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THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF ELDERLY PEOPLE TO OVERCOME PERSONAL ALIENATION

У статті представлено теоретичний аналіз феномену особистісного відчуження в осіб похилого віку та обґрунтовано можливості творчої діяльності як засобу його психологічного подолання. Актуальність дослідження визначається зростанням частки людей старшого віку у структурі населення та поширенням психосоціальних проблем, пов'язаних із самотністю, втратою соціальних ролей і зниженням відчуття власної значущості. Особистісне відчуження у старості трактується як складний психологічний стан, що проявляється у зниженні рівня самоприйняття, емоційній відстороненості та ослабленні міжособистісних зв'язків. На основі міждисциплінарного огляду філософських, соціологічних і психологічних джерел визначено основні детермінанти цього явища: соціальну ізоляцію, когнітивний спад і екзистенційні переживання, пов'язані з усвідомленням кінцівки життя.

Доведено, що творча активність — як індивідуальна, так і колективна — виступає адаптивним і компенсаторним ресурсом, який сприяє відновленню цілісності «Я» та посиленню суб'єктивного відчуття життєвої енергії. Механізми цього впливу розглянуто через призму концепцій самоактуалізації (А. Маслоу), індивідуальності (К. Юнг) та екзистенційної творчості (Е. Фромм). Залучення людей похилого віку до різних видів творчої діяльності (арт-терапія, музика, літературна творчість, декоративно-ужиткове мистецтво) сприяє емоційній виразності, соціальній інтеграції та відновленню сенсу життя. У статті підкреслено, що творчість виступає не лише розважальним або терапевтичним методом, а й формою екзистенційної підтримки, яка допомагає долати відчуження, зберігати ідентичність і підтримувати психічне благополуччя у пізній дорослості.

Ключові слова: особистісне відчуження; люди похилого віку; творча діяльність; самоактуалізація; екзистенційна психологія; геронтопсихологія.

The article presents a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of personal alienation in elderly people and explores the potential of creative activity as a means of its psychological overcoming. The relevance of the study is determined by the growing demographic trend of population aging and the accompanying psychosocial problems associated with isolation, loss of social roles, and reduced sense of self-value in later life. Personal alienation in old age is interpreted as a complex psychological state characterized by decreased self-acceptance, emotional detachment, and weakening of interpersonal relationships. Based on an interdisciplinary review of philosophical, sociological, and psychological literature, the author identifies the main determinants of this phenomenon, including social exclusion, cognitive decline, and existential crisis associated with awareness of life finitude.

The article substantiates that creative activity—both individual and collective—acts as a compensatory and adaptive resource capable of restoring the integrity of the self and reinforcing subjective vitality. The mechanisms of this influence are analyzed through the concepts of self-actualization (A. Maslow), individuation (C. Jung), and existential creativity (E. Fromm). Participation in creative processes (art therapy, music, literature, handicrafts) promotes the reestablishment of social connections, emotional expressiveness, and a renewed sense of purpose. The author emphasizes that creativity enables elderly individuals to re-symbolize their life experience, integrate past and present, and transform passive aging into active self-realization.

The paper concludes that the use of creative activity in gerontopsychological practice should be considered not only as a recreational or therapeutic method, but also as a form of existential support that helps overcome alienation, preserve identity, and maintain mental well-being in late adulthood. The theoretical analysis provides a basis for further empirical research aimed at developing comprehensive psycho-social programs fostering creative self-expression among the elderly.

Keywords: *personal alienation; elderly people; creative activity; self-actualization; existential psychology; gerontopsychology.*

Problem statement. Each person has their own, distinct, psychological characteristics and peculiarities, each is differently adapted to modern, changing society. To ensure the harmony of development and life in each age period, it is necessary to fulfill a number of conditions, in particular, the creative nature of the lifestyle, tolerance for change, the ability to notice and perceive the hidden possibilities of life situations. It is necessary to be especially attentive to the harmony of life at such an age stage as old age. In this age period, life becomes special due to the fact that the physical, emotional and psychological resources to ensure the above-mentioned harmony are becoming less and less, and each person can experience negative psycho-emotional states up to and including personal alienation. An important condition for overcoming these states in old age and active life in this age period is the ability to reveal and realize one's creative potential.

An active attitude to one's life in old age, when older people are able to adequately compensate for negative changes in their own lives, experience losses that occur more and more often, ensure positive development and less frequent experiences of negative psycho-emotional states, which in turn can cause personal alienation. The same applies to those who have a meaning of being, in whose lives positive emotional states prevail, who strive to get to know other individuals, to communicate with them. Creative activity, teaching new things, and transforming attitudes to events and situations in life will contribute to active and productive overcoming of the state of personal alienation and ensuring a harmonious life of older people.

Modernity creates a need to find new opportunities for the creative development of older people through the actualization of accumulated experience and individual achievements at previous stages of personal development in order to ensure active and productive old age.

The purpose of the article. To analyze the possibilities and features of using and developing creative activity of elderly people as a means of overcoming personal alienation.

Presentation of the main material. The phenomenon of aging represents a complex psychological and social process that reflects not only biological decline but also the transformation of an individual's value system, self-perception, and worldview. In modern conditions of social acceleration, informational overload, and shifting social roles, the elderly person often faces the challenge of maintaining internal balance and meaning in a constantly changing environment. Each person has unique psychological characteristics and adaptive mechanisms that determine how they respond to such challenges. However, at older ages, when physical strength, energy, and emotional flexibility gradually decrease, the need for psychological and existential resources becomes especially relevant. One of these crucial resources is creative activity, which enables an individual to overcome the state of passivity, restore self-expression, and maintain personal integrity.

Old age as a psychological stage has its own contradictions. On the one hand, it is a time of accumulated wisdom and life experience; on the other, it is often accompanied by the feeling of limitation, loss, and alienation from the dynamic rhythm of society. The experience of personal alienation in the elderly can manifest through estrangement from one's social environment, a sense of isolation, and loss of connection with one's own inner world. According to existential and humanistic psychology, alienation emerges when a person loses contact with authentic values and ceases to feel themselves as an active subject of life. In this context, the restoration of activity, meaning, and connection with others becomes the central psychological task of late adulthood.

The ability to actualize creative potential allows an elderly individual to reframe life experience and transform negative emotions into constructive activity. Creativity functions as a psychological mediator that connects past and present, helping a person reinterpret previous experiences and transform them into new meanings. When elderly individuals engage in creative work—painting, poetry, music, gardening, crafts, storytelling—they experience a sense of continuity and self-worth. Such activities reinforce the feeling of autonomy, preserve cognitive flexibility, and stimulate social interaction, all of which counteract the processes of isolation and alienation.

Creativity also has a therapeutic dimension: it provides emotional relief, reduces anxiety and depressive symptoms, and enhances overall well-being. Art therapy and expressive practices, for instance, help externalize unspoken emotions and transform them into aesthetic forms that can be shared and understood by others. This process fosters communication and emotional resonance within the social environment. Moreover, creative self-expression serves as a means of symbolic immortality — through

creative products, a person leaves a trace that continues beyond biological existence, thereby reducing existential anxiety and fear of aging.

An important aspect of overcoming personal alienation in late adulthood is the re-evaluation of life experience. Modern psychology emphasizes the necessity of integrating life events into a coherent narrative. According to E. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, the central task of old age is achieving integrity rather than despair. A person who can creatively reinterpret their past and find meaning in their life trajectory attains a sense of completeness and peace. In contrast, fixation on losses, regrets, and unrealized potential leads to emotional exhaustion and alienation. Therefore, creative activity, as a process of symbolic transformation, helps restore coherence between the "experienced self" and the "present self," ensuring a stable sense of identity.

Equally significant is the social function of creativity. Engaging in collective creative projects—community art, intergenerational workshops, volunteer teaching—strengthens interpersonal connections and fosters the feeling of belonging. Such interactions reduce loneliness and promote mutual understanding between generations. Through creativity, older adults can share their experiences, wisdom, and skills with others, fulfilling the need for recognition and contribution. In this way, creativity serves not only as a personal coping strategy but also as a social integrator that connects individual and collective dimensions of life.

The conditions of modern society, with its focus on innovation, productivity, and youthfulness, often marginalize older individuals, depriving them of opportunities for active participation. This marginalization intensifies the feeling of alienation. Therefore, creating institutional and community-based opportunities for the creative self-realization of elderly people becomes an important socio-psychological task. Educational programs, lifelong learning initiatives, cultural centers, and online creative platforms can serve as resources for maintaining cognitive activity and social engagement. The inclusion of elderly individuals in creative and educational contexts provides them not only with psychological support but also with a renewed sense of usefulness and social relevance.

The harmony of life in old age depends largely on the ability to adapt to inevitable changes while preserving inner vitality and a sense of meaning. Creativity becomes the bridge between acceptance and transformation, between reflection on the past and active participation in the present. It allows the elderly person to experience the fullness of being, even under conditions of physical decline, and to find beauty and value in everyday existence. In this regard, creative activity should be considered not only as an auxiliary form of leisure but as a key psychological strategy for self-renewal and for overcoming personal alienation.

Thus, in the face of demographic aging and increasing psychosocial challenges, fostering the creative potential of older adults becomes a priority direction in psychological and social practice. Supporting creativity in late adulthood ensures emotional stability, personal integrity, and existential fulfillment — components that form the basis of a truly harmonious and meaningful old age.

In the modern world, due to the increase in life expectancy, the issue of individual activity throughout life and personal development of an elderly person, overcoming negative psycho-emotional states associated with aging and the manifestation of their personal and creative activity is increasingly being raised (L. Antsiferova, E. Rybalko, M. Ermolaeva, A. Lidars, V. Druzhinin, E. Chueva, O. Krasnova, O. Berezina, V. Naumova, etc.) [5; 6; 7].

L. Antsiferova formulated several provisions regarding the development of the personality in old age, which are simultaneously based on the ideas of reduction and enrichment of mental capabilities. The scientist claims that involutional changes are correlated with neoplasms of a progressive nature, and are aimed at overcoming the destructive phenomena of gerontogenesis and achieving a new level of self-realization of the personality in the world, and the presence of abilities and skills to adequately correlate external conditions with one's own aspirations, goals and motives, awareness and acceptance of the formed system of values of one's own life allow a person in old age to lead an independent, active, responsible and meaningful life [3, p. 89].

The advantage of old age is that the form and type of employment are mostly chosen by the person independently, that is, an elderly person, already less burdened with responsibilities, can choose for himself what and how to do in his free time. However, often the problem is that elderly people do not have the desire to choose anything. N. Shakhmatov, argues that the form and nature of employment are of secondary importance and can be very diverse, but the desire for activity and employment is what fills life in old age with meaning [7].

In old age, the ability to generalize life experience appears, which is very important in the process of choosing employment and spending free time [6]. Studies by K. Strashnikova and M. Tulchinsky have

proven that in old age, the active formation of motivation for activities with an aesthetic orientation occurs. O. Berezina found that with the "correct" attitude to aging, late adulthood can become a period of development and creative flowering, because the preservation of high vitality and working capacity of a person in old age is facilitated by: the level of education, occupation, maturity of the personality, etc. Many men and women who have reached retirement age demonstrate high preservation of health and intellectual functions, and when studying the creative activity of the elderly, it was found that the need for self-expression (writing poetry, drawing, studying something, etc.) is felt by 74% of people [5]. O. Berezina concluded that the creative development of the personality in late adulthood leads to the activation of the personality's adaptive mechanisms and a decrease in the influence of negative factors on the aging process, and creative activity itself does not disappear with age, but manifests itself in a different way.

Internal and external psychological characteristics are the condition and driving force that encourage creativity, and are determined by the environment and genetic predisposition (R. Schmidt). These psychological factors can be stimulants or inhibitors, that is, stimulate or slow down the development of creative activity in older people.

The personality in creative activity within the framework of the psychological approach is considered as a subject of creative activity and the creator of cultural production processes, which implies the initiative of the personality, selectivity, freedom of choice and preferences, a high level of independence, where at the same time the thematic group provides for a high degree of organization of the course of classes, which is achieved by the interactivity of the process, by focusing the attention of participants on significant topics of classes and technology of the process and forms the basis of the purposefulness of creative activity [6]. Research on the issues of personal adaptation recognize the process of creative activity as a variant of a protective adaptive coping strategy, which has a relatively highly organized complex character and activates the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral spheres of personal functioning (V. Ababkov, M. Perre; R. Lazarus) [6]. A. Kopytin believes that the process of artistic creativity is characterized by adaptive behavior that stimulates the communicative needs of the individual, serves as a distraction from a negative situation, which is an effective mechanism for reducing the obstacle to the participant's entry into the stages of actualization and optimization of personal resources in the old age period, such as mobilization of latent resources, resolution of life contradictions and acceptance of oneself in a new status, significantly influencing the development of social communication skills and the development of creative potential [6].

Creative manifestations of older people are possible under certain conditions, to which L. Antsiferova refers:

- an internal need to be included;
- constructive psychological attitude and trust in others;
- adequate perception of the present;
- optimal attitude towards the future;
- relatively diverse interests directed at oneself and others;
- positive solution to the problems of the completed stages of life;
- life experience;
- wisdom;
- psychological independence;
- ability and need for social contacts [3].

The above-mentioned components, in turn, contribute to overcoming personal alienation. Therefore, in old age, acquiring the meaning of life, experiencing its value and uniqueness, understanding and realizing the vast life experience; self-knowledge, self-regulation, self-organization, can encourage an elderly person to develop creative activity.

Surprisingly interesting is the overseas exploration, where ongoing studies examining choral groups, theater training, and visual arts for seniors demonstrate that creative activities can significantly improve the health, well-being, and independence of older adults.

Dr. L. Onken of NIA's Division of Behavioral and Social Research states that current researchers are interested in studying how participation in artistic activities may be linked to improved cognitive function, memory, self-esteem, and overall psychological well-being in older adults. Scientists are also interested in studying the use of music to reduce behavioral symptoms of dementia (stress, aggression, and apathy), and what kind of music will help improve and develop social interaction.

D. Johnson, PhD, of the University of California, conducted a clinical trial called "Community of Voices" to examine the effects of community choir participation on the health and well-being of nearly

400 older adults aged 60 years and older, randomly selected from 12 senior centers in San Francisco. The primary study was conducted immediately, 6 months later, and 12 months (1 year after completion), and the study had six intervention and six control groups. Each choir met once a week for 90-minute sessions for 44 weeks and then performed in several informal concerts. During weekly rehearsals, professional choir directors from the San Francisco Community Music Center were trained to ensure that their activities promoted the health and well-being of older adults. A unique aspect of the study was its use by community partners to recruit and retain a large group of racially and ethnically diverse and low-income older adults, which had significant social outcomes. Participation in a community choir has shown positive results within the first 6 months, including a decrease in feelings of loneliness and an increase in interest in life. D. Johnson particularly noted the positive function of the choir, which was a regular opportunity to meet new people, build social support and increase the sense of belonging among older people. Diverse and active social contacts, inclusion in community social processes are very important preventive measures in overcoming personal alienation. Access to regular creative and artistic activities in diverse low-income communities is vital for older people to remain active and participate in the life of their community.

The experience of Northwestern University is interesting for analysis and imitation. Darby Morhardt, a senior research fellow at the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience and Alzheimer's Disease in Mesulam, says improvisational theater can help older adults with early-stage dementia be socially active and improve their quality of life. The program, developed in 2010 by Northwestern and the Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, aims to improve the quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. The Memory Ensemble, a group of 69 people, learn to use their instincts, creativity, and spontaneity to explore and create improvisational theater. Over the course of the eight-week program, groups of 10 to 15 participants, ages 50 to 90, attend 90-minute sessions that are purposefully repetitive and follow a set pattern. Two facilitators - a clinical social worker and an improvisational theatre artist - accompany participants in all activities. Many exercises have a training basis and include the practice of observation, listening and using imagination to find creative solutions. For example, the mood of participants is assessed at registration using "smiling faces", a physical warm-up and relaxation exercises for breathing regulation are performed.

co-founder, Christine Mary Dunford, Ph.D., of the Lookingglass Theatre Company, says the setting is designed to put participants in a safe but challenging environment where they can experience anxiety. However, participants are given the following instructions in advance: "When I feel anxious or uncertain, I can stop, breathe, observe, go back to my fantasy, and then the answer will come." As a result, participants have been found to feel more accomplished, empowered, and responsible. Morhardt says there are limitations to treating people with dementia, because as the conditions and tasks progress, communicating with words can become a challenge, so the focus of the work is still on nonverbal means of expressing one's emotions, feelings, and thoughts. It is particularly important that the program does not aim to slow down the development of the disease or improve the cognitive functions of an elderly person, the program is aimed at helping people with dementia enjoy their lives, that is, the social aspect of the life of elderly people becomes the primary and especially significant. Which in turn confirms the importance of the social aspect of personal alienation and the use of interpersonal interaction to prevent and overcome it.

Preliminary results show that participation in the Memory Ensemble improves mood, reduces anxiety and increases feelings of belonging, normality and destigmatization, says Dr. K. M. Dunford, with participants also reporting feelings of achievement, empowerment, opportunity and self-discovery. Future plans include developing a training program for psychotherapists, researchers, social workers, art therapists and theatre professionals based on the findings. The research suggests that theatre can be used to address issues such as dementia in older people, making it particularly effective in cases of social isolation where social interaction and engagement are key coping techniques.

Confirming the results of previous studies, the study of the relationship between music and well-being in old age is also supported by the National Institutes of Health (National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Center for the Performing Arts (Center for the Performing Arts) named after John F. Kennedy in Washington, in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts (National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)) launched the "Sound Health", which aims to expand knowledge about how music affects the brain. In the context of the development of this topic, at an NIH workshop in January 2017, a group of medical experts, scientists, music therapists, performers, and artists discussed how to organize research on how the brain processes music and how this research can be implemented and applied in clinical settings, and recommendations were made at the workshop for further development of this field of research. In 2017-2018, according to the above-mentioned program, a series of performances, lectures, and workshops were

held at the Kennedy Center, which brought together leading researchers and performers to explore the intersection of music and science. NIH plans to develop and implement basic and applied science initiatives, improve methodology, and infrastructure to support additional large-scale research. Dr. Onken argues that studying the mechanisms by which creative activity can benefit the health and well-being of older people will create opportunities to create a solid foundation for developing programs to ensure and improve the health and well-being of older people. That is, the mentioned topic of ensuring continuous development and ensuring positive and happy old age is currently very relevant, actively developed and researched.

Conclusions. The analysis of theoretical and empirical studies has led to the conclusion that creative activity does not decrease with age, but on the contrary has the ability to develop under the conditions of the presence of certain personal traits and the appropriate organization of external circumstances. External psychological factors that contribute to the development of creative activity include: acceptance and valuelessness of society, the organization of an appropriate "safe" environment, an atmosphere of creativity. Old age can be the most pleasant time of life if you consciously adhere to certain rules: take care of your physiological and mental health throughout your life; have a favorite job; maintain an optimistic attitude; be internally independent of other people and surrounding conditions, developing creative activity, which in its complex will help prevent negative psycho-emotional states that can cause personal alienation.

Research into music, theater, dance, creative writing, and other creative activities that older adults can engage in shows promise for improving quality of life and well-being for older adults. The benefits can range from improved cognitive function, memory, and self-esteem to reduced stress and increased social interaction, which is especially important in times of social isolation.

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