happy", "optimistic", "satisfied" and "fun". The most frequent negative emotional states were defined as "worried", followed by "frustrated", "depressed", "angry" and "unhappy". The most frequent potentially enjoyable activities were contemplative activities, followed by social and competence activities, practical and intellectual activities.

Table 3 shows the correlations found between frequency of pleasant activities types with life satisfaction and positive and negative affects. It should be observed that, in general, SWB and IPE are related constructs, since there have been several significant relationships between the domains of the two constructs, indicating that the greater the number of pleasant activities performed by the older person, the greater their chances

of experiencing SWB. Analyzing the relationships between the general scores for frequency and pleasure in activities with the dimensions of SWB, it appears that there are significant relationships between all domains, with a predominance of moderate correlations. The greater the satisfaction with life and positive affects, the greater the frequency and pleasure experienced in the activities, whereas the greater the experience of negative affects, the less the frequency and pleasure in performing activities.

Table 2
Descriptive of Involvement in Pleasant Events and Subjective Well-Being

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
General Frequency	1.34	0.30	0.43	1.94
General Pleasure	1.69	0.21	0.91	2
Social and Competence Activities	1.22	0.39	0.19	2
Contemplative Activities	1.67	0.28	0.57	2
Practical Activities	1.11	0.38	0.22	2
Intellectual Activities	0.8	0.66	0	2
Happy	7.72	2.55	1	10
Satisfied	7.67	2.47	0	10
Funny	7.54	2.73	0	10
Optimistic	7.68	2.75	0	10
Cheerful	8.46	2.12	1	10
Depressed	4.01	3.25	0	10
Frustrated	4.06	2.99	0	10
Angry	3.97	3.17	0	10
Worried	6.9	3.02	0	10
Unhappy	3.63	3.17	0	10
Positive Affects	7.81	1.96	1.8	10
Negative Affects	4.57	2.18	0	10
Satisfaction with Life	7.76	1.91	2.5	10

Table 3
Correlations between Involvement in Pleasant Events and Subjective Well-Being

Subjective Well-Being	Practice of Pleasant Activities					
	General Frequency	General Pleasure	Social and Competence Activities	Contemplative Activities	Practical Activities	Intellectual Activities
Positive affects	0.418**	0.337**	0.429**	0.281**	0.281**	0.112
Negative affects	-0.329**	-0.255**	-0.347**	-0.273**	-0.156	-0.100
Life satisfaction	0.380**	0.354**	0.367**	0.259**	0.304**	0.170*

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Note that Social and Competence Activities and Contemplative Activities were the only kinds of activity that showed significant correlations with all domains of SWB, suggesting that these types of activity are more strongly related to SWB than practical and intellectual activities. Intellectual activities were less related to SWB. This type of activity showed a significant relationship only with life satisfaction, and this relationship was weak and with a lower level of significance. In contrast, practical activities were significantly related to life satisfaction and positive affects, but there was no significant relationship with negative affects, suggesting that the involvement of the older person in practical activities is independent of the negative affects they experience.

In Table 4, we can see the correlations between positive and negative emotions with the types of pleasant activities. It should be noted that “worry” is the only emotion that did not have any relationship with IPE. We can also observe that intellectual activities did not show associations with negative affects, but showed few significant relationships with positive affects (“fun” and “optimism”). Social and competence activities were the type of activity that presented a stronger relationship with all affects, except “worry”. The contemplative activities were not related to “optimism” and “worry” and the practical activities were not related to “frustration”, “worry” and “unhappiness”.

Table 4
Correlations between Involvement in Pleasant Events, Positive Affects and Negative Affects

Affects	Practice of Pleasant Activities					
	Frequency in activities	Pleasure in activities	Social and Competence Activities	Contemplative Activities	Practical Activities	Intellectual Activities
Positive						
Happy	0.347**	0.300**	0.358**	0.200*	0.299**	0.070
Satisfied	0.285**	0.284**	0.310**	0.166*	0.203*	0.063
Funny	0.425**	0.302**	0.416**	0.354**	0.240**	0.172*
Optimistic	0.269**	0.259**	0.281**	0.117	0.177*	0.167*
Cheerful	0.378**	0.356**	0.359**	0.272**	0.288**	0.035
Negative						
Depressed	-0.293**	-0.217**	-0.315**	-0.195*	-0.197*	-0.090
Frustrated	-0.236**	-0.212**	-0.257**	-0.179*	-0.106	-0.110
Angry	-0.308**	-0.293**	-0.288**	-0.217**	-0.178*	-0.123
Worried	-0.108	-0.107	-0.131	-0.139	-0.076	-0.086
Unhappy	-0.259**	-0.171	-0.277**	-0.191*	-0.073	-0.080

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

In general, according to the levels of IPE and SWB, the sample of the study showed more positive than negative affects, besides evidencing a higher frequency in contemplative activities and less frequency in intellectual activities. Significant relationships were observed between SWB and IPE, indicating that the higher the IPE, the greater the SWB experienced by older people. Social, competence and contemplative activities were the ones most associated with SWB.

Social, competence and contemplative activities were the only type of pleasant activities that showed significant relationships with all domains of SWB (life satisfaction and positive and negative affects). These data suggest that the emotional state of the older people is associated mostly with events that assume contact with other people, situations that give the person the opportunity to express their skills (in the domain of social and competence activities), in addition to activities that involve contact with nature, contemplation and expression of positive feelings (in the domain of contemplative activities).

The relationship between older people’s well-being and involvement in social activities has already been well documented in the literature (Costa & Neri, 2019; Mantovani et al., 2016; Sousa et al., 2018), indicating that older people who report socializing with other people in the community and participate in sociocultural activities have better levels of well-being in general. Social activities, such as traveling, visiting new places, and making new friendships, among others, allow the person to create social support networks that positively influence their health and general well-being (Ferreira & Barham, 2016). Including older people in activities

that provide a sense of autonomy and power of choice is also relevant for their well-being, especially for the perception of life satisfaction (Camargo et al., 2018). When practicing activities in which they have the opportunity to express a sense of autonomy and usefulness, the older person feels more loved by family members and friends and thus evaluates that he/she is leaving a legacy for other generations, contributing to a positive perception of life, as observed in other studies (Cachioni et al., 2017; Mantovani et al., 2016).

Contemplative activities, including practices such as looking at the sky, enjoying the beautiful landscape and thinking about people you like, besides showing a significant correlation with all SWB domains, was the most frequent type of activity. Previous studies have also identified that contemplative activities are the most common type of activity practiced by older people with chronic kidney disease (Lucas & Ferreira, 2018) and members of social groups (Casemiro & Ferreira, 2020), possibly because these are low-demanding physical and financial activities to be carried out. Contemplative activities are also related to lower levels of depression (Ferreira & Barham, 2018) and can be practiced by those people with less functional capacity and greater social vulnerability (Ferreira et al., 2019). Therefore, this category of activity deserves special attention, as it seems to present an attractive potential for planning interventions aimed at promoting older people's emotional well-being, considering the relationships this activity category has been presenting with mental health indicators and the fact that it requires less physical, cognitive and financial resources on the part of the older person. Thus, it would be relevant for more studies to explore the potential of this type of activity in influencing the emotional state throughout aging.

Contemplative activities also bear some conceptual similarities with the definition of "Appreciation of Beauty", a character strength proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004) in the context of Positive Psychology. For these authors, Appreciation of Beauty is the ability to perceive and appreciate the beauty, virtue and talent of the physical and social world. It is considered a virtue of transcendence, since it connects people with the grandeur of the physical and social world, such as nature, art or the talent of the others. This character strength is defined by an emotional experience of reverence, awe and admiration in the presence of beauty (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

A randomized clinical trial with 150 participants investigated the effects of a 3-week intervention that applied exercises to (1) raise awareness about the beauty and how it affects emotions, beliefs and attitudes; (2) encourage aesthetic attitudes in face of beauty; and (3) increase exposure to situations that express beauty, revealed that the participants who received the intervention experienced improvements in the SWB at the end of the intervention, compared to the control group (Martínez-Martí et al., 2018). Thus, this study brings some evidence about the possibility of increasing SWB levels through interventions focused on developing Appreciation of Beauty as a character strength. Considering the conceptual similarities that the contemplative practices hold with this construct, it would be important for future studies to investigate the effect of interventions focused on increasing older people's IPE, including contemplative practices to improve their SWB.

The practical and intellectual activities, on the other hand, seem to have less relation with the emotional state of older people compared to other types of activity, since the involvement in practical activities was not related to the expression of negative affects and the intellectual activities were not related with any general domain of affects. In a previous study that investigated the relationship between IPE and depression (Ferreira & Barham, 2018) it was found that being involved in intellectual activities was not related to depression, bringing other evidence that involvement in intellectual activities is less associated with the emotional state of older people. Intellectual activities do not presume the presence of social or emotional components to be carried out, and for this reason they may be less related to psychological and emotional variables.

However, a study that reported the impacts of cognitive training in a sample of 15 older individuals found cognitive improvements in the visuospatial domain and lower levels of anxiety and depression in the

sample after applying the intervention (Casemiro et al., 2016). The intervention included several cognitive stimulation activities that involved reading and writing skills, such as sudoku, text writing, reading and interpreting lyrics, etc. Although in this context the use of reading and writing activities (the main components of the intellectual activity) was included as an ingredient for the intervention that resulted in cognitive improvements of the participants, the emotional improvements observed in the sample may have been due to the fact that the intervention was carried out in a group and therefore stimulated the interaction and social engagement of these older people, making them more active, which may have resulted in lower levels of the participants' depression and anxiety (Casemiro et al., 2016). In this case, the effects of intellectual activities, specifically, on the cognitive and emotional functions of the older people, still need to be further investigated.

It was also observed that intellectual activities were practiced less frequently by the sample of this study, corroborating the results of a Brazilian population-based study with 986 older people that identified a low prevalence of involvement in intellectual activities (in this case, using the internet and taking courses) when compared to activities from the social and practical dimensions (Sousa et al., 2018). The low frequency in intellectual activities can be partly explained by the high rate of illiteracy that Brazilian older people still have (IBGE, 2017) and also by issues related to the Brazilian socio-cultural context, in which few older people actually have access to intellectual activities, which makes it impossible to carry out these activities or may even result in a lack of interest in carrying them out.

With regard to practical activities, which include activities such as volunteer work, planning the domestic routine, cooking, going to church, among others, there was a significant relationship with satisfaction with life and positive affects, components of the SWB, which is in line with the literature that indicates activities such as voluntary work, religious participation and home maintenance can serve as protective factors to older people's mental health (Costa & Neri, 2019; Ferreira & Barham, 2018; Mantovani et al., 2016; Oliveira et al., 2015). Practical activities have the function of keeping older people active and independent, and in this way they can increase the chances of experiencing positive affects and life satisfaction, providing higher rates of SWB.

However, it was found that practical activities did not show a significant relationship with the general domain of negative effects, that is, older people engage in practical activities regardless of feeling more or less negative emotions. A possible explanation for this result is that practical activities involve routine and domestic actions, such as cooking, performing household chores, going to church, etc., which can be characterized as routine daily obligations, which in turn can be carried out regardless of a negative emotional state. Activities that the older person usually chooses to do, distinct from routine and home activities (of a more mandatory nature), have a greater potential to impact older people's emotional state (Holahan et al., 2019). However, the results of this study suggest that practical activities have the potential to influence positive emotions and satisfaction with life, indicating that the higher the frequency of these types of activities, the greater the positive affects and satisfaction with life experienced by older people.

It was also observed that "worry" was the only emotion that did not have any relationship with IPE. In other words, engaging in pleasant events may not affect older people's worries. Aging implies a series of concerns related to functional, cognitive, financial and affective losses, which often escape the control of older people. However, concerns of this nature do not seem to affect the involvement of the person in pleasant activities, perhaps because older people develop resilience throughout life, which can lead to a more positive psychosocial adaptation in the face of adversities and concerns (Fontes & Neri, 2015). Future studies should focus on investigating the potential relationships between IPE and resilience, in order to elucidate whether IPE could be considered as a psychological and social resource for adapting the older person to the typical stressful circumstances of aging.

In general, the results of the study when interpreted together may suggest that interventions aimed at promoting older people's emotional state may be more effective if they target involvement in social and contemplative activities, rather than practical and intellectual activities. Engaging with other people, expressing autonomy and a sense of usefulness, as well as developing activities that involve contact with nature and introspection associated with positive feelings, seem to be the kinds of activities more strongly associated with the emotional state and life satisfaction perceived by seniors. Thus, the IPE, especially the involvement in social and contemplative activities, can be considered protective factors for older people's mental health.

Conclusion

This study brought evidence about the association between SWB and IPE, especially social and contemplative activities with life satisfaction and positive/negative affects. These results contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the relationships between positive outcomes in old age, which has relevant implications for the development of interventions aimed at improving older adults' mental health. In addition, these data can support the development of public policies that aim to improve the conditions of population aging, for example, by investing in actions that promote older people's SWB and IPE.

However, this study has some limitations: having used a convenience sample, the generalization of results should be done with caution. The relationships investigated in the present study still need to be reviewed in greater depth and detail in more representative samples, also using other data analysis techniques, such as the development of regression models and structural equations that allow verifying distinct functions between the variables analyzed in the study.

Contributors

H. G. FERREIRA conceptualized and coordinated the research project, analyzed the data and revised the manuscript. S. M. SUZUKI performed data collection and wrote the manuscript. The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Received: May 15, 2020

Final version: April 28, 2021

Approved: June 7, 2021