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VALUE ORIENTATIONS AS FACTORS OF HARDINESS IN ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN

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Abstract. The article presents the results of an empirical study aimed at assessing the contribution of value orientations to the hardiness of elderly men and women (n=60, 53,3 % of women, aged 69,21±5,13, residents of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region). Hardiness is considered as a resource that provides productive personal functioning of elderly people. The collection of empirical data was conducted by the “Hardiness Test” (S. Maddi, adapted by D. A. Leontiev and E. I. Rasskazova) and the “Schwartz Value Scale” (adapted by N. M. Lebedeva). According to the results of the study, elderly people have a reduced level of hardiness, especially in the control component for women, as well as in the components of commitment and challenge for men. At the same time, the hardiness of the elderly is associated with the value orientations of kindness, achievement and security, primarily in the control component. The comparative analysis shows that the hardiness of older men and women is supported by different value orientations: achievement in men and conformity in women. The results are discussed using the principles of a gender approach. The authors state that it is necessary to develop a system of psychological support aimed at preserving and strengthening the hardiness of elderly people, accounting the value orientations of the elderly men and women.

Keywords: hardiness, value orientations, elderly people, men, women, gender differences, Hardiness Test, Schwartz Value Scale, comparative analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis.

ЦЕННОСТНЫЕ ОРИЕНТАЦИИ КАК ФАКТОР ЖИЗНЕСТОЙКОСТИ ПОЖИЛЫХ МУЖЧИН И ЖЕНЩИН

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Аннотация. В статье представлены результаты эмпирического исследования, направленного на оценку вклада ценностных ориентаций в жизнестойкость пожилых мужчин и женщин (n= 60, 53,3 % женщин, 69,21±5,13 лет, жители Санкт-Петербурга и Ленинградской области). Жизнестойкость рассматривается как ресурс, обеспечивающий продуктивное личностное функционирование пожилого человека. Для сбора эмпирических данных использовались «Тест жизнестойкости» (С. Мадди, адаптирован Д. А. Леонтьевым и Е. И. Рассказовой) и «Ценностный опросник Шварца» (адаптирован Н. М. Лебедевой). Согласно результатам исследования, для пожилых людей характерен сниженный уровень жизнестойкости, особенно в компоненте контроль для женщин, а также в компонентах вовлеченность и принятие риска у мужчин. При этом жизнестойкость пожилых связана с ценностными ориентациями доброта, достижения и безопасность, прежде всего, в компоненте контроль. Сравнительный анализ с учетом пола респондентов показал, что жизнестойкость пожилых мужчин и женщин поддерживается разными ценностными ориентациями: достижения у мужчин и конформность у женщин. Результаты обсуждаются с применением принципов гендерного подхода. Констатируется необходимость разработки системы психологических мероприятий, направленных на сохранение и укрепление жизнестойкости пожилых людей, в том числе посредством обращения к ценностным ориентациям пожилого человека.

Ключевые слова: жизнестойкость, ценностные ориентации, пожилые люди, мужчины, женщины, гендерные различия, Тест жизнестойкости, Ценностный опросник Шварца, сравнительный анализ, корреляционный анализ, регрессионный анализ.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the advanced nations faced major changes in the socio-demographic structure of society, which were associated with the gradual increasing amount of elderly people and, as a result, the active aging of the entire population. This problem strongly affects the economic and social spheres, so studying the patterns of personality development at the later stages of ontogenesis is one of the main issues of psychology. In particular, the psychological resources of the elderly person is a very important investigation object. The relevance of studying psychological resources of an elderly person is determined by the fact that, in a changing world, the impact of stressful social factors on the psyche of an elderly person is particularly strong: loneliness, loss of social and professional identity, deterioration of financial condition, negative stereotyping, loss of loved ones, etc. In the process of transforming value orientations in a society, the elderly's choice of a positive strategy for personal development may be difficult. According to M. V. Yermolaeva, positive strategies for personal development in older age are as-

sociated with the search for opportunities to implement their life experience in a socially significant way, which allow an elderly person to feel their importance and involvement in social life, and thereby their self-esteem [1]. A special role for the positive development of the elderly personality belongs to hardiness.

The study of hardiness as the most important resource of a personality is based on the conceptual foundations developed by S. Maddi and S. Kobasa in 1970-1980s [2-6]. These authors introduced the concept of “hardiness” for investigating the psychological features of coping with stress and interpreted it as a special integrative property of persons, a system of beliefs about themselves and the world around them, which makes it possible to maintain internal psychological balance, overcoming various stressful situations. In Russian psychology, the concept of hardiness become known by the D. A. Leontiev's investigation [7-8]. Hardiness as a personal characteristic consists of three components: commitment, control, and challenge. The commitment means the confidence of the individuals in extracting something

interesting and worthwhile from the events that occur with them. Individuals with a developed commitment can enjoy and get real pleasure from their activities, find many useful and exciting things in their life, which provide successfully coping the psychological stress load. The control is a kind of attitude that motivates a person to find different ways for influence on stressful situations. Individuals with a high rate of control have an active life position and tend to consider themselves as the masters of their life. The challenge is a person's confidence in value of everyday experience, which serves their further personal development. A person with a developed challenge overcomes difficulties as exciting and useful events. In general, hardiness is closely correlated with successful adaptation, the overall rate of personal self-efficacy and psychological well-being. In older age, hardiness is an important personal resource, which provides a stronger sense of competence, as well as productive coping strategies [9-10]. It guarantees elderly's psychological safety and allows them to adapt to the social environment, to develop themselves and to predict the desired future [11].

Hardiness is closely related to other personal characteristics, including values. A. N. Fominova argues that a person makes a choice to the hardy life position according to valuable attitudes and beliefs [12]. Value orientations are dynamic personal traits and they change at different stages of life [13]. Their mobility increases at crucial moments of life, which allows a person to choose what course he or she will follow regarding the personal development and value self-determination [14]. Such life situation is typical for elderly people. Psychological studies show the age-related dynamics of values: with age, people tend to accept the values of conservatism and care for others, appreciate interpersonal relationships, while the values of openness to change and self-affirmation gradually fade into the background [15-16]. In addition, the researchers found gender-specific values: for women, self-transcendent values are more important, while for men – the values of self-enhancement [17-18]. These results allow us to consider the values of self-improvement and self-transcendence as gender-typed.

Nowadays, elderly people feel the increasing changes in the value hierarchy of society and the crisis of social ideals. Among these changes, the elderly gradually become divided into two groups. The first group of elderly people is in harmony with themselves, happy with their social status and future prospects, but the second group conversely has a low self-esteem, high rate of frustration, they do not see any ways and any reasons to change anything in their life for the better. In the social process of restructuring value orientations, elderly people face a dilemma. They can save and maintain their usual way of life guided by the Soviet values and interests, or develop a new type of life activity and find some new values, which allow them to get new opportunities for successful social adaptation [14]. Elderly people are often characterized by saving irrelevant values and decreasing hardiness [12]. Meanwhile, hardiness is a predictor of the mental well-being of elderly people [19], that's why it is important to study elderly's hardiness and its value resources.

METHODOLOGY

We formulated the hypothesis that the value orientations of elderly people can influence their hardiness. Accounting the mediation of values by gender [17-18], the study was aimed at assessing the contribution of value orientations to the hardiness of elderly men and women. The sample included 60 elderly people (53,3 % of female) aged 61-92 from St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region. The respondents took part in the study voluntarily. The survey was conducted individually. The collection of empirical data was carried out using the Hardiness Test by S. Maddi (adapted by D. A. Leontiev and E. I. Rasskazova [8]) and Schwartz Value Survey [19] (adapted by N. M. Lebedeva [21]). The test of data distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov criteria (*d*) allowed us to use parametric methods of statistical analysis. The empirical data were processed using Student criteria (*t*), Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) and regression analysis

with computer program "Statistics 12.0".

RESULTS

According to the results of an empirical study, we concluded that the total rate of hardiness of elderly men and women is the same. However, the contribution of the components in the total rate of hardiness slightly differs in the samples of men and women: men have relatively higher rate of control, while women have higher rate of commitment and challenge. Although the difference is not statistically significant (it is presented only as statistical trend), the results suggest that elderly men are slightly more likely to control the situation than women (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Hardiness of elderly people

Indicators	Total (M±S)	Male (M±S)	Female (M±S)	d	t	p
Hardiness (total)	77,42±18,86	77,71±17,11	77,16±20,53	p > .20	-0,11	0,91
Commitment	36,28±10,69	35,54±11,16	36,94±10,39	p > .20	0,50	0,62
Control	27,67±7,95	29,21±6,10	26,31±9,15	p > .20	-1,42	0,16
Challenge	13,47±4,89	12,96±3,65	13,91±5,79	p > .20	0,74	0,46

In general, our data coincide with the results of A. N. Fominova [11], who states that the elderly are often characterized by a lower level of hardiness.

Comparing the value orientations of elderly people, we found that older men and women are characterized by similar value hierarchies. At the same time, the importance of the values of Independence and Power is higher in the sample of men than in the sample of women (see Table 2). This fact corresponds to the results, which were published by other researchers previously.

Table 2 - Values of elderly people

Indicators	Total (M±S)	Male (M±S)	Female (M±S)	d	t	p
Conformity	18,98±4,28	19,36±4,86	18,66±3,75	P < .20	-0,63	0,53
Traditions	21,77±4,70	21,36±5,09	22,13±4,39	P > .20	0,63	0,53
Kindness	25,15±5,35	25,25±5,51	25,06±5,30	P > .20	-0,13	0,89
Universalism	39,62±7,46	40,39±7,61	38,94±7,37	P > .20	-0,75	0,46
Independence	23,60±4,65	24,82±4,36	22,53±4,69	P > .20	-1,99	0,05
Stimulation	13,22±3,79	13,43±4,32	13,03±3,32	P > .20	-0,40	0,69
Hedonism	12,12±4,03	12,61±3,82	11,69±4,22	P < .15	-0,88	0,38
Progress	16,68±5,07	17,61±5,63	15,88±4,46	P > .20	-1,33	0,19
Power	12,80±5,33	14,14±5,52	11,63±4,95	P > .20	-2,00	0,05
Security	26,93±5,33	26,57±6,44	27,25±4,20	P < .15	0,49	0,63

Correlation analysis showed that control as a component of hardiness was primarily related to value orientations in elderly people. Analyzing the overall data set, we found positive correlations between control and the values of kindness ($p=0,29$), achievement ($p=0,32$) and safety ($p=0,26$). The total rate of hardiness also demonstrated correlations with the value of safety ($p=0,28$). At the same time, all values were closely correlated with each other, excepting hedonism.

Partial correlation analysis (for male and female samples independently) revealed different relationships between hardiness and value orientations in these groups. In the sample of men, the total rate of hardiness, as well as the indicator of control, were positively correlated with the value of achievement ($p=0,33$ and $p=0,34$ respectively), while the indicator of challenge was negatively related to the value of power ($p=-0,40$). The female sample demonstrated positive correlations between the control as a component of hardiness and the value of kindness ($p=0,33$), as well as positive relationships between the total rate of hardiness and its component commitment, on the one hand, and the value of safety, on the other hand ($p=0,36$ and $p=0,37$ respectively). In addition, both samples showed positive correlations between values excepting hedonism.

Thus, the results allow us to conclude that the hardiness of elderly men and women is primarily related to gender-typed values. Perhaps, assimilation of the gender-typed values allows elderly people to maintain a positive identity, to feel solidarity with other people, and to improve their hardiness in this way. The preference for gender-neutral values, contrarily, does not help to strengthen the hardiness of elderly people.

At the next stage of data processing, we performed a regression analysis (see Table 3).

The results of the regression analysis suggested that gender-typed values (achievements for men and conformity for women) make the greatest contribution in the rates of hardiness and its components in elderly men and women.

Table 3 – Regression results

Indicators	b*	Std.Err. of b*	b	Std.Err. of b	t	p
Hardiness total (women): R=0.61, R ² =0.38, F(10,21)=1.26						
Conformity	-0.62	0.27	-0.96	0.41	-2.34	0.03
Commitment (men): R=0.66, R ² =0.44, F(10,17)=1.35						
Achievement	0.99	0.36	3.02	1.09	2.77	0.01
Control (men): R=0.68, R ² =0.46, F(10,17)=1.47						
Achievement	0.97	0.35	1.93	0.70	2.77	0.01
Hardiness total (men): R=0.71, R ² =0.51, F(10,17)=1.76						
Achievement	0.98	0.34	0.63	0.22	2.90	0.01

CONCLUSIONS

Our research shows that hardiness tends to decrease by old age. This trend characterizes the total rates of hardiness as well as its components (primarily control in women, challenge and commitment in men). At the same time, our hypothesis was confirmed: the value orientations can be considered as factors of elderly people's hardiness, especially the component of control. Gender-typed values are particularly significant for maintaining hardiness of elderly. These values are achievement in the male sample and conformity in the female sample. In general, the results of the study illustrate the need to address value issues in psychological care for elderly people, aimed at saving and strengthening their hardiness.

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