

Change and Continuity in Psychological Health Across the Retirement Transition

Interindividual Differences and Post-Retirement Adjustment.

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Psykologiska institutionen, 2019

Avhandlingen för avläggande av filosofie doktorexamen i psykologi, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsstyrelsen vid Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligas försvaras Fredagen den 27 september 2019, klockan 10:00 i sal F1, Psykologiska institutionen, Haraldsgatan 1, Göteborg.

Fakultetsopponent: Professor Dr. Hans-Werner Wahl, Department of Psychology, Heidelberg University, Tyskland

Föreliggande uppsats grundar sig på följande artiklar:

- I. Henning, G., Hansson, I., Berg, A.I., Lindwall, M., & Johansson, B. (2017). The role of personality for subjective well-being in the retirement transition – Comparing variable- and person-oriented models. *Personality and Individual Differences, 116*, 385-392. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2017.05.017
- II. Henning, G., Stenling, A., Tafvelin, S., Hansson, I., Kivi, M., Johansson, B., & Lindwall, M. (2019). Preretirement work motivation and subsequent retirement adjustment: A self-determination theory perspective. *Work, Aging and Retirement, 5*, 189-203. doi: 10.1093/workar/way017
- III. Henning, G., Bjälkebring, P., Stenling, A., Thorvaldsson, V., Johansson, B., & Lindwall, M. (2019). Changes in within- and between-person associations between basic psychological need satisfaction and well-being after retirement. *Journal of Research in Personality, 79*, 151-160. doi: 10.1016/j.jrp.2019.03.008
- IV. Henning, G., Stenling, A., Bjälkebring, P., Bielak, A.A.M., Gow, A.J., Kivi, M., Muniz-Terrera, G., Johansson, B., & Lindwall, M. (under review). Towards an active and happy retirement? Changes in leisure activity and depressive symptoms during the retirement transition.



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Abstract

Henning, G. (2019). *Change and Continuity in Psychological Health Across the Retirement Transition. Interindividual Differences and Post-Retirement Adjustment*. Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Retirement is an important life event. Individuals leave their place of work, which often played a vital part in their daily lives, and enter a new phase of life with new opportunities, new challenges and new roles. The overarching aim of the present thesis is to shed light on changes in psychological health across the transition to retirement. All studies were based on the longitudinal Health, Aging and Retirement Transitions in Sweden (HEARTS) study, which follows older Swedish adults ($n = 5,913$, aged 60-66 at baseline) during the last years of their working life and first years of retirement with annual assessments. In Study I, we investigated if personality types and Big Five personality traits moderated the effect of retirement on life satisfaction. We used data from two waves of HEARTS and included participants working at baseline ($n = 2,797$). We found that those retiring between waves showed higher increases in life satisfaction than those who did not. In latent change score models based on personality types, retirement was associated with decreases in life satisfaction for one group, characterized by low openness, agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness, but high neuroticism. In models including personality traits, high scores on agreeableness enhanced the increases in life satisfaction. In Study II, also based on two waves, we investigated if sub-dimensions of work motivation predicted change in basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, relatedness) differently for full-time ($n = 247$) or working retirees ($n = 325$). High intrinsic work motivation before retirement was associated with lower increases in autonomy for full-time retirees, and with higher increases in relatedness for working retirees. High amotivation was associated with stronger increases in relatedness for working retirees, which is most likely a result of changes in one's work situation after starting to take out pensions. In Study III, we investigated if the association of need satisfaction and life satisfaction changes after retirement, which may imply reprioritization. Based on four waves of the HEARTS study ($n = 5,074$), we found that autonomy was more strongly associated with life satisfaction after retirement than before on the within-person level. On the between-person level, higher competence was significantly associated with lower life satisfaction among workers and associated with higher life satisfaction among retirees, although not significantly. In Study IV, also based on four waves, we found that retiring participants ($n = 1,124$) increased their level of physical, intellectual and social leisure activity engagement, but mainly directly after retirement. Level and change in leisure activity and depressive symptoms were associated, but the direction of causality remains unclear. Taken together, the four studies show a substantial heterogeneity in change in psychological health across the retirement transition and evidence for post-retirement adjustment behavior. More research is needed to understand more in detail how different people adjust to retirement and which factors support this process.

Keywords: *adaptation; leisure activity; personality; retirement adjustment; self-determination theory; well-being; work motivation*