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## **STRESS COPING STYLES, SELF-ESTEEM AND HOPE FOR SUCCESS OF PEOPLE IN LATE ADULTHOOD AND OF DIFFERENT SPECIFICITY OF LIFE REVIEW**

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**coping with stress**

**hope for success**

**life review**

### **Summary**

**The aim of research.** The results of the research done by the Authors were presented in this article. People (N = 120) in late adulthood (60–75 years old) who differ in global estimation of their hitherto lives took part in the research. Its primary goal was to identify the differences between four groups of seniors with various specificity of life review in the range of coping with old age stress, self-esteem and the level of hope for success.

**Methods.** Four psychological methods were applied in the discussed project, such as: (1) Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS); (2) Self-Esteem Scale (SES); (3) State Hope Scale (KNS); (4) Life Review Questionnaire (LRQ) created by Izdebski and Polak.

**Results.** Subjects interviewed with various life reviews differed between each other when it came to choose stress coping styles and hope for success, both on the level of general index and its two dimensions. No statistically significant differences in the range of self-esteem were stated. The presented differences referred mainly to people with a totally different life review. Individuals with a very positive life review had less emotional or evasive attitudes towards the problem than those estimating their hitherto life in a very negative way. They had also a stronger belief in positive achievement of their goals.

**Conclusions.** If elderly people have a positive life review, they are more likely to adapt in stressful situations connected with age specificity. The findings obtained in the research may present a significant back-up for psychologists and therapists while defining ways of therapeutic actions taken towards elderly people having problems with overall and adequate life review estimation.

### **Introduction**

We are currently witnessing the dynamically progressive aging process of the population [1, 2]. In the light of the data from the *World Population Aging* report published in 2013 by the

United Nations the share of seniors (persons aged 60 years and above) in the global population rose from 9.2% in 1990 to 11.7% in 2013 and will continue to rise, reaching 21.1% in 2050 [3]. Demographic data relating to the European Union (EU) countries, including Poland, to a large extent reflect worldwide trends. According to the *Eurostat* report from 2011, a share of seniors in the EU population in the year 2040 is going to reach 20% and in 2060 will amount to 30% [4]. Projected demographic changes are one of the major challenges, not only in the area of social policy or economics, but also widely understood psychological help [5].

The period of late adulthood (60–75 years old) from a psychological point of view is, on one hand, the last chance for development opportunity [6], making use of it in an active way results in an increase in life satisfaction and the disclosure of new developmental qualities, such as, for example, wisdom [7, 8] and on the other hand, it is a stage of experiencing multiple and great losses [9, 10]. The loss of most cherished values which the elderly confront with, can lead to experiencing strong stress and generating or exacerbating worries due to uncertain or insecure future [11].

In the light of a variety of developmental changes during old age a person makes life review [12]. The life review applies to constructing and reconstructing, interpreting and reinterpreting and evaluating own life [13]. Its final result can be either positive or negative, and thus, constructively or non-constructively affect present psycho-social functioning of a person [12]. According to Oleś, life review “is so important, especially at its end, that when is negative, it impacts the overall assessment of values and quality of life. Despair resulting from the perception of life as lost results in a tragic existential situation” [14, p. 279]. This fact makes it invaluable to provide older people with adequate forms of support to enable them to a proactive evaluation of their life.

Given the complexity of human life and personality, it should be considered that people differ in terms of the global assessment of what constitutes the essence of their biography [15]. As a result, it can be reasonably expected that people in late adulthood of distinct life specification differ also in terms of specific psychological variables. The disclosure of these differences has great importance from the point of view of therapeutic effects [16]. With this in mind — while taking into account dynamically progressive demographic shifts and the specification of old age expressed greatly by experiencing variety of loss types — in this article an attempt was made to answer a question of whether seniors of distinct life review differ in terms of coping with stress, self-esteem and hope for success. The paper also includes practical implications of research results obtained for the psychological help impact.

### **Life review**

Old age, seen as the last stage of human existence, is time to make life review, which is the evaluation of a content of one's life [5]. From psychological point of view, the issue of life review has already more than a fifty-year history [17]. Still, there are a lot of questions on this issue that have not been answered yet. This is probably due to the fact that "it is not easy to study such phenomena as life review in a way which would guarantee obtaining relevant and reliable data" [14, p. 276]. Consequently, "there are relatively few studies, the research subject of which would be life review. Life review is rather more of a conversation topic in offices of psychologists, psychotherapists and psychiatrists than of regular research. Yet, such research is possible" [14, p. 286].

In this article, it is assumed that life review, according to Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, can be thought of as a developmental period of late adulthood, the essence of which lies in watching back one's life and assessing it [18]. It is worth noting that life review perceived in such a way covers all past achievements and failures, reflection on present life and response towards the most important life issues. Life review made by older people is not just a sum of assessments of various aspects of life, but it is an attempt to understand and reinterpret events as well as emotional and cognitive reference towards them. Motives which led to an overall assessment of life usually include the need to reflect on one's lives, desire to reinterpret and understand different events from a distant perspective and the assessment of decision relevance [12]. It is therefore expected that both a content and final result of life review shall define behavior in difficult situations, self-esteem and competences helping or hindering effective implementation of objectives.

### **Stress coping styles**

Today, stress is an unavoidable element of life of every human being [19]. It can be experienced with a different intensity at all stages of personal development, including late adulthood [6, 10, 20]. However, from a psychological point of view, it is not stress itself, but rather a way of dealing with it that is of crucial importance, since it significantly determines the process of adapting to these difficulties. Lazarus and Folkman define stress as: "ever-changing (dynamic) cognitive and behavioral efforts the aim of which is to cope with certain external and internal expectations, perceived as burdens or factors beyond one's resources" [21, p. 141]. The quoted definition indicates two essential functions for difficulties coping: instrumental (task

oriented) — aimed at problem solving and emotional (self-calming) — which regulates unpleasant emotions [22].

Acting on the assumption of the above concept, Endler and Parker added to the two types of coping with difficult situations a third one — avoiding [23]. The proposed classification, therefore, allows the testing of the three stress coping styles: (1) style focused on a task at hand (task oriented coping), which depends on making efforts to solve problems through constructive actions on cognitive and behavioral levels; (2) style focused on emotions (emotion oriented coping), which concentrates on emotional experiences such as anger, guilt, tension, wishful thinking and fantasizing tendencies. To solve stressful situations a reduction of emotional tension is needed; (3) the style focused on avoiding — avoidance coping means trying not to think about difficult situations and avoiding thinking or experiencing them. This strategy can take two forms: engaging in substitute activities (e.g., watching TV, sleeping, cleaning) or seeking social contacts [23, 24].

### **Self-esteem**

According to Rosenberg self-esteem is linked to the fact that people reveal distinct attitudes towards different objects. One of such objects is own Self. In Rosenberg's opinion self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude towards oneself, which constitutes two components: cognition — referring to beliefs and opinions about oneself, and emotional — concerning feelings towards oneself [25]. Self-esteem, therefore, can be defined as a global assessment of one's self-esteem — an attitude towards oneself. This assessment can be twofold: positive (high self-esteem) or negative (low self-esteem). High self-esteem means feeling a valuable and good enough person. It does not mean though, feeling better than others. And then, low self-esteem is a manifestation of self rejection and discontent with oneself. Hence, self-esteem is an expression of a subjective perception and evaluation of own values and as such, to a large extent, determines a type and effectiveness of actions taken, experienced emotions along with experiencing and perceiving reality or social functioning [26].

### **Hope for success**

One of the psychological concept of hope which is of great interest among researchers, is — a cognitively inspired — proposal of Snyder et al. [27], according to which hope (hope for success) can be understood as a positive motivational state based on co-related beliefs about effective perception of own actions (agency) and ways leading to the attainment of established goals (pathways) [28]. The first aspect of hope refers to energy focused on a purpose and alludes

to the self-efficacy awareness which manifests in achieving objectives. It has been described as the assumption of strong will. The second component of hope indicates specific strategies used to achieve objectives. Hence, it includes self-knowledge awareness which enables an effective implementation of plans. This aspect has been defined as the assumptions on solution-finding skills [29].

The above-mentioned concept of hope has been a subject of multiple evaluations and modifications [30]. Ultimately, it has been assumed that hope for success is a dynamic and multidimensional thought process consisting of the following elements: goal, willpower and waypower which are the sum of motivation (internal and external) and strategy (how) leading to a desired target [31].

### **Problem and research hypotheses**

The literature analysis shows that old age is a period conducive to assessing one's life [5, 6, 14]. The final result of this process, which can be either positive or negative, is of immense importance for seniors' life. Izdebski and Polak's research on a group of people aged 65 and older revealed that a positive life outlook is positively associated with a sense of coherence. Pearson's correlation values, both for the overall and particular SOC subscales ranged from 0.42 to 0.63 and were significant at the level of  $p \leq 0.05$  [15]. In accordance with Antonovsky, Sheridan and Radmacher's suggestions, the sense of coherence plays an important role in the selection of specific coping strategies in stressful situations. People with high indicators in the sense of coherence have an ability to make accurate assessment of reality and do not take a passive attitude in the face of adversity, but rather take adequate ways to overcome it [32, 33].

The last phase of life is associated with experiencing many changes, involving virtually every sphere of a psychosocial functioning [6, 10]. These changes can significantly affect an evaluation of oneself [18]. Research indicates that in the late adulthood self-esteem loses its stability [34]. According to Janiszewska-Rain old age is "time of reflection and conclusions and frequently, it is a period when we try to face up to an earlier wrenching experiences. People who look critically at their own live show much less stable self-esteem than people who do not ponder about many things" [35, p. 613–614].

Moreover, frequent mental disorders of old age besides dementia include depressive disorders. Their incidence concerns 5–30% of seniors [36]. These disorders can be associated with a disappointing life review and may result in a significant reduction of life quality and the risk of suicidal behaviors [14]. This fact impels to look for factors that protect mental health of people at the final stage of their life. Undoubtedly, one of these factors is hope. The standpoint

which supports that is of Koziellecki, according to which “the decline of hope [...] leads in extreme conditions to despair and hopelessness. However, they are not at the end of a chain of negative consequences. People are often faced with an existential dilemma of Hamlet — to be or not to be. In a state of hopelessness they are not able to set greater objectives, when any attempts to accomplish goals fail, then their life becomes absurd. In their consciousness begin to appear lethal thoughts — thoughts of suicide” [37, p. 170]. That is why, hope is one of the main sources of meaning in life, which stimulates to take goal-oriented actions and implement them [38, 39]. For Steuden, entering the period of old age with hope gives people an opportunity to re-evaluate their life. They have a chance to state: “since my life has not been the way I wanted it to be, I would like to say that from now on my life will be different” [40, p 47]. When reviewing one’s life in an optimistic and hopeful way, it becomes possible to make actions that add meaning to life and as a result make it more interesting and valuable [38].

In view of the foregoing, the main objective of the presented research was to identify differences between the elderly of distinct life review in terms of stress coping style, self-esteem and hope for success. On the basis of such specific purpose, the following hypotheses were put forward:

**H1: people in late adulthood of different life review differ in terms of a stress copying style choice.**

**H2: people in late adulthood of different life review differ in terms of a self-esteem level.**

**H3: people in late adulthood of different life review differ in terms of a hope for success level.**

## **Research method**

### Variable operationalization

The research explanatory variables (dependent) were: stress coping style, self-esteem and hope for success. The explanatory variable (independent) was the surveyed life review specification set on four levels: (1) very negative life review; (2) negative life review; (3) positive life review; (4) very positive life review.

### The surveyed and an outline of the study

To make an empirical verification of hypotheses of the carried research, 120 people, including 60 women and 60 men were involved. In a group of men a mean age value was:  $M =$

67.04 with a standard deviation  $SD = 4.83$ , while in a group of women  $M = 64.90$  with a standard deviation  $SD = 4.37$ . The subjects were of different education level. The most numerous group were those with secondary (38.3%) and higher education (38.3%), while the least numerous group accounted for people with primary and vocational education (10.0%). One of the selection criteria was to exclude from the study people revealing depressive symptoms or those in treatment of depression (prompted by the desire to obtain an adequate assessment of respondents' own lives, which is the opposite of the so-called distorted life review). For this purpose personal data supplied to the battery of applied tests were used.

In order to abstract a sample of people with different life review the quartile method was used. In this way, four groups of people were selected: (1) very negative life review ( $n = 27$ ); (2) negative life review ( $n = 32$ ); (3) positive review ( $n = 31$ ) and (4) very positive life review ( $n = 30$ ).

#### Applied research tools

In this research project, four psychological methods were used. Testing explainable variables — dependent — (stress coping styles, self-esteem, hope for success) was done using: (1) Copying Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) constructed by Parker and Endler and adapted to Polish conditions by Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski and Szczepaniak [41]; (2) Self-Esteem Scale (SES) by Rosenberg in the Polish adaptation of Dzwonkowska, Lachowicz-Tabaczek and Łaguna [26]; (3) Hope for Success Questionnaire (KNS) by Łaguna, Trzebiński and Zięba [29]. To test the explanatory variable — independent — Life Review Questionnaire, adapted by Izdebski and Polak, [15] was used.

#### Research Results

The collected empirical material was statistically analyzed and the following results were obtained. In order to examine differences between people of different life review in terms of stress copying styles, self-esteem and hope for success, it was decided to use one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in the intergroup plan. Before proceeding to appropriate statistical calculations theoretical assumptions put on the data through this statistical test were checked. As a result of taken activities no breach was found<sup>1</sup>. On this basis, it was decided to apply on

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the limited framework of this article, it is not possible to discuss full numerical results underlying the positive verification of individual assumptions evaluated by one-way analysis as the parametric technique of data processing. Hence, the study was limited to the general statement emphasizing that these assumptions were not broken. More details are available from the authors.

further stages of the statistical procedure the ANOVA variance analysis parametric technique and post hoc test by Tukey [42, 43]. The obtained results are shown in Appendix.

The obtained results revealed statistically significant differences between groups of people with different life review in terms of two out of the five scales of the Copying Inventory for Stressful Situations, two dimensions and a general indicator of the Hope for Success Questionnaire. No statistically significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) were reported in case of the task-oriented style, avoidance style and the strategy oriented on seeking social contacts, as well as global self-esteem.

Subjects differ in terms of the emotion-oriented style ( $F(3.116) = 6.18$ ;  $p \leq 0.001$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.14$ ) and a strategy oriented on engaging in substitute activities ( $F(3.116) = 2.78$ ;  $p = 0.044$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ). The Tukey test showed that in the case of emotion-oriented style — statistically significant differences occur between people with very negative life review and other groups, including negative, positive and very positive life review. This means that seniors evaluating their life as very positive ( $M = 41.57$ ;  $SD = 10.06$ ), less frequently than those with positive ( $M = 43.65$ ;  $SD = 8.49$ ), negative ( $M = 42.28$ ;  $SD=8.01$ ) and very negative life review ( $M = 50.67$ ;  $SD=8.91$ ), in the face of stressful situations take actions which concentrate on their own emotional experiences or they are more prone to wishful thinking. In the case of a strategy focused on engaging in substitute activities, statistically significant differences were identified in the two extreme groups. The obtained result pattern can be interpreted in the following way: people with very positive life review compared to people with very negative life review to a lesser extent engage in substitute activities, like: watching TV, binge eating or sleeping (VPLR:  $M = 16.80$ ;  $SD = 5.30$ ; VNLR:  $M = 20.48$ ;  $SD = 5.08$ ).

The life review specificity also differentiates respondents in terms of hope for success level covered in both categories ( $F(3.116) = 4.34$ ;  $p = 0.006$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.10$ ), and its individual dimensions: willpower ( $F(3.116) = 4.87$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.12$ ) and solution finding skills ( $F(3.116) = 3.35$ ;  $p = 0.022$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.08$ ). A more detailed analysis taking into account the results of post-hoc test allows to conclude that statistically significant differences occur mainly — as in the case of the above-mentioned coping styles in stressful situations — between people with very negative and very positive overall life review. Such result pattern suggests that individuals with very positive life review ( $M = 50.00$ ;  $SD = 7.73$ ) compared to people with very negative life review ( $M = 42.63$ ;  $SD = 9.14$ ) are to a greater point convinced of the achievement of desired effects of implemented actions. In addition, they have a greater awareness of the self-efficacy and are more likely to initiate and maintain the pursuit of their goals (VPLR:  $M = 26.37$ ;  $SD = 3.76$ ; VNLR:  $M = 22.44$ ;  $SD = 4.70$ ). Finally, they have a stronger conviction about their

knowledge and intellectual competence, making it easy for them to seek new ways to achieve desired objectives (VPLR:  $M = 23.63$ ;  $SD = 4.80$ ; VNLR:  $M = 20.19$ ;  $SD = 4.98$ ).

### Discussion on the results

The aim of the research presented in this article was an analysis of differences between individuals in late adulthood with different life review in the scope of such variables as: coping styles in stressful situation, self-esteem and hope for success. The main research question was whether elder people (60–75 years old) characterized by a different life review (very negative, negative, positive, very positive) significantly differ in terms of selected psychological variables. The obtained research results allowed for positive verification of two out of three posed hypotheses.

With regard to the **first hypothesis (H1)** it was found that people in late adulthood with different life review differ in terms of stress coping styles, emotion-oriented style and style focused on engaging in substitute activities. However, there were no statistically significant differences between seniors with a different life review in terms of the task-oriented style, avoidance style and the strategy oriented towards seeking social contacts.

The pattern of the obtained results remains considerably consistent with expectations. Psychological literature underlines that the period of late adulthood, on one hand, is associated with many great losses, which most commonly are a source of strong stress, and on the other, reveals new developmental qualities such as wisdom [44]. The essence of wisdom is the ability to overcome own limitations, exploring the meaning of present and past life events and reinterpreting life values as well as what was hitherto its principal content [8]. According to Ardelt a wise person is aware of his/her positive and negative characteristics, inherent limitations in terms of accumulated knowledge as well as the unpredictability and uncertainty of human life. Moreover, such person is characterized by having a clear vision of reality, distance to oneself and an ability to interpret events from different perspectives. Additionally, a wise person's capacity for empathy and perception of life is adequate and not perceived through the prism of their own fears, projections, impulses or desires [45, 46]. Wise elder people have specific predispositions that allow them to build a positive life story and its appropriate assessment. Positive life story is not only what a person considers as valuable and beneficial, but also failures, difficult events, suffering, harm experienced personally, and done to others, as well as unfulfilled desires and goals. Such an outlook on life from the perspective of old age allows for an adequate assessment, which in turn allows the elderly to constructively deal with disadvantages of their age [5].

The **second hypothesis (H2)** was not confirmed. The results of the research do not entitle to find differences between individuals in late adulthood with different life review in the area of self-esteem.

When interpreting the results on self-esteem in the light of the psychological literature, it seems noteworthy to refer to the theory of gerotranscendence by Tornstam [7]. Gerotranscendence can be understood as a natural process free from cultural determinants leading to maturity of an individual. As part of this process, an elder person experiences a number of changes in the area of psychosocial functioning. These changes are manifested on three levels: cosmic (existential and spiritual), personality (Self) and social (relational). They manifest through redefinition of basic existential problems, changing perspective on own Self and revaluation of relationship with others [47]. Transformation following gerotranscendence process identified in the area of own Self are revealed, first and foremost, in a confrontation with oneself, which results in the discovery of hidden aspects of own personality — both, positive and negative ones<sup>2</sup>. A person becomes aware, at the same time, that he/she is not the centre of the universe. As a consequence, so far excessive self-esteem takes on more realistic shapes<sup>3</sup>. And what follows is a decline of egocentrism. A change in the spectrum of Self also applies to the image of own body. A resignation from obsessive body concerns is replaced with full self-acceptance. These changes which are a consequence of a progressive process of gerotranscendence are therefore a kind of context (background) in which a person reviews life. Perhaps their intensity means that the final effect of such review is of no importance for self-esteem. The gerotranscendence research results argue that a key role in maintaining high self-esteem and quality of life are factors such as psycho-social activity or spirituality [7].

In reference to the **third hypothesis (H3)**, it should be noted that seniors with very negative, negative, positive and very positive life review differ in terms of a degree of their hope for success recognized both, in its global and individual dimensions. The general hypothesis was therefore entirely confirmed.

The obtained results correspond with the results of research based on psychology. The life review, as it was mentioned before, “does not come down to creating a comprehensive history of life and its summary (though for many people it may be enough), rather it requires intense intellectual activity and a lot of sensitivity to take into account and seriously consider

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<sup>2</sup> This is similar to what Jung (1930) defined as one of the tasks of the second half of life, i.e., discovering hidden aspects of personality — a shadow.

<sup>3</sup> In case, however, when a person from the very beginning has low self-esteem, efforts can be made to try to achieve such a level of confidence which seems appropriate.

viewpoints from different development periods and sometimes extremely various circumstances. Moreover, life review concerns not only oneself, but to a large extent, other people, and relationships with other people” [14, p. 285]. Life review understood in such a way is one of the key tasks that a person in late adulthood has to face. The quality of implementation of this task and its final effects, positive or negative, to a large extent determine management of time which is still left and whether or not it makes sense to engage in the implementation of new life goals. A study carried out by Malette and Oliver suggests that the life-review process which depends on providing adequate assessment of previous events is associated with increased self-awareness, finding new sources of meaning in life and the reconciliation of painful past experiences [48]. Such life evaluation encourages an initiation and maintaining a belief that even in old age future plans make sense and it is possible to implement them [12]. A negative life review gives opposite effects. This is confirmed by the phenomenon of distorted life review. Its essence consists in life assessment from the perspective of currently experienced difficulties and that results in the perception of past in extremely pessimistic categories [14]. The specificity of life review thus remains in a close connection with an assumption about possibility of fixing past mistakes and living a good life that is left<sup>2</sup>.

### **The research results implications for psychotherapy**

The project results allow drawing following conclusions for aiding actions in the field of psychotherapy:

1. While giving seniors psychotherapeutic help, a great attention should be paid to their life review evaluation. If such assessment is negative, it is necessary to take efforts to recognize and articulate what is considered by them as valuable and positive;
2. A stress copying style chosen by the elderly should be matched to their life review specification. The emotion-oriented style or avoidance by engaging in substitute activities, under certain conditions, may be beneficial for the process of an old-age adaptation, as well as the implementation of tasks taking place in late adulthood;
3. When working with the elderly, actions should be taken to stimulate and support the gerotranscendence process. This can be accomplished by inspiring seniors to redefine previous experiences, their own self and relationships with others. The adoption of such psychological effects may help them in creating a realistic self-image — based both on previous successes and failures — and ultimately, in choosing the most convenient stress coping style and having hope for the successful implementation of desired objectives;

4. In the psychotherapy of the elderly, an indication of the specific stress coping styles (associated with the experience of multiple losses) and boosting the level of hope seems to be more important than strengthening their self-esteem.

### **Limitations of the research**

The presented research project, besides cognitive values, also has some limitations. Their appreciation and critical analysis incline to caution in terms of generalization of the research results.

1. The research was conducted as the cross-sectional study and the result were as follows: limited possibilities to draw conclusions about causal character of the identified relations; error risk (random variation, statistical error, memory) or risk of emergence of interfering factors. This fact encourages further research on the life review specificity of people in late adulthood, based on longitudinal studies. They would make it possible to observe changes in the area of life content evaluation, as well as their impact on the psychosocial functioning of seniors. Such a project would allow for the analysis of a wide range of variables (personality traits, behaviors, skills, attitudes), which include a comprehensive understanding of human nature, its developmental phases and of the life review dynamics.

2. The research was carried out in the quasi-experimental schema. Its aim was to analyze differences between groups, but it did not take into account the manipulation of the independent variable, or a random selection of the research groups. By testing dependent variables in separate groups, information about existing differences between them was obtained. However, due to the lack of implementation of the experimental manipulation, it is not appropriate to include here cause and effect conclusions [50]. This fact is extremely important when interpreting the presented research results. It implies caution in discussing the impact of the independent variable (life review specificity) on the dependent variables (stress coping styles, self-esteem, hope for success).

3. The sample cannot be considered representative of the Polish society (the Polish population of seniors). It is true that at the stage of the research project preparation the care was taken to ensure diversity of respondents in terms of socio-demographic variables, such as gender, education, place of residence and marital status, yet the sample characteristics are not fully representative in terms of these characteristics in the Polish elderly population (60–75 year-olds). It is therefore worth considering an idea of a similar project on a representative sample of seniors. Its validity is additionally supported by global demographic trends.

4. Caution should be taken in comparing the obtained research results with reports of foreign authors. It needs to be remembered that searching for analogy between Polish seniors and the elderly representing other nationalities may raise certain difficulties resulting from distinct cultural experiences and specific Polish historical and economic conditions. These circumstances largely determine specificity and a way of carrying out a life review of respondents who agreed to participate in this project.

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**Appendix: Table 1.** The comparison of results of different life review groups within the scope of Copying Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS), Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and Hope for Success Questionnaire (KNS)

| VARIABLES            |     | Life review      |      |                 |      |                 |       |                  |       | ANOVA |                 |          | Post hoc Tukey test                           |
|----------------------|-----|------------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|----------|---|
|                      |     | BNLR<br>(n = 27) |      | NLR<br>(n = 32) |      | PLR<br>(n = 31) |       | BPLR<br>(n = 30) |       | F     | p               | $\eta^2$ |   |
|                      |     | M                | SD   | M               | SD   | M               | SD    | M                | SD    |       |                 |          |   |
| Stress coping styles | TOS | 53.00            | 8.59 | 54.84           | 8.07 | 57.00           | 10.25 | 58.83            | 7.62  | 2.46  | 0.067           | ---      | ---   |
|                      | EOS | 50.67            | 8.91 | 42.28           | 8.01 | 43.65           | 8.49  | 41.57            | 10.06 | 6.18  | <b>0.001***</b> | 0.14     | VNLR: NLR **<br>VNLR: PLR *<br>VNLR: VPLR *** |
|                      | AOS | 45.26            | 7.12 | 41.09           | 7.32 | 43.26           | 6.66  | 40.43            | 8.10  | 2.58  | 0.057           | ---      | ---   |
|                      | ESA | 20.48            | 5.08 | 17.81           | 5.11 | 18.35           | 4.23  | 16.80            | 5.30  | 2.78  | <b>0.044*</b>   | 0.07     | VNLR: VPLR *                                  |
|                      | CS  | 16.26            | 3.64 | 15.91           | 2.80 | 16.77           | 3.06  | 16.23            | 2.73  | 0.43  | 0.731           | ---      | ---   |
| Self-esteem          | GR  | 29.19            | 3.35 | 29.75           | 2.98 | 30.03           | 3.56  | 30.27            | 4.47  | 0.47  | 0.707           | ---      | ---   |
| Hope for success     | SW  | 22.44            | 4.70 | 23.34           | 4.53 | 24.45           | 3.47  | 26.37            | 3.76  | 4.87  | <b>0.003**</b>  | 0.12     | VNLR: VPLR **<br>NLR: VPLR *                  |
|                      | SS  | 20.19            | 4.98 | 22.13           | 4.35 | 23.19           | 3.70  | 23.63            | 4.80  | 3.35  | <b>0.022*</b>   | 0.08     | VNLR: VPLR *                                  |
|                      | GR  | 42.63            | 9.14 | 45.47           | 8.51 | 47.65           | 6.81  | 50.00            | 7.73  | 4.34  | <b>0.006**</b>  | 0.10     | VNLR: VPLR **                                 |

Note: VNLR – people with very negative life review; NLR – people with negative life review; PLR – people with positive life review; VPLR – people with very positive life review; TOS – task-oriented style; EOS – emotion-oriented style; AOS – avoidance-oriented style; ESA – engaging in substitute activities; CS – contact seeking; GR – general result; SW – strong will; SS – solution seeking; \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*  $p \leq 0.05$ .