



Activities and Roles of Older Adults After Retirement: A Review-Based Analysis of Active Ageing

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Abstract: Population ageing and the extension of the post-retirement period have transformed retirement into a complex stage of life, with significant implications for quality of life, psychological well-being and the maintenance of social roles among older people. This review-based study examines theoretical perspectives that explain the relationship between activity, retirement and quality of life, identifies the main types of activities engaged in by older adults after retirement, and highlights the key factors influencing life satisfaction and the preservation of social roles in this stage of life. The literature analysis underscores the central role of activity, continuity and role theories, complemented by successful ageing models, active ageing perspectives and the life course approach, in explaining how social, productive and symbolic engagement contributes to the well-being of the elderly. Diverse typologies of post-retirement activities are identified, including paid work or self-employment, volunteering, leisure pursuits, physical activity, social and community involvement, educational, religious and personal development activities, each exerting differentiated effects on quality of life depending on context and individual meaning. The findings emphasize that life satisfaction and the maintenance of social roles after retirement are shaped by a complex constellation of individual, psychological, relational, economic and structural factors, with social participation, financial security, psychological resilience, social support and access to community opportunities playing essential roles. The conclusions highlight the need for integrative frameworks and public policies tailored to the diversity of pensioners, aimed at supporting active, healthy and fulfilling ageing.

Keywords: Active Ageing, Retirement, Quality of Life, Social Participation, Post-Retirement Activities, Social Roles.

INTRODUCTION

Population ageing represents one of the most significant contemporary demographic transformations, with profound implications for social, economic, and institutional structures. Increasing life expectancy and the extension of the post-retirement period have turned retirement from a one-off event into a distinct and complex stage in the life course, characterized by the reconfiguration of identity, social roles, and the way time is used [1-3].

For some individuals, retirement can represent an opportunity for personal development and social involvement, while for others it may be a source of loss of professional status, diminished self-esteem, and an increased risk of social isolation and decline in psychological well-being [4-6]. Previous research has explored aspects of post-retirement activities and roles in a more descriptive manner [7], highlighting the need for more integrative and theoretically grounded approaches.

In this context, an integrative analysis of specialist literature becomes essential, correlating theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence on post-retirement activities and the factors influencing life satisfaction and the maintenance of social roles in later life. Therefore, the present article aims to: (1) provide a critical synthesis of the main theoretical frameworks regarding the relationship between activity, retirement and quality of life, (2) identify the dominant typologies of activities among older adults after retirement, and (3) highlight the individual, relational and structural factors shaping the post-retirement experience, thus contributing to a better understanding of the processes involved in active and satisfying ageing.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTIVITY, RETIREMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN LATER LIFE

Global population ageing has transformed the relationship between activity, retirement and quality of life into a central subject of study within gerontology, social psychology and public policy. The transition from active professional life to retirement represents one of the most significant status changes in the life course, with profound implications for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the individual [1-3].

The specialist literature has developed multiple theoretical frameworks to explain how this transition affects quality of life, ranging from activity theory and continuity theory to role theory, successful ageing models and ecological perspectives on ageing.

Activity Theory

Activity theory, initially proposed by Robert J. Havighurst in 1961, stands as one of the most influential theoretical frameworks in gerontology. It posits that maintaining a high level of activity and social engagement in later life is essential for life satisfaction and quality of life [5,7-10].

According to this theory, successful aging is associated with the continuation of social, physical, and mental activities that were significant in earlier periods of life [9]. Activity theory was formulated as a response to disengagement theory, which argued that progressive withdrawal from social roles is a natural and adaptive process of aging [4,5].

In line with activity theory, remaining active in later life can compensate for the loss of roles associated with retirement, help maintain the balance formed during midlife, improve quality of life, and delay the aging process [8]. Social participation and productive activity (paid or voluntary) are considered keys to positive aging, emphasizing the importance of maintaining productive activities and attitudes from midlife [5].

Continuity Theory

Continuity theory, developed by Robert Atchley, posits that individuals tend to maintain established patterns of behavior, relationships, and identities throughout their lives, especially during major transitions such as retirement [9, 11]. According to this theory, individual well-being is supported by the preservation of consistent internal structures

(values, beliefs, identity) and external structures (activities, relationships, environment) [9].

When people retire, they choose to participate in various social activities to obtain identity, structure, social stimulation, collective purpose, etc., which were previously provided by work [9]. Thus, continuity theory explains why pre-retirement planning and the continuation of certain activities can enhance satisfaction and quality of life after retirement [11]. Studies [1,2,11] have emphasized that differences in the transition process from work to retirement, based on previous workplace, are evident, and understanding these differences can assist in adapting interventions to facilitate engagement in meaningful occupations during the transition from work to retirement.

Role Theory

Role theory conceptualizes retirement as a transition from professional roles (such as worker, organizational member, professional) to non-professional roles (family and community roles) [3]. The effect of moving from employment to retirement can be either negative or positive, depending on the individual's level of involvement in professional roles compared to their engagement in other roles [3].

According to activity and role theories, maintaining social roles helps preserve identity and self-worth among older adults [5]. Retirement may be considered a loss of occupational roles for older people, which can impact their sense of well-being [5]. The consequences of a change in role may include a decline in social engagements and a feeling of loneliness [4].

Studies have shown that those who lose their professional role without replacing it with other meaningful roles (such as volunteering, caregiving, community involvement) display lower levels of life satisfaction and poorer quality of life [1,6]. Participation in a broader range of activities is associated with higher well-being, as it enables increased purpose through diverse roles in different social contexts [6].

The Successful Ageing Model

The successful ageing model, developed by Rowe and Kahn, proposes three interdependent components: (a) avoidance of disease and disability, (b) maintenance of high cognitive and physical functioning, and (c) active engagement with life, including productive activities and interpersonal relationships [12]. This model has profoundly influenced research and policies regarding ageing, highlighting that active engagement with life is a key factor for quality ageing.

According to successful ageing theory, participation in meaningful leisure activities (religious activity, social gatherings, and volunteering) is significantly linked to life satisfaction among older adults [12]. Engagement in leisure activities is associated with better mental health in older adults, and activity theory suggests that individuals who remain active and involved in meaningful activities during retirement are more likely to experience a positive adaptation [8].

The Perspective of Active Ageing and Social Capital

The perspective of active ageing, promoted by the World Health Organization, emphasizes the optimization of opportunities for health, participation, and security to improve quality of life as people grow older [13]. This perspective aligns with activity theory but extends the framework to include structural dimensions and public policy.

Social capital theory argues that resources available within social networks and relationships can enhance individuals' development and life satisfaction [13]. Community engagement helps older adults build relationships and increase social capital, thereby enhancing wellbeing and life satisfaction [13].

The Life Course Perspective

The life course perspective conceptualizes retirement not as an isolated event, but as a transition within a broader life trajectory shaped by previous experiences, social, and historical contexts [11,14]. This perspective emphasizes that life transitions (including retirement) are influenced by biographical, social, and cultural factors accumulated throughout life. Huber [14] explored the relationships between life course transitions and the tourism behavior of seniors, identifying five themes: "role transitions," "loss of partners," "stressful situations and illness," "travel saturation," and "age perception."

Eagers et al. [11] highlighted that differences in the transition process from work to retirement, based on previous workplace, are evident, and that understanding these differences can assist in adapting interventions to facilitate engagement in meaningful occupations during the transition from work to retirement, promoting active and healthy ageing.

The Ecological Model of Ageing

The ecological model of ageing suggests that ageing is shaped by the interaction of biological, behavioral, and environmental factors [13]. This model highlights the role of social and environmental influences, such as community engagement and social capital, in enhancing the wellbeing of older adults [13].

Gaspar [15] demonstrated that psychosocial conditions related to work and social support significantly influence quality of life both among the active population and among retirees. Stress management (with a greater effect on retired participants) and social support (with a greater effect on active participants) have a positive influence on quality of life. These findings underline that quality of life is influenced by occupational status, social support, and psychosocial conditions related to work, a powerful message for policymakers in the context of growing older populations [15].

Dynamic Resources Theory and Retirement Planning

Principi et al. [1] examined the role of planning and the achievement of plans for retirement satisfaction using an approach based on dynamic resources theory. This theory postulates that adaptation to retirement depends on the resources available (financial, social, psychological) and the individual's ability to mobilize them in the face of change [1].

Achievement of plans was found to be linked to satisfaction with retirement. However, many retirees adapted well to retirement without prior planning, or when plans were thwarted, and sometimes retirement did not meet expectations despite plans being fulfilled [1].

Liao et al. [8] demonstrated the mediating role of psychological resilience between social participation and life satisfaction among older adults in China, using the SOC model (Selection, Optimization, Compensation) within life course research. Adams and Rau [2] emphasized that, in the coming years, a larger number of people will experience retirement for a longer period than ever before, and that, despite this, many will find themselves unprepared for this stage of their lives.

Synthesis Regarding the Role of Ageing Theories in Relation to Quality of Life

The relationship between activity, retirement, and quality of life in later life is conceptualized in specialist literature through multiple complementary but also partially divergent theoretical frameworks. Activity theory, continuity theory, and role theory offer robust explanations for how maintaining activity and professional identity can support quality of life (QoL) and psychological wellbeing [3,8,9,11]. Perspectives on successful and active ageing complete this picture, emphasizing the value of social participation, volunteering, and meaningful activities [12,13,16].

Contemporary divergences indicate the need for integrative frameworks, longitudinal studies, and public policies that facilitate the transition, offer flexible post-retirement activity opportunities, and stimulate identity reconfiguration in diverse contexts, to promote an active, healthy, and satisfying life in later years [1,2,15,17].

TYOLOGIES OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY OLDER ADULTS AFTER RETIREMENT

The transition from an active professional life to retirement constitutes one of the most significant status changes in one's life course, generating a profound reconfiguration of how individuals structure their time, define their identity, and maintain their wellbeing [1,2]. With increasing longevity and global demographic changes, the post-retirement period has become considerably longer than in previous generations, and the context of retirement has transformed significantly, given major pension reforms and a general policy aimed at extending active life and promoting the social participation of older adults [18].

In this context, the specialist literature has paid growing attention to the typologies of activities in which older adults engage after retirement, recognizing that not only the level of activity, but also the type, quality and significance of activities determine their impact on quality of life, mental health and subjective wellbeing [19-21].

Conceptual Framework: Why Does the Typology of Post-Retirement Activities Matter?

A particularly relevant conceptual framework for understanding the typologies of post-retirement activities is that of the "latent benefits" of work. Read et al. [19] (2013) demonstrated that access to the five latent benefits of work—temporal structure, shared experiences, identity, collective purpose and imposed activity—is positively correlated with

quality of life among retirees. Meaningful leisure activities can act as a substitute for paid work for retirees, and collective purpose mediated the relationship between meaningful leisure and quality of life [19] (Read et al., 2013). This perspective suggests that the typology of post-retirement activities should be evaluated not only in terms of frequency or duration, but also by their ability to provide these latent benefits.

Typology of Post-retirement Activities: Main Categories

A synthesis of the empirical literature allows the identification of at least seven major categories of activities in which older adults engage after retirement: (1) paid work after retirement (bridge employment), (2) self-employment and senior entrepreneurship, (3) unpaid work and volunteering, (4) leisure activities and hobbies, (5) physical and sporting activities, (6) social and community participation, and (7) educational and personal development activities.

Paid Work After Retirement

Paid work after retirement involves continuing remunerated activity after formal retirement, either in one's previous field or in a new area. This type of employment has become increasingly common, encouraged by policies that extend active working life and by the financial needs of retirees [17,18,22,23].

The effects on wellbeing are nuanced and depend on the individual context. Continuing to work after retirement can bring benefits such as autonomy, self-actualization and improvements in physical and psychological health [24] as well as increased life satisfaction due to financial security and psychological wellbeing [25].

However, it is essential to distinguish between work undertaken voluntarily and that motivated by financial constraints: working out of financial necessity is associated with lower quality of life, while the voluntary choice to work leads to a higher quality of life. Bridge employment increases life satisfaction for those who retire voluntarily and mitigate the decline in satisfaction for those who retire involuntarily [3].

Self-employment and Senior Entrepreneurship

Self-employment after retirement represents a distinct category of post-retirement activity, different from both salaried work and full retirement.

Fritsch et al. [26] contributed to entrepreneurship theory by proposing an extension of the standard occupational choice model to include the retirement option, necessary for analyzing entrepreneurial behavior at an older age. In their extended occupational choice model, the utility that individuals derive from employment and retirement options is captured through life satisfaction rather than monetary income.

He et al. [5] analyzed the impact of self-employment on depression among older adults, confirming that maintaining productive activity through self-employment is associated with better mental health, in line with activity theory and role theory. Jia et al. [27] demonstrated that participation in local non-agricultural employment significantly improves the mental health of older adults in rural areas, and self-employment tends to

have a greater positive contribution to mental health than salaried employment, through mechanisms such as work income, the need for belonging and respect, and the development of human capital.

Unpaid Work and Volunteering

Volunteering and unpaid work are post-retirement activities that are frequently analyzed, with beneficial effects on the mental health and quality of life of older people. Studies show that involvement in volunteering is positively associated with psychological health and life satisfaction, fostering social integration and the adoption of new roles after retirement [1,12,21].

Meta-analyses confirm the protective effect of volunteering and hobbies against depressive symptoms [28]. Unpaid work, such as caring for grandchildren, is particularly relevant in societies with pronounced intergenerational solidarity, but the relationship with mental health is complex and dependent on cultural context [22, 29].

Leisure Activities and Hobbies

Leisure activities for older adults after retirement represent a diverse category with a significant impact on mental health and adaptation to retirement. Studies show that participation in leisure activities, such as intellectual, social, and physical activities, is associated with reduced depressive symptoms and facilitates positive adaptation to retirement, according to activity theory [9, 29, 30].

Systematic reviews highlight that retirement increases the time spent on leisure activities; however, the type of activity is essential: passive activities such as watching television are the most frequent but do not bring the same psychological benefits as social or physical activities [30].

Engagement in hobbies, including physical activity, artistic and cultural participation, as well as involvement in community groups or social clubs, is correlated with higher mental wellbeing and can contribute to extending the period of "productive aging" [28]. Longitudinal studies highlight relationships between these hobbies and a lower incidence of depression among older adults [29]. Moreover, active involvement in hobbies is associated with a reduced risk of all-cause mortality, thus validating hobbies as universal modifiable factors for promoting health and wellbeing in later life [31].

Physical and Sporting Activities

Physical activity is one of the most studied forms of post-retirement activity. Sharifi et al. [30] found a notable positive relationship between physical activity and psychological adaptation among retirees, with a strong correlation between high levels of physical activity and improvements in life satisfaction, quality of life, and psychological wellbeing [30].

Zhang et al. [32] confirmed these findings through bibliometric analysis, emphasizing that recreational physical activity significantly contributes to improving quality of life and maintaining mental health in older adults. Huang et al. [13] examined the contribution of physical activity to the intrinsic capacity of older adults in the USA, UK, Europe, and China,

finding that different types of exercise can provide various benefits for physical and psychological health—for example, team sports, cycling, and aerobic and gym activities were most strongly associated with improved mental health outcomes [13].

Social and Community Participation

Social and community participation plays a central role in maintaining and improving the mental well-being and quality of life of older adults after retirement. Informal social interactions, involvement in community organizations, religious activities, social clubs, and civic engagement contribute to reducing depressive symptoms, stimulating social capital, and increasing life satisfaction—effects demonstrated across various cultural and institutional contexts [4,6,13,33-35].

The quality of relationships with family and friends, as well as the sense of belonging and usefulness within the community, are key factors supporting personal identity, self-esteem, and satisfaction with retirement. Trust-based relationships and extensive social networks are positively associated with subjective well-being, and adapting social activities to specific subgroups (gender, age, cultural context) enhances the effectiveness of interventions [1,36].

Religious and spiritual activities represent an important form of social participation and the search for meaning in post-retirement life. Yoon et al. [12] confirmed that religious activity is significantly linked to life satisfaction among older adults, consistent with previous studies supporting the positive effect of religious engagement on life satisfaction [12]. Saeed [37] found that religious orientation is a significant correlation of life satisfaction among pensioners.

Religious activities can provide temporal structure, community, meaning, and purpose, contributing to several of the latent benefits of work identified by Read et al. [19]. They can also offer social and emotional support, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation that may accompany retirement [4,6].

Social and community participation, supported by informal interactions, productive activities, and strong family relationships, promotes successful ageing, reduces the risk of depression, and makes a significant contribution to life satisfaction in later life.

Educational and Personal Development Activities

López-Ramos et al. [38] identified four distinct profiles among a sample of Spanish retirees enrolled in university programmes, based on organizational pressures, health problems, interest in retirement, levels of work-related stress, social support, and resilience. Differentiating profiles for retirees help eliminate socially motivated age discrimination and mistaken beliefs about pensioners (ageism) and assist in adjusting and personalizing retirement preparation programmes [38]. This finding highlights that participation in educational activities after retirement is not uniform but instead reflects distinct psychosocial profiles.

Wang and Li [9] demonstrated that intellectual leisure activities are associated with lower depressive symptoms among retired older adults. Sharifi et al. [30] found that engagement in intellectual, social, or physical leisure activities increased after retirement,

suggesting that retirement may free up time for personal development activities. Lin et al. [39] showed that reading, as an intellectual activity, is associated with more favorable cognitive and emotional trajectories compared with passive activities such as watching television.

Contextual and Cultural Differences in Activity Typologies

Typologies for post-retirement activities are profoundly influenced by institutional and cultural context. In high-income countries with robust social security and pension systems, older adults can retire with financial stability, which leads to reduced participation in the workforce. In contrast, in countries with less developed pension systems, older people are compelled to continue paid work to secure their livelihoods [40-42].

The retirement context changes under the influence of pension reforms and policies aimed at extending active life and promoting social participation, as highlighted by Henning et al. [18]. In Taiwan, specific challenges are amplified by the rapid ageing of the population and the lack of support structures for post-retirement social participation [43].

There are gender differences in activity typologies: men tend to prefer passive activities, while women are more involved in social activities, and gender also influences how post-retirement employment affects life satisfaction and subjective well-being [22,25,30,44].

FACTORS INFLUENCING LIFE SATISFACTION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF SOCIAL ROLES AMONG OLDER ADULTS AFTER RETIREMENT

The specialist literature highlights a complex constellation of factors – individual, relational, community, and structural – that interact to determine the quality of the post-retirement experience, and empirical studies from diverse cultural contexts provide a nuanced picture of these determinants.

The analysis is structured around five major categories of factors: (1) social participation and community engagement, (2) economic and financial factors, (3) psychological and personality factors, (4) relational and family factors, (5) structural, institutional, and environmental factors and (6) physical and functional health factors.

Social Participation and Community Engagement

Social participation is recognized as an essential factor for life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing in old age, supported by activity theory, continuity theory, and role theory [33,45,46]. Activity theory highlights the importance of maintaining a high level of social involvement, while continuity theory underscores the adaptation of social roles during retirement [8-10,33].

Empirical studies show that retirement reduces depression and improves mental health, and social participation amplifies these benefits [33]. Moreover, involvement in social activities facilitates social integration, provides access to additional resources, motivates the adoption of healthy behaviors, and contributes to increased wellbeing [46]

Economic and Financial Factors

Financial security is a key factor for life satisfaction after retirement. Having pension and access to public health insurance are associated with higher subjective well-being and a favorable income structure for older adults, while the absence of these resources poses a major risk for decreased social participation and deterioration of social roles [32,47]. The quality of pension schemes positively influences life satisfaction and reduces anxiety and loneliness, encouraging self-care, while retirement planning has a strong impact on well-being, especially among individuals with lower economic status [48,49].

Financial well-being - defined as security and freedom of choice - is directly correlated with life satisfaction, including during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when a regular pension brings stability [50,51]. On the other hand, financial insecurity, poverty, unemployment and low educational levels negatively affect the life satisfaction and social roles of older adults and are especially prevalent in countries with underdeveloped pension systems, where older people continue working out of necessity [42,44,52,53].

The existence of strong social security programmes and stable pensions enables older adults to retire with greater financial security and enjoy a higher quality of life, while the lack of these resources exposes them to social and economic risks [40].

Psychological and Personality Factors

Psychological resilience plays a central role in the relationship between social participation and life satisfaction after retirement. Studies show that resilience mediates the effect of social participation on life satisfaction, and psychological resources as well as adaptation to retirement are essential, regardless of prior planning [1,8]. Retiree profiles differ depending on resilience, stress, social support, and other factors, which suggests the need for personalized interventions [38].

Psychological well-being, optimism, and perceptions of ageing significantly influence life satisfaction in older adults. Optimism moderates the negative impact of functional limitations, while social networks, involvement of friends, and informal participation contribute to increased life satisfaction in the context of functional decline and decreased social participation after retirement [54-56].

Relational and Family Factors

The quality of family relationships is a central factor for satisfaction with retirement, regardless of the level of planning, as confirmed by longitudinal studies in various countries [1]. Intergenerational co-residence and living with a spouse, as well as participation in social activities, enhance the subjective well-being of older adults, especially in rural areas where support from adult children becomes essential [47].

Relational turbulence within retired couples can influence marital satisfaction and intimacy, being predicted by variables such as uncertainty and partner interdependence, aspects which highlight the dyadic nature of these challenges in post-retirement life [36].

Social support, both from family and friends, plays a crucial role in maintaining quality of life after retirement, with frequent contact and strong social networks being positively associated with well-being [15,34]. Emotional and instrumental support provided by children or partners contributes to the life satisfaction of older adults [56].

Participation in social activities brings immediate emotional benefits and expands the support network, improving subjective well-being [46]. Caring for grandchildren is a role specific to later life, with a dual impact on life satisfaction, and involvement in domestic activities or support for children, neighbors, and friends reduces loneliness and brings happiness to older women [45,57].

Structural, Institutional, and Environmental Factors

Pension systems, public policies, and the structural environment fundamentally shape the experience of retirement and life satisfaction in later life. Analyses show that factors such as workplace autonomy, work-family balance, training opportunities, and anti-discrimination policies determine the willingness to continue working after retirement, and recent reforms tend to extend active life [17,18]. The structure of pension systems can create gender inequalities, with women receiving lower pensions and experiencing limited improvements in life satisfaction compared to men, as observed in Korea [58]. In Sweden, the complexity of the pension system and lack of information lead to passive choices regarding pension investments [59].

The physical and social environment plays a key role; social cohesion and age-friendly surroundings contribute to quality of life, especially in rural areas where access to formal support is limited [47,60]. Social participation is essential for physical, mental, and social health, and educational or volunteer interventions reduce loneliness and increase a sense of purpose [61]. Rural-urban differences are marked by access to services and the types of activities undertaken, but life satisfaction is influenced more by values and perceived issues than by location itself [60,62].

Age-based discrimination (ageism) represents a major structural risk, affecting life satisfaction, social participation, and access to post-retirement opportunities. Negative attitudes, financial difficulties, lack of opportunities, and health problems contribute to isolation and greater care needs [63]. Ageism can also erode job satisfaction for older workers [25], and differentiating pensioner profiles is essential for combating prejudice and promoting equity [38].

Physical and Functional Health

Physical and functional health is an essential factor for life satisfaction in later life, with activity limitations being negatively associated with quality of life and personal satisfaction—a relationship confirmed by longitudinal analyses [55]. Psychological well-being is influenced by both perceptions of ageing and the respect received from others [54].

Control over one's individual environment and characteristics of previous employment can determine how retirement affects satisfaction, with positive effects if retirement follows a physically demanding job, and negative effects in the case of intellectually stimulating work [64].

Physical activity is strongly correlated with psychological adaptation, well-being, and quality of life, and recreational physical activity contributes to maintaining mental health [30,32]. Using skills and knowledge in later life can increase professional satisfaction and, implicitly, life satisfaction, while social participation is crucial for preventing functional decline in both men and women [65].

CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of the literature on retirement and active ageing highlights that maintaining quality of life and social roles after withdrawal from professional activity depends on a combination of individual, relational, and structural factors, and that post-retirement activity plays a central role only when it is supported by favourable contexts and adequate resources. In this regard, the study's conclusions can be translated into a series of practical implications relevant to public policies, social services, communities, and retirement preparation programmes.

Implications for public policy and social protection systems - The results underline the necessity for active ageing policies to move beyond uniform approaches and recognize the diversity of retirement experiences. Promoting work after retirement should focus on voluntary choice and flexibility, avoiding economic pressure on older adults with limited resources, since work motivated by financial constraints is associated with lower quality of life.

Implications for communities and local organizations - Social participation, volunteering, and community involvement emerge as key strategies for maintaining social roles and preventing isolation and depression among retirees. Therefore, local communities play an essential role in creating accessible and meaningful opportunities for engagement.

Implications for health and social services interventions - Physical and functional health conditions access to activities and social participation, and physical activity is consistently associated with better psychological adaptation and higher quality of life.

Thus, it is necessary to: integrate physical and recreational activity into prevention and health promotion programmes for older people; adapt interventions to the level of functional capacity and the residential environment (urban/rural); coordinate social services with community initiatives to reduce barriers to activity access.

Implications for combatting ageism and promoting equity - Finally, the conclusions highlight that maintaining social roles after retirement is profoundly influenced by social attitudes and institutional structures. Ageism limits access to work, volunteering, and social participation, directly affecting life satisfaction and the sense of social usefulness among older adults.

Therefore, there is a need for: policies and campaigns to combat age-based discrimination; recognition of the diversity of retiree profiles and adaptation of interventions to these differences; promotion of a positive social image of active ageing, centered on competence, contribution, and participation.

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