

# Self concept, mood and quality of life of older adults: first analysis

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## ABSTRACT

The economic growth, the medical progress and the improvement of hygienic conditions, comfort and security have allowed one of the oldest human desires: increase longevity. This extension of time of individual aging is one of the largely and most significant challenges that European Union is facing - pronounced population aging. Besides the obvious implications and concerns on social and economic spheres, it is essential to meet the emotional issues of aging population.

The results presented include a preliminary assessment of several variables, such as: self-concept, mood and quality of life of seniors, integrated into the whole work conducted during the PhD – Multimodal Computer-Mediated Communication for Senior Context of Use. The main goal of this research is the evaluation of the impact of using Web services in the emotional variables in a group of institutionalized seniors while taking part in a senior online community. This research is also integrated into the SEDUCE project - Senior Citizen Use of Computer Mediated Communication and Information in Web Ecologies.

The selection criteria addressed senior participants with age greater than or equal to 65 years old, a cognitive state considered normal (evaluated through the Mini Mental State Examination) and with a voluntary participation.

To perceive if there is an impact of using Web services in the variables self-concept, mood and quality of life of senior citizens, two groups of seniors (a control group and an experimental one) were created in each of the four Center Care and/or Home Care institutions of Aveiro council.

During the months of July and August 2011, the Clinical Inventory of Self-Concept [1], the Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale, Lawton, 1975 adaptation of Paúl, em 1991 [2] and the Scale of Quality Life of the World Health Organization - WHOQOL-Bref, adapted by Vaz-Serra, in 2006 [3], were applied to these senior groups.

The application of these questionnaires for the senior population is valid in Portugal and is commonly administered by the researcher. Moreover, the researcher reads the instructions, makes questions, descriptions and checks the response scale [4]. The Clinical Inventory of Self Concept assesses the factors of social acceptance/rejection, self-efficacy, psychological maturity and activity-impulsivity. Moral Scale assesses the factors of loneliness/dissatisfaction, attitude towards aging and agitation. The Scale of Quality of Life includes the physical, psychological, social relationships and environment. A survey was also conducted to characterize the sample.

41 senior participants, 16 males and 25 females, 22 in the experimental group and 19 in the control group, compose the sample. 10 individuals had less than four years of education, 25 had four years of education, only 2 participants took 5 years of education and 4 seniors with six years of education. Concerning occupation<sup>1</sup>, the majority (19 participants) is part of the Large Group 9, followed by the Large Groups 5 and 7, each of 6 individuals. The age of participants is between 66 and 96 years, with the average 82.66 (standard deviation 6.71 years).

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<sup>1</sup> INE, 2010 - Portuguese Classification of Occupations: Large Group 9 - Unskilled workers, Large Group 7 - Skilled Workers Industry, Large Group 5 - Employees of personal services, protection and security

Overall, 41 participants have values of self-concept of 72.34 ( $\sigma = 5.75$ , maximum = 86 and minimum = 61), mood 7.63 ( $\sigma = 2.41$ , maximum = 11 and minimum = 3) and quality of life 56.71 ( $\sigma = 15.84$ , minimum = 67.86 and maximum = 35.71).

**Table 1 – Preliminary results of the evaluation of the senior emotional variables by group**

	Experimental group		Control group		sample	
	Mean	$\sigma$	Mean	$\sigma$	Mean	$\sigma$
<b>Self-concept</b>	<b>72,59</b>	5,46	<b>72,05</b>	6,21	<b>72,34</b>	5,75
F1 – social acceptance / rejection	17,50	1,77	17,74	1,67	17,61	1,72
F2 – self-effective	20,14	2,57	20,21	2,18	20,17	2,37
F3 – psychological maturity	15,36	1,37	15,05	2,01	15,22	1,71
F4 – impulsivity / activity	11,55	1,47	11,11	1,66	11,34	1,56
<b>Mood</b>	<b>7,95</b>	2,65	<b>7,26</b>	2,10	<b>7,63</b>	2,41
F1 – loneliness / dissatisfaction	3,05	1,40	2,53	1,12	2,80	1,29
F2 – attitude to aging	3,05	1,05	2,58	1,12	2,83	1,09
F3 – agitation	1,86	1,17	2,16	1,07	2,00	1,12
<b>Quality of life</b>	<b>60,80</b>	16,04	<b>51,97</b>	14,56	<b>56,71</b>	15,84
D1 – physical	53,08	9,04	56,58	5,90	54,70	7,72
D2 – psychological	61,17	7,86	61,63	5,99	61,38	6,97
D3 – social relations	66,67	7,27	64,04	8,36	65,45	7,81
D4 – environment	66,34	5,45	63,98	6,94	65,25	6,22

Regarding the factors and domains that compose the emotional variables, the results show that:

- considering self-concept, the experimental and control groups share higher values of self-efficacy and lower of impulsivity / activity;
- considering mood, the senior of the experimental group have higher values for the factors of loneliness/ dissatisfaction and attitude concerning aging and lower levels of agitation. The control group shows the highest values in attitude concerning aging and lower agitation;
- considering quality of life, the groups also share the highest values in the domain of social relations and lower in the physical domain.

As mentioned previously, these results were obtained prior to use of the Web services. During the months of July and August 2012, data will be collected subsequent to the use of these services in order to check implications on the emotional variables.

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