

Lifelong learning and freetime activities of elderly

Lenka Nádvořníková¹

Martin Korych²

Veronika Benčová, Lucie Kolářová, Michaela Marková³

¹Technical university of Liberec, Faculty of science, humanities and education, Studentská 2, 461 17 Liberec 1, email: lenka.nadvornikova@tul.cz

²Technical university of Liberec, Faculty of science, humanities and education, Studentská 2, 461 17 Liberec 1, email: martin.korych@tul.cz

³Students of follow-up master's study special pedagogy program of Technical university of Liberec, Faculty of science, humanities and education, Studentská 2, 461 17 Liberec 1, email: veronika.plavcova@tul.cz, lucie.kolarova@tul.cz, michaela.markova2@tul.cz

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Abstract The paper is focused on free time and free time activities of elderly in relation to lifelong learning and education. In the first chapter is outlined the theoretical basis of free time, free time activities and providing of educational and free time activities for the elderly by institutions. The second chapter clarifies the term of lifelong learning and education, which we present as a conceptual change in education, reacting to demographical evolution not only in Czech Republic, but worldwide. The conclusion of this contribution briefly characterizes basic theses of a research project called Student grant competition FP TUL n. SGS-FP-TUL 31/2017, which will take place during 2017.

Key Words lifelong learning, lifelong education, elderly, free time, free time activity, educational activity.

1. FREE TIME AND FREE TIME ACTIVITY

The first chapter provides a theoretical framework for a planned research project to be held this year within the Student grant competition of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Humanities and the Technical University of Liberec and explains the concepts related to it, namely free time, free time and educational activities and institutional and organizing leisure and educational activities.

1.1 Free time and free time activity elderly

If we want to talk about free time activities about what is filled with free time, it is necessary to explain this concept first. It is worth mentioning the Bachelor's opinion (1978) that leisure as such does not exist at all, is part of human life and cannot be separated from work, sleep or other activities, so we cannot talk about free time in the true sense of the word. They further argue that in the future, with the growing society and automation, free time will totally disappear, because there will be no work and one will only have "free time", which will not be free time but all human time. This opinion is in opposition to the general concept of free time, the rise and growth of which is connected with technical progress, development of the economy, automation and modern technologies (for example Slepíčková 2005; Vážanský, Smékal 1995; Janiš, Skopalová 2016). Our research project (see Chapter 3) is the closest concept of free

time according to Šerák (2009), which describes it as the time that the individual devotes only to himself and how he completes it depends only on him. It is important that this is a voluntary and free-spirited activity. On the basis of how and where leisure is spent, there is a distinction between free time activities - outdoor, indoor, physical, cultural, social and similar, but also free time activities can be distinguished according to their function - recreation, compensation, education, integration, enculturation and participation (Šerák 2009). Duffková, Urban, Dubský (2008) break activities on social, educational, sports, public, recreational, traveller's, hobby activities and manual activities.

On the choosing free time activity have influence social, economic, demographic, political, family, and other factors (age, personality, residence, family background, interests, financial options, ability, skills...) it can also be said that the choice of free time activity does not have to be significantly different with the age of free time when it comes to adulthood. The same view is expressed by Janiš, Skopalová (2016, p. 79), they claim that "the free time activities elderly need not differ in their intensity and duality" from middle-aged activities. Nevertheless, some authors distinguish directly the leisure activities of seniors, for example Janiš, Loudová (2011); Janiš, Skopalová (2016) and Holmerová et al. (2014). Janiš, Skopalová (2016) generally distinguish between 5 basic groups of free time activities - educational activities, movement leisure activities, free time activities with family, free time activities at home and social free time activities. For the purposes of our research, we chose the taxonomy of leisure activities based on a combination of the above mentioned authors and divided them into free time activities focused on modern technologies, physical activities, educational activities, activities with animals, activities with music and singing, cooking and gastronomy, cultural activities, manual labor and congenial activities.

1.2 Organizations and institutions providing free time and educational activities for the elderly

The range of leisure activities of the elderly is so wide that it also corresponds to a number of different institutions involved in their implementation. That is why we will introduce only the most common and the most famous.

Not only in the area of free time have a very important place organization, organizations protecting the rights and interests of seniors, such as the Senior Citizens' Council of the Czech Republic and the Union of Pensioners of the Czech Republic (and their regional branches), they support the active participation of seniors in public life and create space for their active lives.

The most well-known educational institutions are University of the Third Age, which exist today in almost all universities (not only public but also private) and academies of the 3rd age, which are most often created in places where there is no college. The founders Academy of the Third Age can be cultural houses, museums, secondary schools and basic art schools or institution how is Czech Red Cross (Benešová 2013).

Another institution, although not so frequent in our country, is the virtual 3AU, which is more common in Finland or Australia, but today it exists in the Czech Republic for example in Prague at the Czech University of Agriculture (Špatenková, Smékalová 2015). Unique is also experimental intergenerational university for grandparents and grandchildren, which was established in the academic year 2004/2005 at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of the Charles University in Prague and later at the Palacký University in Olomouc. Last but not least it is necessary to state senior clubs or retirement clubs, where seniors often spend their free time in the form of one-time activities (lectures, discussions, sightseeing tours...), but also in the form of long-term interest activities (Špatenková, Smékalová 2015). Other founders of leisure activities include Benešová (2014) municipal institutions, non-profit organizations and social services. Štěpánková, Smékalová (2015) still mention educational agencies, libraries, cultural centres and children and youth houses.

2. LIFELONG EDUCATION AND LEARNING

2.1 Lifelong learning and education in the context of population aging

The concept of lifelong learning is not a new idea, but especially in the context of demographic developments, technical and technological changes, advances in science, and the increase in information and knowledge available, the process is currently very up to date. Since the mid 90's. years of the 20th century, this concept has come to the fore and is becoming one of the central themes of the policies of the European Union and its member states (ČSÚ¹, 2013), which is reflected in the creation of many national and transnational documents.

The concept of lifelong learning had several predecessors. For example The Council of Europe defined the concept of "permanent education" in its documents at the beginning of the 1970s, the OECD used the term "periodic education" and in the 1980s the new concept of "continuous education" respective "Lifelong Learning" (Griffin 2009; MŠMT² 2007). The latest concept of "lifelong learning" appears only at the turn of the millennium (Beneš, 2003). Under the lifelong learning concept, the offer of educational activities and courses for seniors should meet the changing needs of the changing society with a focus on information and communication technology, financial literacy and seniority security (MPSV, 2014). On the basis of the above, two National Strategic Action Agendas supporting positive aging (MPSV³ 2014) in the area of lifelong learning set out two basic strategic objectives: "To create a functional system of continuing education that will be

attractive for both employees and employers and will meet the demand for labor force "and" Increase the share of seniors involved in interest-based education through the 3UA and academy of seniors with regard to local accessibility." The fact that lifelong learning is important, not only from a health, social or social-political point of view, but else of view the application of intergenerational solidarity in practice and the prevention of social exclusion. A similar view as we do is Špatenková (2009), which perceives lifelong learning as a form of activation of seniors to help them integrate into society, and Bočková, Hastrmanová and Havrdová (2011) believe that the quality of filling the elderly's leisure time can even help to prevent social exclusion.

2.2 Czech and international documents related to lifelong learning and education

The concept of lifelong learning is closely linked to the development of the European Union, as we can find this concept in both the Lisbon and the Copenhagen and Bologna processes, although it is true that lifelong learning focuses primarily on professional, tertiary lifelong learning. Equally, we must not forget the White Paper on Education and Training issued by the European Commission in 1995 (Hloušková, Pol in Rabušicová, Rabušic 2009).

The Basic European lifelong learning document, adopted by the European Parliament in 2002, is the Lifelong Learning Resolution, which however unifies the legislative process of the European Union countries in the field of education. From the point of view of today's concept of lifelong learning, the breakthrough document is the Action Program for the Support of Lifelong Learning 2007-2013, which unified all forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal) and created a unified construction of lifelong learning from childhood to late seniority and encouraged decentralization of projects within individual European Union countries (Hloušková, Pol in Rabušicová, Rabušic 2009).

There are many other documents in the field of lifelong learning that are not internationally binding, issued by international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. These organizations, in their documents, combine lifelong learning with human and social capital or with professional competence (Hloušková, Pol in Rabušicová, Rabušic 2009).

3. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project focuses on lifelong learning of elderly of age 65 or greater, with focus on using this form of education as a possible way of activating people of elderly age, for example by free time activities. The main purpose of the project is mapping the current situation in the area of lifelong learning of aforementioned group of people in selected regions of Czech Republic. (Liberecký, Ústecký and Středočeský regions) Another purpose is result analysis based on selected variables, and their comparison. (e.g. age, reached education, permanent place of stay or family status of respondents) The main research question is: "What is the offer and demand of free time activities for elderly in our regions?" Based in this question we chose further research sub-questions, for example: "Does the offer of free time and educational activities correspond to the demand from the elderly?", "What is the relation between available of organisations offering free time and educational activities for the elderly, and the elderly people's permanent place of stay.", "What is the relation between the reached education of the respondent, and their choice of free time or educational activity?"

¹ The Czech office of statistic

² The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

³ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

In the last part we chose empty hypotheses which will be tested with selected statistical methods (see below).

H1 We assume we will not notice any difference in preferences for free time and educational activities of elderly in Liberec region, based on the selected variables (H1.1 - age, H1.2 - size of town, H1.3 - reached education).

H2 We assume we will not notice any difference in preferences for free time and educational activities of elderly in Ústecký region, based on the selected variables (H2.1 - age, H2.2 - size of town, H2.3 - reached education).

H3 We assume we will not notice any difference in preferences for free time and educational activities of elderly in Středočeský region, based on the selected variables (H3.1 - age, H3.2 - size of town, H3.3 - reached education).

H4 We assume we will not notice any difference in preferences for free time and educate activities based on our selected regions (H4.1 Liberecký X Ústecký region, H4.2 Liberecký X Středočeský region, H4.3 Ústecký X Středočeský region)

3.1 Research methods

We are going to use quantitative strategy for the research-questionnaire research taking place in May to June 2017. The questionnaire research will run simultaneously in three regions of Czech Republic, based on the permanent place of stay of the co-operators of this project. The research subject is going to be free time and educational activities of elderly. The research object is going to be the elderly in age category of 65 years or greater. This age threshold was chosen based on our understanding of senior age (according to age of retirement), but also according to age segmentation of Czech Republic citizens according to Czech office of statistics. Based on our selected quantitative strategy we have constructed a questionnaire of 17 questions. The questionnaires include both open and closed questions, out of which some have five step scale. It this allows us to differentiate the rate of positive or

negative feeling of respondents to individual declarations and question wording. Some questions are multiple choice (the maximum amount of choices to select is mentioned in the questionnaires) and some with the possibility to choose between answers “yes” or “no”. The questionnaires are created according to the implied aspects of the task and are determined by the goal and research questions of the research project. Currently the piloting and verification of the questionnaire in practice is taking place in all of our three selected regions. Next will be distribution of questionnaires will follow in two ways according to preference of respondents. Either by giving them the printed questionnaire in person or by electronic form. The research will be realised within Liberecký, Ústecký and Středočeský regions in the form of filling quotes.

The received result data will be evaluated by statistical methods using programs Microsoft Office and Excel 2010 and StatGraphics. For testing our selected empty hypotheses will be used pivot tables, Pearson's chi quadrat test and Mann-Whitney's W-test, eventually other methods of mathematical statistics.

3.2. Characteristics of basic and specific research group

Because of more complex view on the topic of free time activities of elderly of 65 years of age or greater we decided to do research in three regions of Czech Republic, and we chose three research samples (one in each region) of 100 respondents. The choice of respondents was done with the help of quota choice (quotas: age, sex and size of town in which respondent lives).

Exact numeric definition of basic and specific research group is mentioned below in tables 1-6. The research samples were taken by quota choice, where this way offers relatively representative research sample.

The regions are Liberecký, Ústecký and Středočeský regions. These regions were selected mainly because of availability of respondents and lower time and financial difficulty.

Table 1 – Basic research sample – Liberec region – absolute count (N)

The size of the village (population)	The number of seniors by age and gender (absolute count - N)											
	65–69 years		70–74 years		75–79 years		80–84 years		Over 85 years		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To 999	1856	1951	1086	1283	729	1094	445	901	268	633	4384	5862
1000–4999	2082	2319	1257	1683	930	1411	579	1187	317	993	5165	7593
5000–9999	1585	1929	993	1431	749	1148	462	949	277	755	4066	6212
10000–19999	749	857	473	602	331	523	202	456	143	305	1898	2743
20000–49999	1857	2225	1131	1545	744	1223	499	1028	313	792	4544	6813
50000–99999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
100000 or more	2457	3012	1453	2078	1111	1717	768	1490	452	1189	6241	9486
Total	10586	12293	6393	8622	4594	7116	2955	6011	1770	4557	26298	38709
Total												65 007

Source: ČSÚ 2011 – Czech office of statistical

In table 1 are mentioned counts of respondents of basic research group of Liberec region (according to data from Czech office of statistics) and according to our selected quotes. The result is 65 007

elderlies in the age of 65 or greater, out of which 26 298 are men and 38 709 women.

Table 2 – Basic research sample – Liberec region – relative count (%)

The size of the village □(population)	The number of seniors by age and gender (relative count - %)											
	65–69 years		70–74 years		75–79 years		80–84 years		Over 85 years		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To 999	2,85	3,00	1,67	1,97	1,12	1,69	0,69	1,39	0,42	0,98	6,75	9,03
1000–4999	3,20	3,58	1,94	2,59	1,43	2,17	0,89	1,83	0,49	1,37	7,95	11,54
5000–9999	2,44	2,97	1,54	2,21	1,15	1,76	0,71	1,46	0,43	1,16	6,27	9,56
10000–19999	1,15	1,32	0,73	0,93	0,52	0,81	0,31	0,70	0,22	0,48	2,93	4,24
20000–49999	2,86	3,42	1,74	2,39	1,15	1,88	0,77	1,58	0,48	1,22	7,00	10,49
50000–99999	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
100000 or more	3,79	4,64	1,72	2,24	3,20	2,65	1,19	2,30	0,70	1,83	10,58	13,66
Total	16,29	18,92	9,34	12,33	8,57	10,96	4,53	9,26	2,74	7,04	41,48	58,52
Total												100,00

Source: own calculations

To transform the percentage representation in basic research group and transformation to total amount of elderly in Liberec region we came to structure of basic research group (Table 2). During rounding when defining absolute count of respondents in specific research group, we assumed standard mathematical rules for rounding with precision of two decimal spaces. After transformation total count of respondents of this research group of a value 100, the proportional distribution of respondents of 65 years of age or greater as follows. There are 19 women of 65–69 years of age, 12 women of

70–74 years of age, 12 women of 75–79 years of age, 9 women of 80–84 years of age, and in the last category of 85 years of age or greater will be 6 elderly women. In the case of men, the counts in all categories differ due to demographical progress. There are 16 respondents of 65–69 years of age, 11 men of 70–74 years of age, 8 men of 75–79 years of age, 5 men of 80–84 years of age and in the last category of 85 years of age or greater there are only 2 men.

Table 3 – Basic research sample – Ústecký region – absolute count (N)

The size of the village □(population)	The number of seniors by age and gender (absolute count - N)											
	65–69 years		70–74 years		75–79 years		80–84 years		Over 85 years		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To 999	4014	4046	2175	2273	1131	1577	635	1068	327	890	8282	9854
1000–4999	4907	5315	2704	3306	1534	2211	869	1551	500	1389	10514	13772
5000–9999	1910	2089	1046	1459	667	1045	419	710	191	557	4233	5860
10000–19999	3839	4575	2252	3021	1318	2004	789	1404	405	1134	8603	12138
20000–49999	7462	9210	4824	6348	2788	4383	1713	2997	976	2653	17763	25591
50000–99999	5080	6240	3022	4200	1883	2937	1107	2004	632	1751	11724	17132
100000 or more	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27212	31475	16023	20607	9 321	14157	5 532	9 734	3 031	8 374	61119	84347
Total												145 466

Source: ČSÚ 2011

At Table 3 are number of respondents in the basic research file of the Ústecký region (according to the data of the Czech Statistical Office) according to us, the chosen quotas, which read a total of 145 466 seniors aged 65+, of whom 61 119 men and 84 347 women. It is

clear that older people aged 65+ live in the Ústecký region more than twice as much as in the Liberecký region, but also almost 100 000 less than in the Central Bohemia Region.

Table 4 – Basic research sample - Ústecký region - relative count (%)

The size of the village □(population)	The number of seniors by age and gender (relative count - %)											
	65–69 years		70–74 years		75–79 years		80–84 years		Over 85 years		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To 999	2,76	2,78	1,50	1,56	0,78	1,08	0,44	0,73	0,22	0,62	5,70	6,77
1000–4999	3,37	3,65	1,86	2,27	1,05	1,52	0,60	1,07	0,34	0,95	7,22	9,46
5000–9999	1,31	1,44	0,72	1,00	0,46	0,72	0,29	0,49	0,13	0,38	2,91	4,03
10000–19999	2,64	3,15	1,55	2,08	0,91	1,38	0,54	0,97	0,28	0,78	5,92	8,36
20000–49999	5,13	6,33	3,32	4,36	1,92	3,01	1,18	2,06	0,67	1,82	12,22	17,58
50000–99999	3,49	4,29	2,08	2,89	1,29	2,02	0,76	1,38	0,43	1,20	8,05	11,78
100000 or more	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Total	18,70	21,64	11,01	14,17	6,41	9,73	3,80	6,69	2,08	5,77	42,02	57,98
Total												100,00

Source: own calculations

After computing the percentage representation in the basic research file and calculating the total number of seniors in the Ústecký region, we obtained the structure of the basic research file (Table 4).

When determining the absolute number of respondents in our own research group, we rounded out the standard mathematical rules for rounding (to two decimal places) and, after calculating the total

number of respondents in this research sample of 100, the proportional distribution of the elderly respondents 65+ following: 22 women aged 65–69, 14 women aged 70–74 and 10 women aged 75–79 years old, 7 women seniors aged 80–84 and aged over 85, As well as in the Liberec Region, 6 seniors. The men seniors will be in their own research group aged 65–69 years 19, in the age category 70–74 years there will be 11, as in the Liberec region. In the age category 75–79, there will be 6 respondents, at the age of 80–84 they will be only 4 respondents and in the last category aged 85 and over will be the same as in the Liberec region, only two senior men respondents.

The last region where our research will take place is the Central Bohemian Region. The size of the basic research population is the largest in the region, the number of seniors aged 65+ is 234 968. As we have so many different regions in our research, it can be said that the choice of our quota selection strategy is well-founded. The numbers of 65+ seniors in different senior age categories are listed in Table 5. These data were then converted to percentage representation to get the structure of our own Seniors 65+ Region Research Region (see Table 6).

Table 5 – Basic research sample – Středočeský region – absolute count (N)

The size of the village □(population)	The number of seniors by age and gender (absolute count - N)											
	65–69 years		70–74 years		75–79 years		80–84 years		Over 85 years		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To 999	11200	11743	7703	8902	4101	5640	2439	4272	1672	3909	27115	34466
1000–4999	12186	13290	8770	10347	4501	6313	2743	4665	1904	4408	30104	39023
5000–9999	3837	4538	2904	3646	1576	2405	991	1810	750	1713	10058	14112
10000–19999	6582	7966	5000	6612	2807	4222	1747	3133	1134	2756	17270	24689
20000–49999	3892	4666	2725	3843	1689	2580	1056	2063	768	1670	10130	14822
50000–99999	2023	2483	1533	2189	897	1387	527	915	341	884	5321	7858
100000 or more	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	39720	44686	28635	35539	15571	22547	9503	16858	6569	15340	99998	134970
Total												234 968

Source: ČSÚ 2011

After transformation of relative counts from table 6 to absolute count of respondents of each research group (100 respondents of 65 years of age or greater), we got the following segmentation of individual age categories for men:

There are 18 men of 65–69 years of age, 12 men of 70–74 years of age, 7 men of 75–79 years of age, 3 men of 80–84 years of age and 2 men of 85 years of age or greater.

For women there are 19 women of 65–69 years of age, 15 women of 70–74 years of age, 10 women of 75–79 years of age, 7 women of 80–84 years of age and 7 women of 85 years of age or greater.

Table 6 – Basic research sample – Středočeský region – relative count (%)

The size of the village □(population)	The number of seniors by age and gender (absolute count - N)											
	65 – 69 years		70 – 74 years		75 – 79 years		80 – 84 years		Over 85 years		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To 999	4,77	5,00	3,27	3,78	1,75	2,40	1,04	1,82	0,71	1,66	11,54	14,66
1000–4999	5,19	5,66	3,73	4,40	1,92	2,69	1,17	1,99	0,81	1,88	12,82	16,62
5000–9999	1,63	1,93	1,24	1,55	0,67	1,02	0,41	0,77	0,32	0,73	4,27	6,00
10000–19999	2,80	3,39	2,13	2,81	1,19	1,80	0,74	1,33	0,48	1,17	7,34	10,50
20000–49999	1,66	1,99	1,16	1,64	0,72	1,10	0,45	0,88	0,33	0,71	4,32	6,32
50000–99999	0,86	1,06	0,65	0,93	0,38	0,59	0,22	0,39	0,15	0,38	2,26	3,35
100000 or more	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Total	16,91	19,03	12,18	15,11	6,63	9,60	4,03	7,18	2,80	6,53	42,55	57,45
Total												100,00

Source: own calculations

Středočeský region has many more towns of medium size compared to Liberecký and Ústecký regions, which is apparent mainly in case of towns with 10 000–19 999 – in these towns in Středočeský region there are almost 10 times more elderly than in Liberecký region and 2 times more than in Ústecký region. If this fact will somehow reflect in the results of our research will be discovered in Autumn of 2017.

4. CONCLUSION

The average total time that elderly currently spend in retirement is 19–25 years. Not only because of this reason it is necessary for this time to be spent sensibly and effectively, with which free time activities should help as one of the forms of activation and

prevention of pathological aging. Age is no illness because of which we should give up our hobbies and interests, and settle exclusively in home environment. Quite the opposite, this age should be the age when elderly actively spend their free time of „autumn of life“ in the collective of people of similar age, continue their active life, or by free time activities find their second life program.

National documents about lifelong learning show that there is a lot of free time and educational activities in Czech Republic and that the demand from elderly population should be satisfied. We believe that we will get at least partial answer whether that is truly the case in Liberecký, Ústecký and Středočeský regions, where the aforementioned research project will take place for target elderly group of 65 years of age or greater.

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