



## **SELF-ESTEEM, RESILIENCE, AND SUSTAINABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE PRODUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ELDERLY WHO UNDERTAKE IN EL ORO**

### **AUTOESTIMA, RESILIENCIA Y APORTES SOSTENIBLES PARA EL DESARROLLO PRODUCTIVO DEL ADULTO MAYOR QUE EMPRENDE EN EL ORO**

Bohorquez Gardenia<sup>1</sup>

Bojorque Erick<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Investigadora independiente. Manta, Ecuador. [gardebohorquez30@gmail.com](mailto:gardebohorquez30@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6277-2343>

<sup>1</sup> Profesor Titular de la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, ULEAM. Manta, Ecuador. [jorge.bojorque@uleam.edu.ec](mailto:jorge.bojorque@uleam.edu.ec), <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6179-5423>

#### **ABSTRACT:**

This article aims to determine the importance of self-esteem, resilient activities, and sustainable contributions for the productive development of the elderly who undertake in the Autonomous Decentralized Parish Governments of the province of El Oro. The development of the study was supported by documentary sources of Previous research that served as a theoretical foundation that allowed this research to be supported on a vulnerable population known as older adults. The research methodology used was a mixed intersubjective approach, with a type of analytical study and a deductive method. It was possible to work with a representative sample of 366 older adults who benefit from the programs and projects promoted by the GADP in the El Oro province. Surveys techniques were used mainly, as well as interviews and when inserting the information collected in the statistical program SPSS25. The following results were obtained: 53.3% of older adults are people who do feel useful at this stage of their lives. 77% said they always participate and undertake in the programs developed by the GADP in the province. A considerable group of 64.2% indicated that they were in unstable economic situations. As a conclusion, it can be known that there are social public policies benefiting the elderly, however, all the duties that society has in relation to the elderly as a priority group and all the rights that people of the elderly have should be promoted in a more visible way the third Age.

**Keywords:** Older adult, self-esteem, resilience, entrepreneurship, sustainable contribution.

#### **RESUMEN:**

El presente artículo tiene como objetivo determinar la importancia de la autoestima, actividades resilientes y aportes sostenibles para el desarrollo productivo del adulto mayor que emprende en los Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados Parroquiales de la provincia de El Oro. El desarrollo de estudio se basó de fuentes documentales de investigaciones previas que sirvieron como fundamento teórico que permitió sustentar esta investigación sobre una población vulnerable conocida como adultos mayores. La metodología de investigación que se utilizó fue de enfoque y naturaleza cuantitativa, con un tipo de estudio analítico y método deductivo. Se pudo trabajar con una muestra representativa de 366 adultos mayores que son beneficiados de los programas y proyectos promovidos por los GADP en la provincia El Oro. Se utilizó la técnica de encuesta principalmente y se logró insertar la información recolectada en el programa estadístico SPSS25 se obtuvieron los siguientes resultados: El 53,3% de los adultos mayores son personas que si se sienten útiles en esta etapa de sus vidas. El 77% manifestó siempre participar y emprender en los programas desarrollados por los GADP en la provincia. Un grupo considerable del 64,2% indicó encontrarse en situaciones económicas inestables. Como conclusión se puede saber que existen políticas publicas sociales beneficiando a los adultos mayores, sin embargo, se debe promover de forma más visible todos los deberes que posee la sociedad en relación con los adultos mayores como grupo prioritario y todos los derechos que poseen las personas de la tercera edad.

**Palabras clave:** Adulto mayor, autoestima, resiliencia, emprendimiento, aporte sostenible.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present research is focused on the study of the self-esteem, resilient activities and sustainable contributions of the elderly who undertake in the Autonomous Decentralized Parish Governments (ADPG) of the province of El Oro, during the year 2020. This is a research constituted This is research consisting of several relevant dimensions and all directed around the elderly, it is much needed within the field of study in social sciences and social work.

In this regard, it is important to define what this stage of life known as old age or third age symbolizes, which begins at approximately 60 years of age in the life of the human being according to the World Health Organization (2018), which states that population aging can be considered a success for public health policies and socioeconomic development, but also constitutes a challenge for society, which must adapt to it in order to maximize the health and functional capacity of the elderly, as well as their social participation and security (WHO, 2018).

When this stage of life manifests as a social challenge, it can be noticed that it is raised from this vision because there are many

physical, psychological, and social changes that elderly people experience. In addition, it is opportune to point out what the United Nations Organization (UN, 2018) indicated when establishing that "there are 600 million people over 60 years old in the world, a figure that will double by 2025, it is estimated that by 2050 there will be more people over 60 than children under 15 years old". This makes this social phenomenon to be taken more into account as the time passes by.

However, it can be considered that older adults in old age experience a series of experiences and adversities that can sometimes make them feel negative feelings and emotions that can affect their self-esteem and the quality of life that many of them may have and this is due to all those very remarkable physical, psychological and social changes, added to facing adverse situations as experiencing the death of loved ones, physical and sensory limitations, the decline of professional status, among others, evidencing what Santos et al (2019) said when they stated "In old age, resilience is the ability to face, adapt and respond positively to changes that occur with age". (p.2).



It must also be understood that aging is a natural and irreversible process, not a pathological process, nor a disease, nor a mere involution, susceptible aspects of medical or psychological treatment, this being a very necessary approach pointed out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2018). Through all that has been manifested in the experience of the aging already symbolizes resilience in the elderly.

For all these reasons, published and social policies have emerged with the intention of covering the needs and guaranteeing the human rights of many older adults who are in a stage of prioritized attention. In this regard, laws presented in the national territory can be observed, such as the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) which establishes in its Article 36 "Older adults will receive prioritized and specialized attention in the public and private sectors, especially in the fields of social and economic inclusion, and protection against violence". (p.30).

Around these laws that govern public and social policies, rural ADPGs must guarantee the rights of priority groups, a vital issue that

reflects the need for this research, since it focuses on the different factors that are related to the quality of life experienced by older adults in El Oro province, considering sources of documentary and empirical information in relation to this research about the elderly.

The objective of this study is to determine the importance of self-esteem, resilient activities, and sustainable contributions to the productive development of the elderly that are undertaken in the Decentralized Autonomous Parish Governments of the province of El Oro

In relation to the definition of older adults, while the WHO and the UN consider them to be over 60 years of age, there is a small change in the Ecuadorian national territory and according to the Constitution of Ecuador (2008) in Article 36 "Those persons who have reached the age of sixty-five shall be considered older adults". (p.30).

Considering these multiple international and national definitions of the elderly, it is necessary to emphasize that at this stage of life the experiences, that are full of changes, are very noticeable and start since the beginning of aging.



It is fundamental to broaden the definition of aging and what resilience symbolizes, taking into account the author Uriarte (2014) when defining:

Aging is a stage in the life cycle that is taking on great importance in developed societies, in part due to the increase in life expectancy. Increasingly, people are living their old age to the fullest and long-lived people are developing a remarkable subjective quality of life

Resilience is the construct that calls for the process by which people realize a positive integration, despite the difficulties and limitations that occur in old age, and reach the end of life aware of themselves, with emotional well-being, satisfied with their lives. Thus, resilience is a facet of aging itself. (p. 68-69).

Another definition of resilience is defined as "the ability to face, adapt to and respond positively to the changes that occur with aging" (Santos et al, 2019, pág. 2).

Regarding Santos' statement, we can notice the adaptation that older people have in this stage of their lives, which is full of many experiences and adverse situations that lead them to be human beings with great

resilience and to be examples for the whole society in which their members must be dedicated to caring for them and treating them with respect. It is also very opportune to point out what self-esteem represents and how it is visualized in aging, being able to consider this perception as "an important indicator of health and well-being, generally defined as a feeling that can be positive or negative, manifested as a result of the valorization on characteristics and own potentialities, which determines feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the personality". (De Armas et al, 2019)

In terms of conceptualization, it is important that adults develop and perceive themselves in a positive way so that they can face obstacles and challenges in their life experiences on their own. It is fundamental to consider autonomy and self-confidence as the main elements that feed self-esteem in the elderly.

Another aspect that should be considered regarding this phenomenon of social aging is that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2018) pointed out that with the passage of time we will see the emergence of aging societies and economies with "accelerated aging of the



population will become the most relevant demographic trend in the region. From that moment on, changes in the age structure will be dominated by the dynamics of the older generations" (p.34).

The information provided by this organism allows us to understand that, as years go by, the most common group of people in social contexts are the elderly and even more so than young people or children. This reality can be noticed considerably in the western countries like Italy, Spain, France, and others of the European continent, being also very close the countries of the American continent mainly countries like Cuba, Canada and Uruguay that also have a population that ages quickly, in this group we also find Ecuador.

Due to the notable growth of the population of older adults, who in many environments tend to have their human rights violated, public and social policies aimed at the protection and fulfillment of the norms in which the social duties and rights are established, being considered in Ecuador apart from the Constitution other laws and norms established, such as the Organic Law

of the Elderly (2019) that establishes in its Art. 16:

To guarantee the integral protection that the State, society and the family must provide to the elderly, with the purpose of achieving the effective enjoyment of their rights, duties and responsibilities; they will have the right to access resources and opportunities in the areas of work, economics, politics, education, culture, spirituality and recreation, as well as the perfection of their skills, competencies and potential, in order to achieve their personal and community development that will allow them to promote their personal autonomy. (p. 14).

According to this law, the State, society, and families have obligations that must be fulfilled as a manifestation of respect for the human rights of older adults, who in many cases are not treated as established in this law.

In addition, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES, 2013) established that the country should "promote socially and economically inclusive aging that will improve the living conditions of older adults and generate their autonomy and integration into the family, community and



society" (p. 23). This is another body that emphasizes the duty of an entire society and of governments, which through their officials must guarantee what is established in the regulations.

Also, reference can be made to the Organic Code of Territorial Organization, (COOTAD, 2017) when establishing in its Article 249:

The budget of the decentralized autonomous government will not be approved if it does not allocate at least ten percent (10%) of its non-tax revenues to finance the planning and execution of social programs for the attention of priority groups. (p.87). Based on the above, it

is understood that the obligations of the ADPG are to promote programs and policies that benefit the most vulnerable groups, as indicated by COOTAD, the budget allocated by the State must be invested in the implementation of projects that benefit priority groups such as the elderly, however, in many cases, such estimates are not sufficient.

Therefore, it is very necessary to review the budget for the creation of programs, policies and projects that protect these groups so

that they can have a dignified life with quality and warmth.

Additionally, the lack of economic resources are experiences that most elderly people must experience, and it can be indicated "The lack of income due to the weakness of the pension systems causes many of the elderly to be forced to continue working beyond retirement to earn extra income". (Betancourt, 2020). This study shows that in their daily life experiences many older adults are having their rights violated, many by not receiving pensions with a fair income and others who despite being older adults with advanced age do not receive any retirement or pension benefits from the State.

However, despite many adversities it is again important to emphasize the resilience that many older adults demonstrate as noted by the author (Buran, 2017) in his study that most older adults have high levels of resilience, influenced largely by their lifestyles.

Finally, it is relevant to refer to the quality of life experienced by older adults, which is considered as "the evaluation that people make based on their personal experiences in various aspects that are linked to



satisfaction" (Peralta e tal, 2018). It is the sum of that well-being and personal satisfaction as it is also stated (Aponte, 2015) defining that it is intertwined with what they can feel and that conformity and perception of the contexts in which they are, being. It is important that they feel productive and with great desire of personal improvement.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The study that was developed is of mixed approach of hermeneutic character with complementation of qualitative and quantitative research.

### **a) Methodology Design.**

In the development of the research, the deductive and analytical-synthetic method was applied, which allowed initially to go from the macro to the micro, with initial collection of information sources that served as theoretical support to achieve a direct study on the older adults of El Oro province with sufficient foundation.

### **b) Research Participants**

With a total of 50 ADPGs that have entrepreneurial projects, among all these 7,500 senior citizens attended, on whom a

probability sampling was used with one of the statistical formulas presented with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, establishing a representative sample of 366 senior citizens participating in the study.

### **c) Area of Study**

The research was carried out in the different parishes of El Oro province.

### **d) Techniques Employed**

The main techniques used were the survey, with its respective questionnaire, the interview and direct observation.

### **e) Statistical Analysis**

The results obtained in the research have been processed through a reliable statistical analysis generated from the insertion of the data obtained from the surveys applied in SPSS 25 program, which can be observed in the statistical charts indicated in the results.



### 3. RESULTS

**Table 1.** Identification of Self-Esteem in Older Adults.

		Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
Frequency of high self-esteem	Sometimes	8,7%	8,7%	17,5%
	Almost	1,6%	0,5%	2,2%
	Never			
	Almost	10,1%	22,1%	32,2%
	Always			
	Never	0,5%	0,8%	1,4%
	Always	27,6%	19,1%	46,7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>48,6%</b>	<b>51,4%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

*Prepared by: Members of the Gender Research Project. (2020).*

51.4% of the older participants in this study belong to the male gender, while 48.6% are of the female gender, and a very minimal difference can be observed in the number of people between both genders. In relation to the frequency of feeling like human beings in this stage of their lives with high self-esteem, fortunately 46.7% responded that with this perception and feeling they always feel, very followed by a group of 32.2% who feel with high self-esteem almost always and a group of 17.5% who have this evaluation only sometimes.

**Table 2.** Resilience Analysis in Older Adults

		You feel like a useful person at this stage of your life			
		Sometimes	Yes	No	Total
Age range	65 - 69	6,0%	20,2%	4,9%	31,1%
	70 - 74	7,7%	5,2%	3,3%	16,1%
	75 - 79	5,2%	6,0%	6,0%	17,2%
	80 - 84	6,3%	7,4%	3,3%	16,9%
	Older than 85	3,6%	14,5%	0,5%	18,6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>28,7%</b>	<b>53,3%</b>	<b>18,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

*Prepared by: Members of the Gender Research Project. (2020).*

To be able to reach this stage of life known as old age and face many changes and life experiences demonstrates the resilience that older people possess, who are represented by 31.1% between 65 and 69 years of age, followed by a percentage of 18.6% of older adults who are approaching longevity with more than 85 years of age, another significant group of participants represented by 17.2% are between 75 and 79 years of age. In relation to the experience of feeling and valuing themselves as useful people at this stage of their lives, the majority of 53.3% responded affirmatively, which again demonstrates the resilience of older adults, sometimes they feel useful 28.7%, however there is a minority but





significant 18.0% of people who no longer feel useful because they are in old age.

**Table 3.** Definition of Sustainable Contributions to Economic Growth.

Has participated in inclusive ADPG programs where he has felt productive					
		Some times	Almost Never	Always	Total
<b>Considers that he/she possesses economic stability</b>	No	3,0%	13,9 %	47,3%	64,2%
	Yes	3,0%	3,0%	29,8%	35,8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,0%</b>	<b>16,9%</b>	<b>77,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

*Prepared by: Members of the Gender Research Project. (2020).*

It can be observed that if there is a continuous participation and integration of older adults in the inclusive programs, worked and promoted by the decentralized autonomous governments (ADPG) in which 77.0% of older adults have always participated feel productive and with desire of personal improvement, another group of 16.9% stated that they have almost never participated in these programs and a minority group of 6% has participated at times. Even though they are participating in

productive programs, 64.2% of the senior citizens surveyed indicated that they do not have economic stability and a minority group of 35.8% stated that they do have stability in their economy.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The results that have been obtained in this stage of the research allow us to demonstrate with empirically sustainable arguments what has been proposed in previous studies related to the influence of self-esteem and resilient activities of the elderly that they undertake in the decentralized autonomous parish governments of El Oro province.

It was possible to obtain an investigation with results posed from several dimensions, being these initially the self-esteem of the people in their old age, their resilience defined as that capacity to overcome adversity and also those contributions with entrepreneurship that are generated mostly by older adults thanks to the implementation of public and social policies aimed at guaranteeing human rights in this stage of life in which the elderly must be treated with equality, priority attention and



social inclusion, and for these reasons the different governments have a leading role in the search for such guarantees for the elderly.

Many older adults represented by 46.7% always reported high self-esteem, which in part is positive, however a minority group that totals 3.6% indicated that they almost never or never experience the well-being and satisfaction of feeling with positive perception and high self-esteem at this stage of their lives and this is largely due to that series of physical changes, psychological and social that so many human beings experience at one stage of their lives, nostalgia for the past, loss of contact with family members, health impairment, loss of economic stability and more, which shows that this is a stage that is also characterized by the resilience of people. Based on the above, it is important to make an analogy of this study in relation to the proposals of authors such as De Armas, et al, (2019) y Santos et al, (2019).

The authors De Armas, et al (2019) emphasize that self-esteem is a clear indicator of health, well-being, and satisfaction of people in different stages of life, pointing out that autonomy and self-

confidence are fundamental to achieve a high self-esteem, with personal satisfaction, being determining factors to achieve in part quality of life.

Santos et al, (2019) show what has been found in this study and that is the remarkable resilience and overcoming of adversity that many older adults experience in their old age. The aspects that have been manifested allow us to demonstrate that being a stage of life in which the human being experiences many adversities is also a stage of vulnerability, and this, to a large extent, is due to the family and social contexts of older adults in which we unfortunately often find violations of their human rights with a lack of appreciation, integration and social inclusion, since by the vision of many people with a lack of social conscience they are seen as family and social burdens.

In the face of so many adversities and observed needs, public and social policies promoted by international organizations such as the WHO, the UN, and ECLAC have emerged, seeking to follow up on a global and continental level in order to manifest the reality experienced by millions of older adults over time, towards whom respect,



inclusion and the guarantee of rights are sought, also, the attention to the needs in the national territory are promoted by laws such as the Constitution of Ecuador (2008), the organic law of older adults, among other norms that seek to have governments such as the decentralized autonomous ones fulfill their functions and allocate at least 10.0% for people who require priority attention.

Fortunately, the majority of older adults, represented by 77.0%, have always participated in ADPG programs and feel productive and have a desire to improve themselves, however, it is also notorious what was stated by Betancourt (2020), who pointed out that there is a lack of economic income due to failures in the social support systems, as can be seen with the pensions and retirements in which many do not have it or receive very little income that is not enough to cover their basic needs. This situation was expressed by 64.2% of the older adults, demonstrating what Betancourt pointed out.

This study has made it possible to determine the importance of self-esteem, resilience and sustainable contributions for the older adult who undertakes in the decentralized

autonomous governments of El Oro province, being able to demonstrate and achieve the objective of the study.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Self-esteem has been identified as a fundamental element for the productive development of the older adults who are continuously undertaking in the province of El Oro through support and active participation in the programs of the decentralized autonomous parish governments.

It has been possible to analyze that overcoming adversities at this stage of life demonstrates resilience and self-esteem as factors that are highly intertwined with the well-being and satisfaction that determine the quality of life of older adults.

It is significant the definition of the influence of sustainable contributions and productive development of many older adults in this stage of their lives, however it is worrying to observe that most of the participants of the study in the province of El Oro indicated to have economic instability.

Decentralized Autonomous Governments, remembering the duty they must fulfill



according to what is established by the laws in Ecuador, it is important that they consider the guarantee of human rights that the elderly possess and the continuous struggle for a fair budget with which they can cover the needs of the elderly, through programs, projects and proposals that seek the social inclusion of this person and respect for their human rights.

For young people in society, you must remember that at one time the older people you see today, at one period of their lives were also young and came to this stage of life known as old age, in which there are many changes experienced and they are invited to have a culture of humanity, respect and empathy towards older people, because as time goes by many young people will also find themselves in old age.

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