

Inventory of Life Satisfaction (ILS)

A validation study among Portuguese mid-life and older people

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INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction has been considered the subjective expression of quality of life and an indicator of successful ageing determined by three dimensions: psychological, social and physical functioning (Fernández-Ballesteros, Zamarrón and Ruiz 2001). Numerous studies (for a revision, Diener 2000; Meléndez, Tomás, Oliver and Navarro 2009) have been conducted to clarify the impact of ageing on individuals' life satisfaction (or related construct such as subjective well-being). Findings have been contradictory: some studies have shown that ageing has no significant impact on life satisfaction (Subasi and Hayran 2005; Gwozdź and Sousa-Poza 2010) but others highlight the negative impact, especially when ageing comes associated with poor health (Baltes and Smith 2003; Smith, Borchelt, Maier and Jopp 2002), depression (Paúl and Ribeiro 2008), and low income (Veenhoven 2000). Others, by contrast, support the positive impact: Van Landeghem (2008) identified an increase in well-being after mid-life, and Gall, Evans and Howard (1997) sustained that older people are generally healthy, well-adjusted, and reporting increased well-being.



This research pays attention both to individual and to ecological and environmental variables that may affect life satisfaction of mid-life and older people. Three important constructs that may influence life satisfaction are considered:

Health and Safety: interest in health-related quality of life can be attributed to several interrelated changes that have occurred in the second half of the twentieth century: (i) improvements in health care, the effect of which has been to prolong the lives of those who would otherwise have died; (ii) drastic reductions in early mortality from exogenous causes (e.g. infections) to increases in endogenous causes (e.g. chronic illnesses such as cancers or circulatory disorders); (iii) an acute awareness that 'curing' illness is not the only outcome from health interventions and that many services are designed to prevent any further deterioration in quality of life.

Services and Resources: older people will need a range of diverse services and resources to help them live constructive and healthful life-styles. Participation in diverse activities enhances life satisfaction and such participation includes activities that promote physical activity, social activity, productive activity (e.g. gardening, shopping), social connection (friends or neighbors) and fitness activity. Evidence also shows that involvement in religious organizations and volunteerism reduce risk of mortality and engagement in explicitly physical activity (fitness, sports or walking) is reported to have a positive impact on longevity and health in older adults.

Residence and Sociability: older people are seen as less likely to change the place or the usual ways of living. Most people grow old in familiar settings, they age in place. Such patterning of the life course has been viewed positively,

as part of the natural order of later life: growing old in familiar surroundings with familiar faces and familiar routines implies a sense of satisfaction and well-being. Moving or "relocation" invokes risk. At the same time, the marital relationship is the one that best indicates life satisfaction, being the principal agent to deal with the problems associated with health and disability.

The main goal of this study is to provide descriptive information about prevalence of these three factors with respect to life satisfaction through construction and validation of an instrument that would cover ecological sensitive life satisfaction factors, and meet standard psychometric requirements for reliable and valid measurement.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 1321 participants aged 50-101 years old living in Portugal participated in this study. Average age was 70.4 years. Female comprised 71.1% of the population. The majority of participants was married (55.7%) and had completed 4 years of education (55.3%). The sociodemographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Materials

The instrument used was the *Inventory of Life Satisfaction (ILS)*, which was inspired on an inventory originally developed by Fonseca and Paúl (2004) to assess both current retirement satisfaction and perceptions of retirement experiences. The ILS contained three sets of items relating to Health and Safety, Services and Resources, Residence and Sociability.

Procedures

The survey was conducted by trained interviewers, using a structured questionnaire format that entailed demographic, social, psychological and cognitive questions. Data was collected on site. There was no time limit for completing the forms. Informed consents were obtained from the participants.



Statistical Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis using principal components extraction and Varimax rotation was performed. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency for individual factor and for the entire instrument. Statistical analyses were conducted using PASW Software, version 17.

RESULTS

The final version of the ILS (Table 1) presents 13 items, distributed by three factors. The factor 1 *Services and Resources* has six items; the factor 2 *Health and Safety* contains four items; the factor 3 *Residence and Sociability* includes three items.

The internal consistency was evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha. For the total scale, the value for Cronbach's Alpha was 0.83, proved to be adequate. Analyzing the internal consistency for each factor, also this as adequate, presenting values equal or higher than 0.7 for the three factors.

TABLE 1 - FACTORIAL STRUCTURE OF THE ILS.

	Services and Resources	Health and Safety	Residence and Sociability
The availability of public transports	0.807	0.072	0.254
The availability of physical, cultural and leisure activities sites	0.806	0.000	0.075
The services provided by the community	0.799	-0.054	0.248
Cultural activities and leisure alone or with others	0.798	0.077	0.259
Physical activities alone or with others	0.801	0.287	0.009
The services provided by the state	0.800	0.097	0.051
My financial situation	0.803	0.408	0.253
My health	0.093	0.808	0.053
My physical condition	0.154	0.799	0.160
My personal safety	0.181	0.789	0.201
The home where I live	0.087	0.204	0.804
The place where I live	0.087	0.183	0.799
Deal with family, neighbors or friends	0.088	0.084	0.777
Eigenvalue	4.895	1.857	1.081
Cronbach's Alpha	0.780	0.707	0.809
% of Variance	37.6%	14.2%	8.2%

Regarding gender differences, there were no significant results between men and women on the overall score but factors' comparison show significant differences in factors *Services and Resources* and *Health and Safety*. As for age differences, there was a statistically significant difference between age groups regarding the factor *Health and Safety*. Marital status displayed significant differences on the overall score and between groups concerning *Residence and Sociability*. Finally, the present study revealed significant differences with education on the overall score and for all the three factors analyzed.

DISCUSSION

It can be concluded that the proposed three-factor solution provides an adequate description of psychometric properties of the ILS for a Portuguese population, supported by high alpha values and differentiated results in the majority of the variables considered. Older people's individual needs deserve attention in order to assure that people maintain their satisfaction. Our study shows that *Services and Resources*, *Health and Safety*, and *Residence and Sociability* may be used as determinants of life satisfaction of mid-life and older people not only considering the heterogeneity of the ageing process itself but also because different groups of older people even within a similar cohort might differ in their experience of life satisfaction.

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Inventário de Satisfação com a Vida (ISV)

(Fonseca, Silva, Teixeira & Paúl, 2010)

Indique o seu actual grau de satisfação com os seguintes domínios da sua vida:

1ª Parte: Serviços e Recursos

1. A disponibilidade de transportes públicos ao meu alcance.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

2. A disponibilidade de locais para realizar actividades físicas (praticar desporto, fazer ginástica, dançar), culturais e de lazer (cinema, música, biblioteca, exposições).

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

3. Os serviços proporcionados pela comunidade (paróquia, junta de freguesia, associações, centros de dia, etc.).

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

4. A realização de actividades culturais e de lazer, sozinho(a) ou com outras pessoas (membros da família, conhecidos, amigos).

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

5. A realização de actividades físicas (praticar desporto, fazer ginástica, dançar), sozinho(a) ou com outras pessoas (membros da família, conhecidos, amigos).

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

6. Os serviços proporcionados pelo estado (segurança social, serviços medidos, subsídios, outras regalias).

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

2ª Parte: Saúde e Segurança

7. A minha situação financeira.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

8. A minha saúde.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

9. A minha condição física.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

10. A minha segurança pessoal.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

3ª Parte: Residência e Sociabilidade

11. A casa (inclui "lar de idosos") onde eu vivo.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

12. O lugar (cidade, vila, aldeia) onde eu vivo.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

13. Conversar com familiares, vizinhos ou amigos.

Completamente satisfeito(a)	Muito satisfeito(a)	Satisfeito(a)	Insatisfeito(a)	Muito insatisfeito(a)	Completamente insatisfeito(a)	Não Aplicável
1	2	3	4	5	6	0

Ficha de Caracterização

Nome (opcional) _____

Género Feminino Masculino

Idade _____ Menos que 75 anos 76 ou mais anos

Estado Civil Casado(a) Viúvo(a) Outro

Escolaridade ≤ 4 anos 5 a 9 anos Outra

Residência permanente Casa Lar de Idosos
