



Social productivity of seniors using services of adult day care centers

Summary of the doctoral dissertation

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1. Justification for the choice of topic

Statistical data show that Poland is a country that exceeded the demographic old age threshold in 1967 (Dragan, 2011, p. 4). In 2014, it was estimated that in 2030 there will be 457.5 thousand people aged 65 and over, while the number of people in pre-working age and working age will clearly decrease (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2014a, p. 131). For this reason, it is so important to counteract the negative effects of the aging of the society in advance.

It turns out, however, that the support provided to seniors through semi-stationary facilities is still not sufficiently developed (Pawlus, 2016, p. 179). Therefore, it is postulated "(...) to develop an optimal model of service delivery, which will be financially viable, and at the same time guarantee the satisfaction of caring needs at a decent level" (Pawlus, 2016, p. 175).

Already several decades ago, attention was drawn to the too rare reference to the theory of services during carrying out of economic research (Polarczyk, 1971, p. 189). At the same time, the concept of the silver economy is still not very popular in Poland, not only among representatives of local government units but also entrepreneurs. Therefore, there is a research gap in the functioning of Polish social services (Denek, 2003, p. 10).

Moreover, seniors show low awareness of their possible productive role despite exiting the labor market. Meanwhile, adult day care centers can play an important preventive role "(...) against the manifestation of character traits identified with disengagement in an elderly person, as well as against the social exclusion of elderly people and the emergence of a feeling of loneliness" (Zawadzka, 2014, p. 151).

The phenomenon of social productivity, especially in the context of older people, is not very often analyzed in Polish conditions. The research carried out by institutions relates at most to one of its components, namely volunteering. It is worth mentioning the marginalized role of adult day care centers. Universities of the third age or nursing homes are much more often in the field of interest of researchers.

2. Subject, goals and research problems

As part of the doctoral dissertation, it was considered important to establish the activity of the "Senior-WIGOR" Adult Day Care Centers and the "Senior+" Adult Day Care Centers

located in the Greater Poland Voivodeship, which were established thanks to *The multi-annual program "Senior+" for the years 2015–2020*. The respondents were elderly people over 60 years of age who used the services of semi-stationary facilities on a daily basis. The implementation of the pilot studies took place in March and April 2021, and the relevant empirical studies from June to September 2021.

The main goal was to assess the relationship between living in an adult day care center during the COVID-19 pandemic and the socially productive attitude of the elderly. In relation to the main goal, the following specific goals were also created:

1. To organize scientific achievements in the field of social productivity.
2. To show the variety of services provided in adult day care centers.
3. To diagnose the needs of seniors participating in the activities of adult day care centers.
4. To get to know the ways of activating the elderly.
5. To determine the importance of social productivity of elderly people staying in adult day care centers.
6. To identify the determinants of the social productivity of seniors using adult day care centers.
7. To create the characteristics of the socially productive attitude displayed by the elderly.

The main research question concerns the role of adult day care centers in shaping socially productive attitudes in the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic. On this basis, the following detailed research questions were formulated:

1. What kind of activities are carried out in adult day care centers?
2. How do the staff of the adult day care centers socially activate seniors?
3. What are the reasons for elderly people to use services of adult day care centers?
4. Which activities within social productivity are performed by seniors?
5. What factors determine the social productivity of the elderly?
6. What are the characteristics of the elderly showing a socially productive attitude?

3. Methodology of own research

As part of the literature research, a research model was created that shows the importance of individual factors relating to the elderly and institutional factors related to adult day care centers. Their significance in the context of the implementation of socially productive activities was verified (see Figure 1).

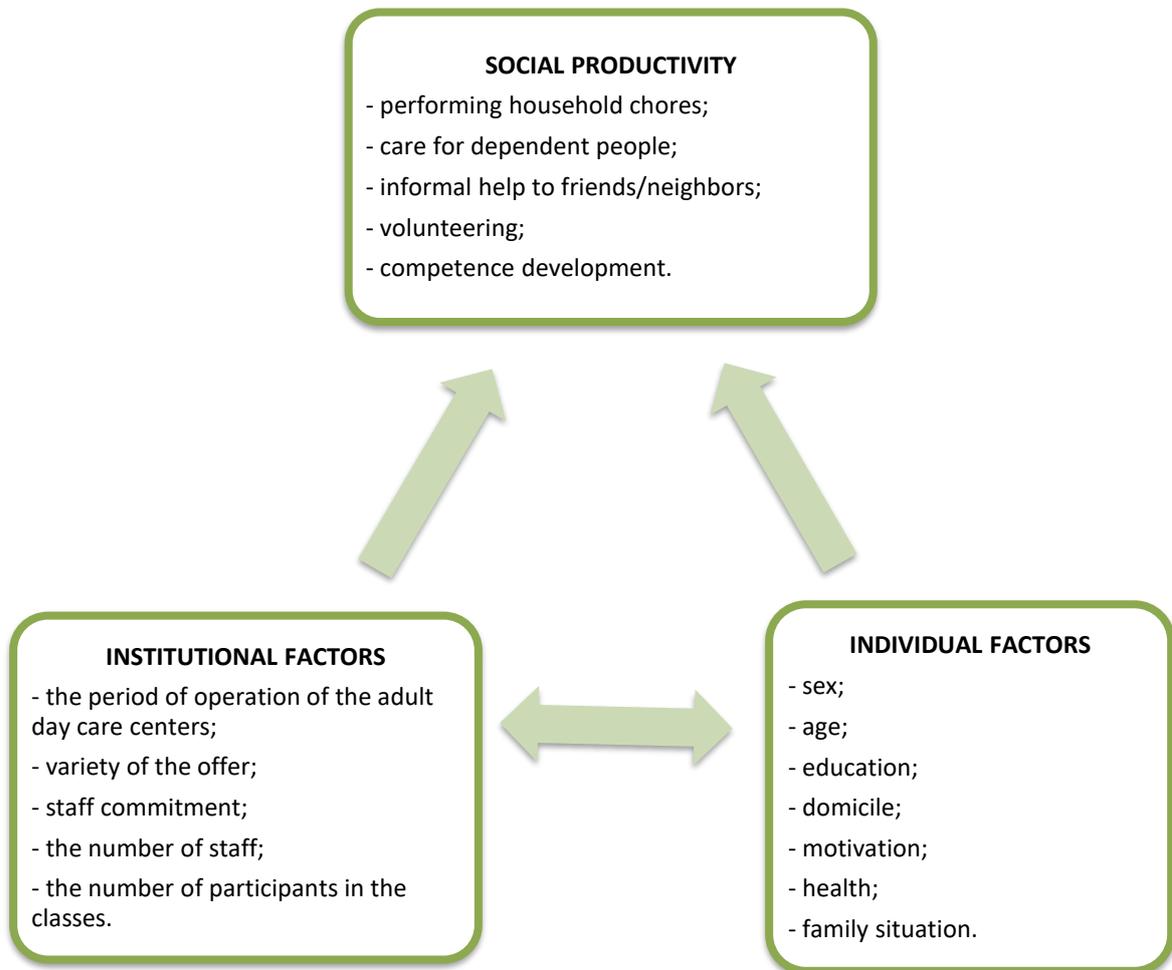


Figure 1. Research model

Source: own study based on the literature on the subject.

It was decided to use triangulation of research methods. At the beginning, special attention was paid to all documents dealing with old age in legal and statistical terms. In addition to the analysis of existing data, the diagnostic survey method has undoubtedly turned out to be important. Due to the fact that the respondents were elderly people with various health conditions, it was considered important to create favorable conditions for them during the interviews. This is why seniors could feel at ease and willingly share their experiences. The accompanying method was the observation made during personal visits to

semi-stationary facilities. It is worth noting that all data elicited during the research process was analyzed.

At the time of the commencement of the empirical research, there were 31 “Senior-WIGOR” and “Senior+” adult day care centers in the Greater Poland Voivodeship. In total, they offered 861 places for seniors (as of February 3, 2021). Ultimately 121 elderly people took part in the interviews, including 88 women and 29 men from 19 adult day care centers. Most respondents indicated that they lived in single-person households in cities below 20,000 residents. The length of stay of seniors in the centers also varied. Most often they stayed in the centers from one to three years. Higher education was the least frequently indicated in the group of respondents. Basic vocational and elementary education dominated in this area.

4. Research results and recommendations

The conducted research made it possible to achieve the assumed research goals. First of all, the importance of staying in an adult day care centers was revealed in the context of shaping a socially productive attitude in a crisis situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, it was useful to create specific research objectives. It has been shown that the staff significantly supports the elderly in everyday activities, encouraging them in a tactful manner to perform various tasks. It turns out that additional assistance is provided outside working hours. The respondents appreciate this fact, stating that the family atmosphere encourages them to attend classes. During them, seniors can mainly take care of fulfilling living needs and the needs of belonging or self-fulfillment. The staff, however, does not regularly diagnose the participants’ needs.

In addition to revising the concept of social productivity in the context of the research topic, 8 institutional factors important in shaping the attitudes of older people were identified. The following factors were distinguished: supportive staff, family atmosphere, variety of activities, promoting social involvement, proper quality of food, ensuring transport, transparency of activities and appropriate infrastructure.

The conducted research made it possible to create a typology of attitudes of seniors who use adult day care centers. Older people may display certain attitudes depending on various institutional and individual factors. The first type of passive attitude is characterized by

directing actions towards the inside of the group. Seniors do not feel confident, which makes them conservative in action. They prefer to observe the environment, and in semi-stationary institutions they tend to participate only in basic classes. On the other hand, the active approach of the respondents within the group shows the initiative and openness of the elderly. This is due to their need for interpersonal contacts. For this reason, they are interested in participating in various activities. This type of attitude is rarely displayed at the beginning of a stay in a semi-stationary facility. Likewise, a long time must pass for seniors to engage in external activities, especially related to charity. However, it is always accompanied by joy and the need to repay for the support shown during the stay in the adult day care centers. The respondents admit that meetings with representatives of other institutions rarely take place. Passive people do not feel comfortable in these situations. However, they decide to participate in the events due to the need for conformism (see Table 1).

Table 1. Types of socially productive attitudes in elderly people staying in adult day care centers

		DIRECTION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS	
		inside	outside
APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS	passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conservativeness, hesitation, fear, sadness; - observation of the environment; - need to withdraw; - participating in basic activities; - usually the initial phase of staying in the adult day care centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compliance, confusion, frustration; - attempts to withdraw; - need for conformism; - a rare type of attitude due to the few contacts between the facilities and other institutions.
	active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - openness, initiative, trust; - need for contact; - participation in various activities; - conversations with other seniors on private matters, also outside the opening hours of the facility; - long time lapse necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - joy, excitement, confidence; - need to pay back; - participation in charity events; - preparing gifts during classes; - willingness to share knowledge with people outside of the adult day care centers.

Source: own study based on the results of the conducted research.

Based on the results of the research, recommendations were formulated that may be of interest not only to employees of day homes and local government units running them, but also to other decision-makers and scientists related to social policy. This is why it will be possible to shape socially productive attitudes more effectively. For example, it is proposed to introduce changes in the areas of:

- appropriate quality of the services provided (especially the food offered);

- providing permanent transport (to enable participation in daily activities and excursions);
- activities tailored to the needs of recipients (due to gender and different types of disability);
- introducing a variety of activities (minimizing the number of artistic and musical activities for the benefit of others);
- regular involvement of external specialists (in fields of interest to seniors, especially psychology and rehabilitation);
- motivating staff to social activity (raising awareness of the importance of volunteering, encouraging older people to participate in charity initiatives);
- establishing contacts with various institutions (especially with other senior and educational institutions);
- regular monitoring and evaluation of activities (examining the needs of seniors, creating strategies for functioning in crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic);
- building awareness of members of the society (regarding the importance of various forms of support for seniors).

5. Selected publications

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6. The structure of the doctoral dissertation

The work contains a total of 6 chapters. The first three are theoretical. They contain information on the determinants of the aging of the Polish society, especially in the economic, political, social and demographic dimensions. The fourth chapter concerns the methodology of own research, and the last two present the results of empirical research.

The dissertation also included conclusions and recommendations. Below is a detailed table of contents for the doctoral dissertation:

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