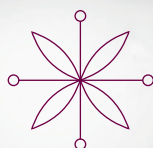


The Abstract Book of the 22nd European Conference on Developmental Psychology



August 25-29, 2025
Vilnius, Lithuania

<https://doi.org/10.15388/ECDP.2025>

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Konferenciją, kurios santraukos publikuojamos šiame leidinyje, iš dalies finansavo Lietuvos mokslo taryba (LMTLT), sut. Nr. S-MOR-25-11.

The authors are responsible for the content of their abstracts. The organizers assume no responsibility for the quality of the abstracts or the accuracy of the information.

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ISBN 978-609-07-1244-3 (skaitmeninis PDF)

EXPLORING LIFESTYLE AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN EDUCATION, PERSONALITY TRAITS, AND COGNITIVE ABILITIES IN OLDER ADULTHOOD

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As the global population ages, cognitive decline has become a significant concern, particularly in the context of developmental changes over the lifespan. Research links cognitive changes to education, personality traits, and lifestyle (Stern, 2009; Luchetti et al., 2015; Valenzuela & Sachdev, 2005). Studies suggest that lifestyle mediates the relationship between education, personality traits, and cognitive abilities. It plays a key role in shaping cognitive reserve, which supports cognition in older age and slows decline (Sogaard & Ni, 2018; Dause & Kirby, 2019). This study aimed to evaluate a mediation model in which lifestyle mediates the relationship between education, personality traits, and cognitive abilities.

Data from the 7th and 8th waves of the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) were analyzed (Börsch-Supan, 2019, 2022). The sample included 16,205 individuals aged 65–100 from 16 European countries (43.5% men). Cognitive abilities were assessed using eight tasks covering working and episodic memory, attention, and executive functions. The Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT) was used to assess memory, while numeracy tasks assessed working memory, attention, and executive functions. A verbal fluency task further evaluated executive function. Lifestyle factors included leisure activities (e.g., volunteering, educational courses, reading, puzzles), computer and internet use, and alcohol consumption. Leisure participation was assessed by asking if participants engaged in listed activities over the past year, while self-evaluated computer skills, internet use, and alcohol consumption in the past week were also measured. Lifestyle was expected to positively contribute to cognitive abilities.

Structural equation modeling revealed that lifestyle partially mediated the relationship between education, personality traits, and cognitive abilities, highlighting its role in the ageing process as a psychological mechanism. These findings emphasize the importance of engaging in social, mental, and physical activities, and using modern technology to promote cognitive health and support cognitive development throughout the lifespan.