

The Relationship between the Positivity and Specificity of Autobiographical Memory and Well-being: Age-differences

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Abstract

Many studies in the literature have shown that elderly tend to remember events in their lives more positive than young adults. Compared with young adults, when elderly were asked to generate autobiographical memories in response to stimuli that would facilitate recall, the number of positive events related to the negative events was higher with age. The recall of positive events was also associated with high levels of positive emotions with aging. Although age-related positive effect has been found in numerous measurements of autobiographical memory in the elderly, it wasn't always obtained in the memory tasks. Taking into account the results of these studies in the literature, this study wanted to investigate the differences in the positivity and specificity of autobiographical memory, in the elderly group and the adult group. Another objective of this study, was the analysis of the distinct impact of positivity of autobiographical memory and of specificity of autobiographical memory on the frequency, intensity and duration of the well-being, in the group of elderly and in the adult group. The study involved 91 participants of which 47 were elderly (aged 60 years and over) and 44 were adults (aged between 22 and 35 years). The results of the study showed that there were no age differences in the positivity and specificity of autobiographical memory and those two variables were not found to be significant predictors of frequency, intensity and duration of the well-being.

Keywords

positivity effect; specificity; autobiographical memory; well-being; aging.