

THESIS SYNOPSIS

Edina Kovács

Subjective well-being aspects of tourism-related employment of the elderly

Ph.D. dissertation

Supervisors:

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Department of Tourism

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1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1.1. Quality of life and subjective well-being as theoretical framework

The beginning of modern scientific research on the quality of life dates back to the beginning of the 1960s, when the social indicators movement gained momentum, but even today it is an unfailingly popular field of research not only in the social sciences, but also in the fields of medicine and economics (BRUNI – PORTA 2006; NUSSBAUM – SEN 1993), although, in spite of all this, the quality of life and its objective and subjective pillars – the latter meaning subjective well-being – still do not have a uniform definition in the literature. The definition and measurement methodology of the concepts of quality of life and subjective well-being catalyze lively discourse among researchers nowadays, and new conceptualizing and synthesizing experiments are frequently published, where the amorphous and multidimensional nature of these concepts is most often in focus. Although, there is no consensus about the components of quality of life and subjective well-being, neither in general nor specifically for the elderly, work as a productive activity is included in most general theoretical models (RATH – HARTER 2010; RAHMAN ET AL. 2005; WHOQOL 1998). It is undeniable that work is a defining part of every stage of adulthood in one way or another (ROCHA RODRIGUES 2020). Recent decades have therefore seen a proliferation of theoretical and applied research on work-related well-being and its effects on one's quality of life and subjective well-being (BAKKER – OERLEMANS 2011).

1.2. Quality of life and subjective well-being of the elderly

If we specifically take into account quality of life and well-being research conducted among the elderly, we can identify the factors that are present in most cases. Summing up these research, the factors affecting the quality of life of the elderly include *health status*, i.e. *physical functionality*, *emotional functionality*, *cognitive functionality*, *financial situation*, *housing conditions*, *quality of close relationships* (just as family and friends), *embeddedness in local community*, *autonomy*, *vitality*, as well as the subjectively perceived *future prospects* and *life satisfaction*, which reflects their overall satisfaction with the factors listed above. Based on the literature on the quality of life of the elderly, it is clear that, compared to surveys on the quality of life of the entire population, *health status*, *autonomy*, the *control they feel over their own lives*, and their broader or closer *social relationships* are of particular importance to them. In terms of health status, the absence of

disease plays an important role. Many research dealing with this argue that the elderly mainly mention health in a context the lack of which has the most negative impact on their quality of life (FERNÁNDEZ-BALLESTEROS 2011; FARQUHAR 1995; BOWLING 1995). Their family, friendships, and broader social relationships – unlike the social relationships dimension that of the general quality of life models – play an important role in offsetting loneliness and avoiding isolation and as a support network for them. Therefore the elderly often mention these as the factors that most positively affect their quality of life.

Research papers specifically related to the well-being of the elderly aim to examine the role that age plays in the development of an individual's subjective well-being, whether and how the factors that affect subjective well-being change as years pass by (SCHNEIDER ET AL. 2006; KOO ET AL. 2004). Based on the research conducted in this field, it can be said that subjective well-being (as a subjective projection of the quality of life), in the case of the elderly compared to other age groups, has similar content – contains satisfaction with nominally almost the same factors, just as: living conditions, psychological well-being, social relationships, activity, etc. (GEORGE 2010) – yet there can be significant differences in the function of each factor, since in their case the aspects of life also included in general subjective well-being research might have a different meaning (BOWLING 1995).

Both domestic studies (GICZI 2008) and international research results (PEDERSEN – DALL SCHMIDT 2009) have shown, that the *feeling of loneliness*, as well as the *presence or loss of a partner* show very strong correlation with the subjective well-being of the elderly, while, for example, characteristics that determine economic and social situation, such as *income* or *level of education* in the case of the elderly – compared to younger age groups – are much less decisive (GEORGE 2010). In old age, *autonomy* and *self-reliance* have a prominent role, which – assuming a healthy individual – are also quite important in the earlier stages of life but are almost self-evident (ARGYLE 1996). Research has proven that although the role of health (or the absence of disease) is prominent in old age, objective physiological values provide very little explanation for the differences in the subjective well-being of elderly individuals.

Since my dissertation examines the work of the elderly, the role of work in both age-specific and general quality of life models must be examined in detail. In the general quality of life models, work as an income-generating activity and/or a mean of self-realization is included in almost all cases (RATH – HARTER 2010; RAHMAN ET AL. 2005), which is not surprising at all. In contrast to the general, age-independent quality of life models, in the case of the

elderly, *work* as an independent factor is only present in a very few cases, since these research papers typically deal with respondents, who have already retired from the labor market. At the same time, it is interesting to observe that the place of *work* as a factor is taken over by *activity*, *leisure-time activity*, and *hobbies* as the most important factors in terms of quality of life for this age group. In addition, working in retirement age – although it appears as an explicit factor in only a few models – can also be present in most cases through the indirect influence of material well-being, which is also considered important by this age group. Furthermore, we must not forget that the working in retirement age can, also indirectly, strengthen social embeddedness and help maintaining of social relations, which is considered extremely important by this age group, and as such, it can be an effective prevention of isolation (KIM – PARK 2017; BROWN ET AL. 2004). Therefore, based on the results of the literature, it is unquestionable that work (done voluntarily or for salary) plays a role in the quality of life of the elderly, but it is still a question what exactly this role is and according to what mechanisms it exerts its effect.

1.3. The phenomenon of ageing society and its consequences

The demographic process of aging affects many areas of the economy and society in one form or another (UN 2020), successful adaptation on both personal and societal level is essential to effectively deal with these challenges (GOLDMAN ET AL. 2018). The proportion of older people in the total population is undoubtedly growing at a dynamic pace, but how we deal with the individual and societal challenges of this demographic change sometimes shows huge regional differences. The process of rapidly changing age structure of the society in recent decades (UN 2020) has led to more and more retirees deciding to stay / re-enter the labor market if their opportunities allow them to do so (KSH 2017).

The employment opportunities for the elderly and their implications have been addressed in recent decades by a number of researchers, who have all agreed on the paramount importance of programs promoting the employment of this age group within a framework that is satisfactory for them (COUGHLIN 2018; BAL ET AL 2015; ADAY – KEHOE 2008). The issue elderly employment is one of the most recent challenges, requiring particularly proactive solutions, for which political and business decision-makers, as well as society itself, still do not have a well-thought-out and elaborated long-term action plan (HELPAGE 2015). Due to this demographic change, there is an unprecedented need to prioritize measures for the well-being of the elderly when designing development strategies for the

future (COUGHLIN 2017; KSH 2004), as mitigating the marginalization of this age group can have positive effects in a number of other fields (GALE ET AL. 2018).

In order to see the possibilities of their involvement in the labor market clearly, we must start by exploring the characteristics of the studied group, without exaggerating the similarities between individuals, as this age group is just as diverse, and its members live as differently as people of any other age group do (BOND – CORNER 2004). In addition, we need to consider and analyze the specificities of the industry that offers opportunities for employment for them to develop practices that serve the interests of older people alike – in terms of job satisfaction – but also create value for their employers. In the light of this, it is worth examining the employment opportunities offered by tourism industry as one of the possible areas, where the abilities and skills of older people and the requirements of the employers could meet, and senior employment could therefore result in mutual value creation.

1.4. The Hungarian situation

In Hungary, just as in other developed countries, the proportion of the elderly in society is quite high, and according to the Central Statistical Office (KSH), further dynamic growth is expected in this area in the future (KSH 2014). In addition, the statistics also show that the labor market activity of the retired age group has been growing sharply in the past few years (KSH 2020), therefore more and more people want (or have to) to remain in the labor market even after passing the retirement age. Thus, the rapid aging of the population is not a question in Hungary either, but the success of adaptation to this process at individual and societal level still is. In relation to the change in the age composition of society, it is also a noteworthy fact that, in terms of indicators and rankings measuring the success of each country's adaptation to aging and the subjective well-being of the elderly, Hungary usually ranks among the last ones, but definitely in the second half of the field (GOLDMAN ET AL. 2018; KSH 2015:1; HELPAGE 2015). Thus, scientific research presenting results, which offer possible solutions to this challenge is extremely important. Results of my dissertation could be interpreted as exploration of the possibilities of solving social challenges posed by the aging process through tourism-oriented employment of the elderly. Tourism industry have been chosen as the field of my primary research – for several reasons. On the one hand, because the strong seasonal change in labor demand is a key feature of the industry, making it an excellent field for atypical employment, which usually suits better to

the needs of retirees; and on the other hand, the demand for authenticity and storytelling, the popularity of intergenerational knowledge transfer and the need of visitors of certain attractions / services for personal contact are all characteristics that make tourism a suitable field of study in these terms. In addition, a number of scientific articles have addressed the impact on the elderly of being included in tourism on the demand side (i.e. as travelers), but there are no results yet on how they experience being affected as players of the supply side (i.e. as employees or service providers).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of my research is to examine what work means for retired employees working in tourism-related places, how they perceive the tasks given to them, how they perceive the value of the work they do and what are the subjective well-being implications of their employment for them. In addition to that, challenges posed by the aging of society make it particularly important to investigate, what untapped opportunities exist in the Hungarian tourism sector for the value-creating and optimal employment of retirees wishing to continue working. Therefore, it must also be addressed what opportunities, advantages, obstacles, and disadvantages tourism service providers see in the integration of retirees into the tourism market as employees.

2.1. Research questions of the dissertation

In order to comply with these objectives as accurately as possible, in the light of the relevant Hungarian and international literature, and in the knowledge of the current demographic and economic situation the following research questions were formulated:

- Q 1. What does their current work mean to employees beyond retirement age working in places related to tourism consumption; and how do they experience the tasks given to and performed by them?**
- Q 2. What are the subjective well-being implications of the current work of employees beyond retirement age in jobs related to tourism consumption?**
- Q 3. What are the perceptions of employers in the Hungarian tourism sector of the employment of people beyond retirement age?**

To achieve the research goals stated above qualitative content analysis was applied on transcripts of semi-structured thematic interviews, which were made with employees of retirement age and the employers of them to examine the work-related experiences of older people working in such workplaces and their employers' perceptions of them. When choosing the location for the interviews, the first step was to consider, which sectors are directly related to tourism. The primary guide for naming these sectors was the *iceberg model* illustrating the logical connection between tourism sectors and other components of the tourism economy (HÜTTL – PROBÁLD 2000). Based on the iceberg model typical tourism services (such as travel agencies, accommodation services, attractions, and hospitality units) became the focus of my investigation.

2.2. Method of data collection – semi-structured thematic interview

As the primary data collection method of my interpretative research, semi-structured thematic interview was used following the methodological guidance of GALLETTA (2013) the essence of which is the “*interest in the story of others*”, where “*individuals' narratives represent the value*” (SEIDMAN 2002:27). My scientific investigation was primarily driven by the fact that I could closely observe and understand what work in tourism means for the elderly and how it shapes their subjective well-being. In the apt words of Clifford Geertz, professor of anthropology: “*if we want to understand a science, we should not take a look at its theories or results [...], we have to look at what those who practice it do on the field*” (GEERTZ 1994:172). If we accept Geertz's statement, then there is no doubt that if we want to know what work means for retired people still working in tourism, or how their employers feel about them; and especially if we want to find innovative solutions for their (re)integration into the labor market, we can do nothing but observe and ask them about it. Storytelling is as old as humankind is able to communicate (BARTHES 1975), so we can basically look at humans as storytellers (MACINTYRE 1981) and if we consider stories as an accepted tool of scientific exploration and understanding (BABBIE 2008; KVALE 1996), then in this current case the interview method is particularly suitable to get closer to understanding the phenomenon we want to explore (GALLETTA 2013).

The idea of Irving Seidman, a renowned professor of qualitative research methodology, played a key role in choosing the methodology of my primary research, according to which storytelling can essentially be considered an interpretation process, since the stories shared

by people are only a subjectively chosen part of the real experience. But the fact, that which part is being told exactly, and how the storyteller considers it worth telling, reveals a lot about the individual's experience of the given phenomenon (SEIDMAN 2002). Considering this, the semi-structured thematic interview method seemed to be the most appropriate for answering the previously defined research questions.

In order to achieve the research goals of the dissertation, I needed to hear first-hand experiences of the examined group regarding their own current work and their subjective interpretation of that. Besides getting to know the stories of retired people employed in tourism, it was also essential to involve employers in the research, so that I could get an idea of the criteria on which retired workers are hired, how their tasks are assigned, how satisfied are the employers with their work, and what social, economic and other advantages and disadvantages they see in the in their employment. The employers' point of view is important in exploring in which field and in which responsibilities employees of retirement age can be especially effective, according to current industry experience.

In the data collection period between March 2018 to September 2021, 117 invitation letters were sent out to various locations related to tourism consumption (e.g.: *commercial- and private accommodations, hospitality units, Tourinform offices, travel agencies and tour operators, tourism attractions, and professional organizations* etc.) in the hope that there are any potential interviewees who meet the criteria and willing to participate in my research. There was no predetermined target number for the interviews; in the case of pensioners interviews were conducted until the level of theoretical saturation was reached, so in their case a total of 50 interviews were conducted in 31 locations in 19 different settlements of the country. Regarding employers, due to the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on domestic tourism, some compromises had to be made, which are described in more detail in the chapter discussing the limitations of the research. A total number of 16 employer interviews were conducted, 10 of which took place in locations where pensioners are employed, and 6 in places where there are no pensioner employees. All the interviews were recorded (with video and / or audio recording), after which a verbatim transcript was made of each recording. The transcript made from the audio files and the notes made during the conversation provided the basis for further analysis.

The guide of the semi-structured thematic interviews with pensioners was prepared by using and mixing the elements of the CASP-19 scale developed by HYDE ET AL. (2003) and OPQOL-35 measuring instrument (*see Annex No. 6. and No. 7. of the dissertation*). The

CASP scale, which is used by many researchers to measure the subjective well-being of the elderly (SAND – GRUBER 2018; HORNER 2014; JIVRAJ ET AL. 2014), defines four domains (*control, autonomy, self-realization, pleasure*) and VANHOUTTE (2014) believes that this is the one that most sufficiently balances the affective, cognitive and eudaimonic dimensions of subjective well-being on the one hand, and is undoubtedly appears to be the most suitable for measuring the eudaimonic dimension. The OPQOL-35 is another measurement tool used in research focusing on the elderly, which examines the following eight dimensions: *life overall, health, social relationships, independence – control over life – freedom, home and neighborhood, psychological and emotional well-being, financial circumstances, leisure and activities*. Although the latter measurement tool basically focuses on the quality of life, it also often appears in the literature dealing with the subjective well-being of the elderly (ILIFFE ET AL. 2015; BOWLING – STENNER 2011). As a result of this, the interview guide for conversations with pensioners was created by merging the most important elements of the otherwise quantitative subjective well-being measurement tools of CASP-19 and OPQOL-35.

In case of the semi-structured thematic interviews conducted with employers, the interviewees were, on the one hand, employers who currently employ pensioners, and on the other hand, those who do not do that for some reason. Interview guides for employers have been composed based on the methodology used in the works of GRINGART ET AL. (2005), and TAYLOR – WALKER (1998) investigating employer attitudes towards elderly workers (*see Annex No. 8. of the dissertation*). These two researches were chosen as the starting point for the topics to be covered during the employer interviews for several reasons. On the one hand, because both studies focus on employer attitudes, stereotypes, and specific decision-making features related to elderly employees (50-70 years old); on the other hand, while TAYLOR and WALKER (1998) investigated large companies in this regard, GRINGART ET AL. (2005) examined the practices of small and medium-sized businesses in all sectors of the economy. The methodology applied in these quantitative researches were used to create my qualitative interview guide in such a way that the blocks of the questionnaires (*e.g.: importance of age when hiring, characteristics of the performance of elderly, comparison with young workers, employment strategy for the elderly, etc.*) were divided into their elements and from the questions of each block one of my own comprehensive question was formulated on the same topic as in the original case (*for more details see Annex No. 8. of the dissertation*). In this way, the employer interview

guides cover all topics that the methodology of the cited research included. In the case of employers, the focus of the interview was therefore on exploring whether they employ pensioners in the given, tourism-related location, and if they do so, how the selection and training process takes place, in what position they are mostly employed and what overall experiences they have in relation to these workers; on the other hand, if there is no pensioner working there, then what is the exact reason behind that.

2.3. Method of data analysis – thematic analysis

For the analysis of the collected data, the method of thematic analysis (TA) was used following the hermeneutic tradition, as the main aim was to get a deeper understanding of the content of the text in context, to identify the motifs, expressions and overall content that can be discovered in the told stories, so that conclusions can be drawn regarding the experience lived and told by the respondents. The qualitative thematic analysis is an interpretive approach based on inductive coding logic, with which my primary goal was finding the meaning and discovering the key emerging themes in the stories told (DRISKO – MASCHI 2016). The use of inductive coding logic is justified by the lack of a potential interpretation framework, which stems from the fact that no empirical studies related to the topic had been published before. During the data analysis, the focus was on the key themes emerging from the stories. The transcripts of the interviews were processed according to the steps of conceptual or thematic analysis, which in this case has been implemented following the methodological guidelines of KUCKARTZ (2014). This is an iterative process, which originally includes seven steps starting from the initial examination of the content of the text to the identification of emerging themes till the mapping of the relationship between the different theme categories. Parallel to reading the transcripts several times by following inductive logic in the light of the research questions the seemingly interesting parts have been highlighted and labeled (coding). The initial codes were later amended with new categories while reading the transcripts again and again several times, then the iterative process of omitting, adding, and merging some of the codes resulted in the final code structure. With the help of the codes the most important *key emerging themes* have outlined from the texts, along which the stories and experiences shared by the interviewees became interpretable.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research presented in my doctoral dissertation sought answers to three questions related to the employment of pensioners in the field of tourism. During the data collection, semi-structured thematic interviews were conducted with 50 pensioners and 16 employers, the transcripts of which were analyzed using the qualitative method of thematic analysis.

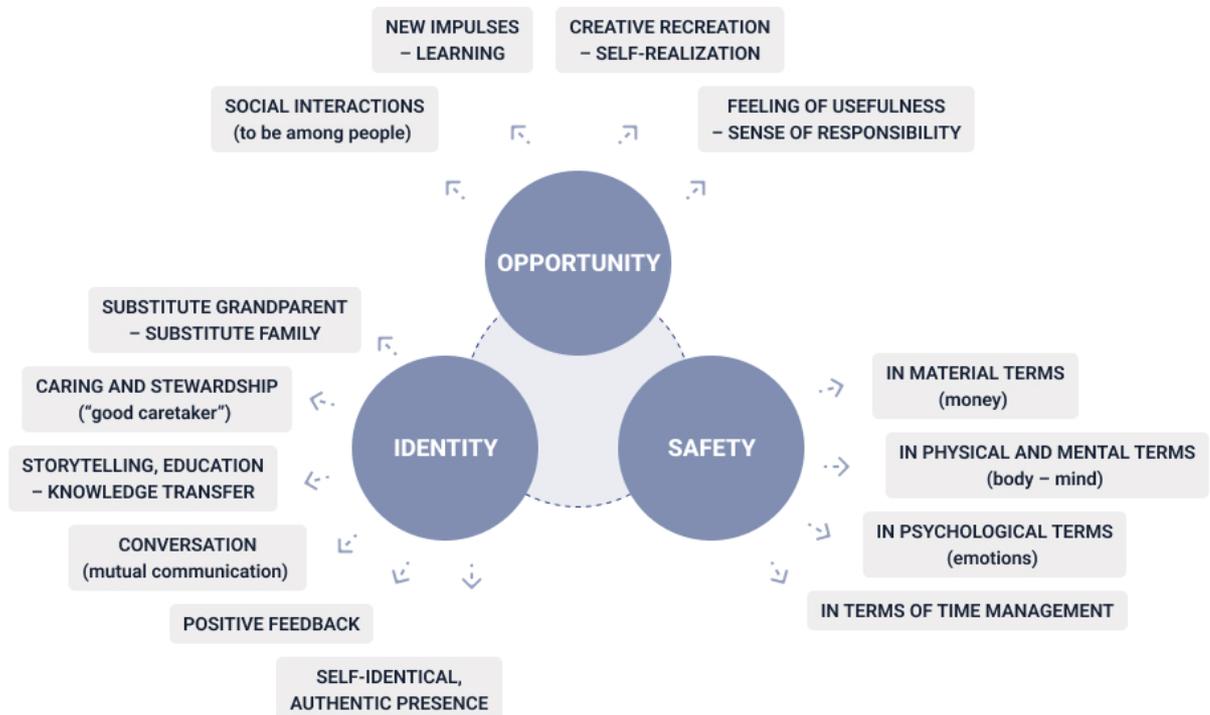
3.1. Results of interviews made with retired employees

As a result of the data analysis, on the one hand, we get an answer to the question of what work means for retired people working in tourism-related locations, as well as how they experience the tasks assigned to and performed by them (Q1). Summarizing the results of the research in key words, we can say that for retired people working in tourism-related locations, their work is an important part of their *identity*, it also represents *opportunities* and provides *safety* in several aspects (*Figure 1*). Based on the research results it can be said that in the *identity forming role of work* the most important components are the substitute grandparent role they may take on, the substitute family experience, the task of caretaking, storytelling - teaching - knowledge transfer as activities, the opportunity for communication and social interactions, the received positive reinforcement and authentic presence. The *safety*, which their work means to them, is mostly embodied in a sense of physical and spiritual (physique – mind), material (money) and psychological (emotions) sense of security, but at the same time we must not forget about the temporal aspect either, which also becomes key, because retired people feel that this activity provides a framework for their everyday life and structures their time. In addition, it is also clear from the results of the research that work provides an *opportunity* for retired people, on the one hand, to create and preserve social relationships, and on the other hand for creative recreation (self-fulfillment), as well as to experience and maintain the sense of usefulness, and to gain new knowledge, since their workplace/tasks are sources of new impulses for them.

With regard to the question of how retired people experience the tasks they perform (Q1), the thematic text analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in four key themes along which differences can be seen between the interviewed elderly people. These key emerging themes were *one's own role*, *feedback* received in relation to work, *job satisfaction* and *future plans*. In terms of their own role, the most important characteristic was whether, according to their own subjective experience, they create value during their work or not. It

seemed to be also a closely related aspect, that if they create value, whether it is recognized or not. Regarding the feedback received on the work, it proved to be extremely important whether the evaluation comes in a direct or indirect form. Regarding the theme of job satisfaction, basically three types of experiences could be distinguished in the interviewees' narratives: the satisfied one, where a sense of mission and purpose appear in the work-related activities of the retiree; the neutral one, where no particular emotion is associated with the work; as well as the negative one, in which there are mostly unpleasant feelings and experiences related to the current job.

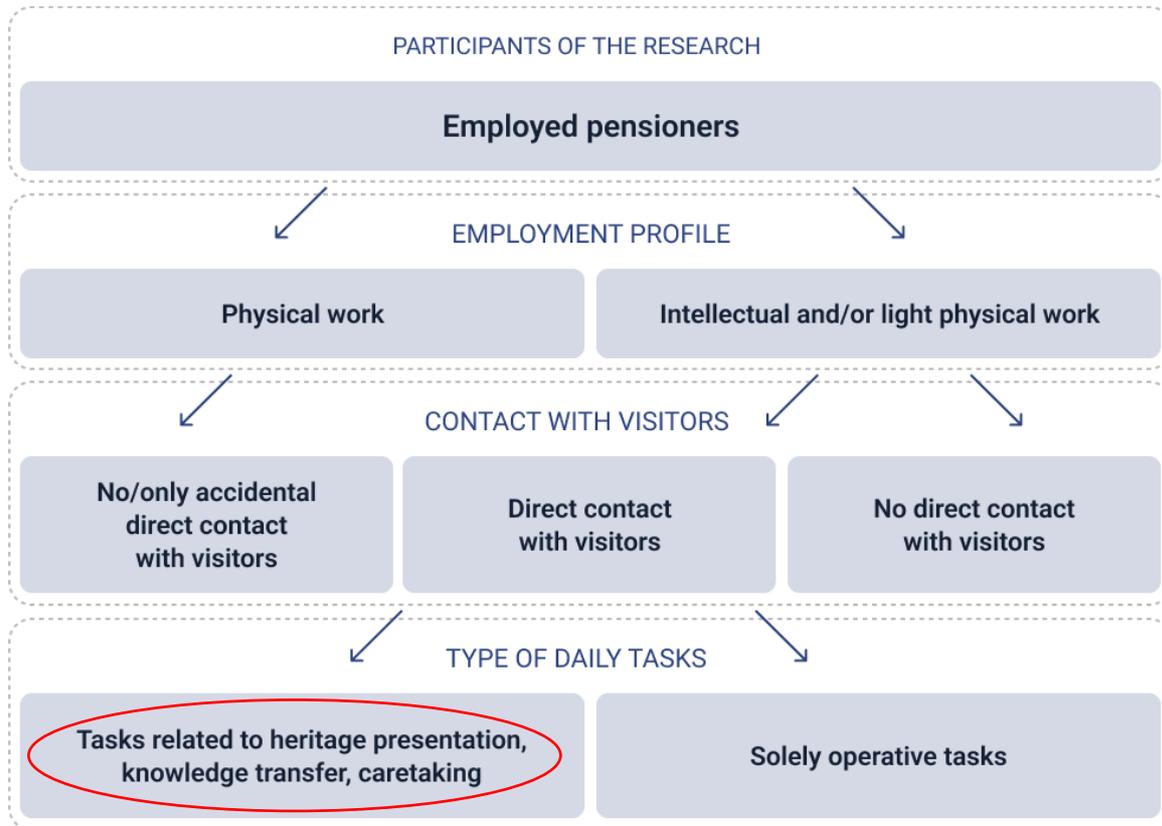
Figure 1: The role of work in the life of the retired interviewees



Source: own editing

In the topic category of future plans, optimistic, neutral and resigned attitudes were distinguished from each other as differences in their general outlook on life and future perspectives. At the same time, the following contradiction is worth mentioning: while based on the first three key themes (*own role, feedback, job satisfaction*), the differences that unfolded between the surveyed retired-age employees point towards consistent and unidirectional typologies (*Figure 2*), while in terms of *future plans* the differences emerging between the interviewees do not fit into this typology.

Figure 2: The differences used as a basis of the classification among pensioners



Source: own editing

The second research question of my dissertation (Q2) aimed to explore the subjective well-being aspects of the current work of retired people working in tourism-related locations. To answer this, another round of thematic analysis of the transcripts of the employee interviews were done. The work-related part of the employee interview guide, was assembled based on the CASP-19 measuring instrument, created by HYDE ET AL. (2003), which, in addition to being a need-satisfaction-focused approach designed for the elderly, leaves a lot of room for subjective experiences in addition to objective factors. From the answers of the interviewees and the stories they shared, the elements of the dimensions of *control*, *autonomy*, *self-realization* and *pleasure* and their importance in terms of general life-, and job satisfaction clearly emerged, which in this way reflect on the typologies mentioned in the answer to the first research question. If these four dimensions are present together in the current work of the interviewed retired person, it most probably affects their everyday life and their general satisfaction with life. Of course, the extent of the effect cannot be determined clearly based solely on this research. Based on theory and empiricism, it turns out to be crucial how the given pensioner perceives the work he/she does and what are his/her experiences related to it. For a deeper, contextual understanding of this, it is worth

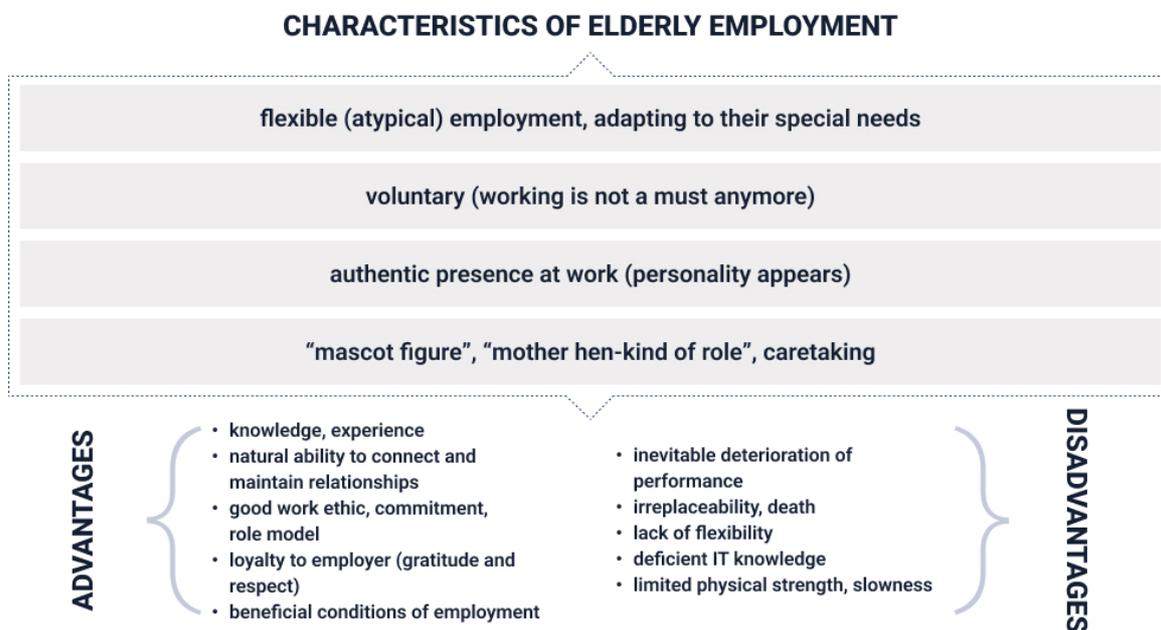
examining the experiences of the pensioners involved in the research that forms the basis of my dissertation in the light of the sense of coherence model associated with the name of Aaron Antonovsky (ANTONOVSKY 1987b). With the salutogenetic examination of ‘*being well*’ and the creation of the concept of a sense of coherence ANTONOVSKY (1987a) pointed out that the „*comprehensibility–manageability–meaningfulness*” attitude towards the impulses and challenges of the world around us is essential for successful coping. If we transfer this *sense of coherence* concept, interpreted by Antonovsky as a global orientation, to the subjective well-being of pensioners and, within that, to their workplace and work-related experiences, then we can examine a certain task according to how the person performing it – in this case the pensioner – feels about the following: whether the work-related tasks and challenges are structured, predictable and understandable, whether these could be solved with the available resources and capabilities, as well as whether they are worth solving, so is it worth investing one’s resources to solve them? If these three factors (*comprehensible, manageable, meaningful*) are represented on one axis of a three-dimensional coordinate system, then a certain task can be placed in this system according to how the interviewed pensioners think about it. In this way, for example, a task that a given interviewee considers to be predictable, solvable, and worth solving according to his/her own experience, creates the sense of coherence for him/her in his work, which results in satisfaction and commitment. The salutogenetic state (characterized by sense of coherence) of retired people and their employment is when they are given tasks, which they perceive as predictable, understandable, feasible and also worth doing.

3.2. Results of employer interviews

Last but not least, my dissertation also sought the answer to the question of how employers in the domestic tourism sector think about the employment of pensioners (Q3). In order to answer this, additional interviews were conducted at locations related to tourism consumption that employ pensioners, and places that do not employ this age group to get to know the arguments and experiences of both sides. The fact that there are no employees of retirement age can, on the one hand, be the result of a conscious management decision, but on the other hand, there are also locations where it simply happened as a random consequence of the coincidence of various circumstances, so they do not intentionally avoid employing people of retirement age. Interviews with employers of pensioners, in addition to allowing a deeper insight into the most important *characteristics of employment* of this

age group – such as atypical employment forms, voluntary work or authentic presence – pointed out its *advantages* and *disadvantages* (Figure 3). Based on the interviews, among the advantages we must definitely mention their immeasurable amount of knowledge and experience, their commitment, their loyalty, their skill in maintaining contacts and their enthusiasm, and of course, last but not least, the favorable legal conditions of their employment. Among the disadvantages limited physical capacity and possible slowness, lack of flexibility, difficulties in using IT, inevitably deteriorating performance, and death (irreplaceability) were the most frequently mentioned ones.

Figure 3: Key emerging themes of the interviews made with employers



Source: own editing

In those locations where there are no employees of retirement age as a result of a **conscious managerial decision**, the interviewees primarily pointed out that the main reasons for this are the poorer physical condition of the elderly compared to those employees of younger age, lack of flexibility, slower pace of learning new things, and the generally more deficient IT knowledge. In addition, there are locations, where the lack of pensioner employees is **not a conscious managerial decision**, but rather a random consequence of the coincidence of various circumstances. It is therefore also a fact that these locations do not have employees of retirement age, but the management did not consciously make a dismissive decision in this regard, but the situation just happened to turn out this way for some reason. These locations therefore do not refuse to employ pensioners, and in the future they might add a pensioner to their team if the opportunity presents itself.

The results of the research clearly indicate that for Hungarian pensioners, domestic tourism can be an ideal field for re-employment (typical or atypical, voluntary or paid), as it provides many opportunities that fit well with their preferences and experiences.

3.3. Summary

The results of my research allow me to conclude, on the one hand, that the abilities, skills, and experiences of the elderly involved in tourism on the service side (as employees) and their adaptation mechanisms, described by the person-job fit model make them an excellent fit to carry out tasks related to heritage presentation and preservation, knowledge transfer and caretaking. While on the other hand, the involvement of elderly in the supply side of tourism can thus be related to the development of their subjective well-being. Based on the results of the research, we can say that the well-being aspects of their current work and how they feel in the given activity or workplace do not depend so much on the position itself (and its objective characteristics), but rather on to what extent the individual is able to experience its identity-forming nature and to what extent he/she perceives it as an opportunity and safety in different aspects described previously along these dimensions. Taking this into account, domestic tourism has many opportunities in which those of retirement age, who are able and willing to work can express themselves and work in a way that is beneficial for them, for their employers as well.

Based on the results of my dissertation I firmly believe that – regardless of their position – it would be worthwhile to – emphatically and consistently – display the pensioner employees in the marketing communication of the services of those tourism-related locations. Based on my experience, unfortunately, there are still many tourism-related sites and businesses where the presence of a pensioner employee is treated more leniently than proudly. However, changing this gently forgiving attitude would presumably induce positive changes for both the employers, the visitors, and the pensioner employees as well at many places, where such an experience matches their profile.

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