

## **Reading habit during the successful aging process**

**Deise Claudiane Rodrigues Antunes**

Feevale University. Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9101-7040>

E-mail: [deiseantunes@hotmail.com](mailto:deiseantunes@hotmail.com)

**Caroline Fagundes**

Graduate Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion, Feevale University

Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4546-0938>

**Cesar Augusto Kampff**

Master in Psychology, Feevale University

Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4338-5222>

**Elizangela Halinski Cardoso**

Graduate Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion, Feevale University

Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8076-7353>

**Marcele Medina Silveira**

Graduate Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion, Feevale University

Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4124-2714>

**Martina Dillenborg Scur**

Graduate Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion, Feevale University

Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0763-1131>

**Rosane Barbosa**

Graduate Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion, Feevale University

Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0984-5002>

**Geraldine Alves dos Santos (Corresponding author)**

Graduate Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion. Master in Psychology.

Feevale University. Novo Hamburgo, Brazil

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5620-9071>

E-mail: [geraldinesantos@feevale.br](mailto:geraldinesantos@feevale.br)

**Abstract**

*The increase in the elderly population brings a reflection on successful aging. Thus, beneficial aspects during this phase are analyzed. This study aimed to analyze the forms of influence of the reading habit for the promotion of successful aging, relating the readings performed with the periods of the development process throughout life. The study presents a qualitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional design. This study sample was composed of seven women who participated in this research, aged 60 years, or over, intentionally selected through the snowball technique. The criterion for inclusion in the study was to have the habit of reading throughout the life cycle. The research instrument was a semi-structured interview script. The analysis was performed using the Bardin content analysis method. From the results, it was possible to identify the habit of reading as a great ally, working as a tool for coping with difficulties. In aging, reading occurs naturally, showing its importance throughout life. Among the interviewees, it was possible to identify, despite their unique stories, that parents have a strong influence on an individual reader's formation. It comes to solidify when the school reinforces it in adolescence. The experience of aging is unique, that is, subjective, and reading can serve all people in different ways. Consequently, this habit enables learning to overcome difficulties in each phase, providing a conscious and autonomous experience of aging, retirement, and body changes, looking for ways to live healthier, taking advantage of their individual potential.*

**Keywords:** Successful aging; Lifespan development; Reading.

**1. Introduction**

With the development of society, longevity increased, aging became something real in social daily life, and this achievement is a victory and at the same time a social challenge. Paschoal<sup>1</sup> described that “the possibility of increased survival brought the need to assess the quality of this survival” (p. 79).

Quality of life for the elderly includes several aspects, such as physical and psychological health, autonomy, good social relationships, support from the family nucleus, among other aspects. These are essential for achieving successful aging, one of the most studied theories in the literature about aging and it will also approach in this study. There are several elements related to successful aging. Teixeira and Neri<sup>2</sup> highlight aspects defined by researchers in this area, such as autonomy, self-acceptance, physiological and psychosocial characteristics, coping strategies, among many others. However, the authors affirm there is no agreement on the relevance of each aspect, due to different researches presenting diverse ways to classify them, something that brought importance to listening to the perception of the elderly about aging in their experiences.

A very important aspect that made globalization and human evolution possible is the language that “is not a simple vehicle of information, but a means of rescuing man as a social, historical and cultural being”<sup>3</sup>(p. 590). As one of the forms of language come the writing and reading. With them came a lot of possibilities, which include the production of historical archives, expansion of research and development. Furthermore, the act of reading has become a more common hobby, a habit enjoyed by many people around the world, and is no longer just a communication tool or theoretical study.

Ferreira<sup>4</sup> describes that the human being is in constant learning. Moreover, this is amplified through the habit of reading. The author considers that as reading is practiced the possibility of knowledge and maturation of the individual is intensified, both in their learning processes and in the elaboration of a larger worldview. Enabling people to become more critical and have better personal development.

Considering reading as a habit, this study aims to understand the influences of literature on human development, specifically in successful aging. In this sense, the general objective of this study is to analyze the influence forms of the reading habit to the promotion of successful aging, relating the reading made during the development process throughout life.

## 2. Method

This study has a qualitative, descriptive and cross-sectional design. Seven women, aged over 60 years, intentionally selected through the *snowball* technique participated in this study. As inclusion criteria was defined that the elderly should have the habit of reading throughout their life cycle, in order to, based on reports of individual experiences, identify possible correlations between reading as a form of adaptation during successful aging. For this study, a semi-structured interview related to the reading habit, the literary style that attracts this group of readers and the perceived benefits was made. Finally, it was investigated the readings realized during the course of life, including specific questions related to the maintenance of this habit in aging and its connection with social interactions.

For data collection, online meetings were made via videoconference. Initially, the Informed Consent Term (ICT) was sent, in which the purpose of the research and the way in which it would occur were informed. Participants' identities were preserved. For an analysis of the data used Content Analysis, according to the method developed by Laurence Bardin.

Bardin (2011) classified content analysis based on three fundamentals phases. The first is the pre-analysis, characterized by the organization, which starts from the objective definition of procedures; the second is the exploration of the material defined at the previous phase, characteristics found, prioritizing no content distortions, described as “long and fastidious, consistently in operations”<sup>5</sup> (p. 131). The operations mentioned must include the rules formulated previously. The last phase refers to the treatment of results, inference and interpretation. Câmara<sup>6</sup> contributes characterizing this moment as “the meaning of what is behind the immediately apprehended” (p. 188). At this moment, through different methods, conclusions can be found from the analyzed material.

Bardin<sup>5</sup> conceptualizes that the content analysis, in the context of interviews, presents the necessity for the researcher to be delicate in doing it. The author considers that the verbal material requires resourcefulness and the material collected contains richness and complexity, as it is a subjective discourse

of the interviewee. Where there is a “free play of what this person lived, felt and thought about something” (p. 93), then including their individual singularity, even with regard to the emergence of their unconscious.

The category created to guide this study was the presence of reading during the phases of the participants' life cycle.

### **3. Results**

The reading habit becomes a great ally of the individual reader, serving as a tool to face difficulties included in the life cycle. In aging, this occurs naturally, because elderly readers already have the habit included in their routines from earlier stages, bringing its importance throughout life.

Jardim and Camargo<sup>7</sup> define reading as an essential activity for human beings, in all age groups. The authors consider that it provides feelings and learning. They also divide reading into two parts, which are reading with the purpose of learning, which is associated with the formation of the subject, and reading as pleasure, which enables the reader to have a direct relationship with infinite areas of knowledge.

Mota, Pereira and Rodrigues<sup>8</sup> assume that reading is defined as a social practice developed throughout life. According to the authors, the reading results in transformation of meanings, according to the experiences lived by the individual and as they mature. They also suggest that social practice is related to new learning, something of extreme importance in aging of human beings, considering the necessity to adapt, rediscover and reinvent in aging. The authors cite reading as a means of protection for elderly, because in addition to developing cognition, the habit of reading enables independence and greater autonomy for the individual.

Seven interviews were conducted online with women, aged between 60 and 78 years and then was possible to realize that was not possible to analyze the reading habit in isolation, in their speeches all the interviewees reported the constancy of the book in their lives from the childhood stage.

Silva, Lima, Lemos, Chaves and Gabriel<sup>9</sup> studied the contributions of childhood's literature and described it as "the habit of reading is a constant process" (p. 2), and it is in childhood that this habit should be stimulated, to do the individual realizes that reading can become something pleasurable. The authors also point out the importance of having a moment in this person's routine to practice this habit for life, "the reading process is not just for one period, on the contrary, it results from a lifelong development" (p. 6). Ferreira<sup>4</sup> studied the importance of the reading habit throughout life and corroborates with it by pointing out that:

Developing an interest and the habit of reading is a constant process that starts very early at home, improves at school and continues for a lifetime. There are several factors that influence interest in reading. Children who hears stories from an early age, who have direct contact with books and who are stimulated, will have a favorable development of their vocabulary, as well as readiness for reading (p. 151).

According to Silva et al.<sup>9</sup> the sooner the reading is included, enabling children to come into contact with books, biggest will be the probability of the formation of an adult reader. The authors mention that the environment where the child is inserted can serve as a form of encouragement for them to rouse to the world of reading: "an environment where there are several reading materials, such as: books, magazines and newspapers, and encouragement their use it will rouse in children the desire to know the world of

letters” (p. 6).

In the speech of the interviews, the encouragement of parents to read were present, where they usually describe that the mother or father, or both, had the habit of reading.

B 68 - I have a very good mirror with reference to the father.

G 78 - Look, I think the habit of reading is something that needs to be gestated, it needs to start in childhood, I learned to read at 6 years old, I was literate at 6 years old, but before that, there were children's storybooks, my mother read the stories to us.

F 74 - From a very early age, my parents read to me. My mother had little schooling, she had only up to the fourth grade (the old primary), she liked to read too, and my father already had a higher education. My mother read the simpler stories at first and then my father started to read more sophisticated things, [...] he read a lot to me and I remember I was a child when he used to do it, very young child.

D 72 - So, in my childhood, in this case my father was a reader and during high school I also liked it a lot, [...] I always had the example, my father was always very good reader, there was a very good library and bought us encyclopedias. I have two other brothers, so I roused more to reading, because before, my mother already told stories, so there were little stories books, stories that she told us without the help of a book and then when I was 9/10 years old I started to read the encyclopedias a lot.

C 71 - I started to read even more when I was 8/9/10 years old, when I was already literate, some of my mother's magazines and then my younger brother and I had comic books... we exchanged with colleagues the comic books because they had one that we didn't have.

The interviewees also mention the importance of maintaining this habit during adolescence and the essential role of teachers during this period. For Silva et al.<sup>9</sup> the formation of readers should start with teachers, looking for their students find pleasure in developing these activities, rousing interest in them. The authors also point out that “a reader teacher can be a mirror for his students” (p. 7).

B 68 - I had great high school teachers (today it would be because my teaching was not in that system). However, I had two teachers who encouraged me a lot. A history teacher who made us every Sunday look for an article about world facts, then she created a habit for looking for knowledge, it was always super motivating subjects. The second was a science teacher who also always instigated us to look in the literature for things related to the human factor, about viruses, microbes, genetics... so she always made us to research a lot, this curiosity was great! So this way I got the habit of reading and looking for things, you know? Information.

D 72 - At school I studied normally, [...], it was also a lot... the habit of reading was cultivated a lot. We had to take books from the library, read, so these Brazilian authors like Machado de Assis, Jose de Alencar [...] we read all the books we had in the library, so I think it was very interesting what the school provided to us of literature.

According to Neves<sup>10</sup>, the school environment should enable the increase of students' reading habits, thus providing a training for readers that will contribute to the students' educational success. As well as allowing the integral development, that contemplates citizenship, social inclusion and the subject's autonomy. The family environment is responsible for constituting the first stimuli, involving the creation of reading habits. The school, as the first institutional environment that the individual will have contact with, has a fundamental role and can be determinant in how students will relate with reading throughout

their lives. Neves<sup>10</sup> points out that “the habit of reading is fed and strengthened with practice, we can say that we are definitely facing the possibility of constant individual enrichment” (p. 24). Therefore, we must consider the maintenance of this habit at all times in life. The interviewees noted that reading has been included in their routines since they were very young, but still consider that at different stages, it was unique for personal and professional reasons.

E 72 - The arrival of the children made reading difficult, so it was difficult to pick up a book and read it to the end, sometimes I started, but didn't continue.

B 68 - I had time, my biggest problem before was reading with time, I had a deadline to win. I had to read things to solve, to make decisions together with my students, so I had to know theories and that was the time. It was something that distressed me a lot. I had to win this. So sometimes, I had to talk to other colleagues who already had more reading about that author or that theory and that made me very anxious.

G 78 - So I can tell you this, when my children were little, I had less time to read, when I had time to read...

F 74 - I think, I always read a lot, but when you have a lot of work and you have to handle theoretically the specialization, it's not that I read less, I read more professionally, to handle to theoretically the things, but I think that reading less never, our own experience as a university professor, if you are old, it demands permanent reading, there is no way. I read 300-page thesis in three days, I had to do it, and there was another book of literature “let's not go there, let's see” (laughs).

D 72 - When we work independently, then you have to read what is related to your work, then for other types of literature, time is scarcer, today whatever falls into my hand I read (laughs). [...] With small children, to read a novel, for example, hardly! The time is very short.

C 71 - In fact, the period I least read when children... girls were little! [...] of course, I hibernated for a while, a few months, when I couldn't read the newspaper but I had to read it and sometimes I couldn't, but I never stayed long time without those, who likes it, always find a way.

The terms Selection, Optimization and Compensation compose the necessities mechanisms for the functionality of the human being, where there is well-being. In this study it was possible to identify the selection strategy, which refers to the reorganization made towards to moments of loss recovery, which it is possible to identify possibilities and resources and choose for one of them to move forward<sup>11</sup>.

In the period of adulthood, the participants, despite making it clear that they maintained their liking for reading, had to organize their lives according to the most latent demands, such as motherhood and professional overload. In this sense, according to the selection strategy, they used goals compatible with the resources they had at the time.

Consider that, over the course of life, the individual is constantly changing, and in interaction with his physical and social environment, also dynamic, they have to do adjustments and changes in themselves and in the environment to live in an adapted and healthy way, mechanisms like those described in the SOC model are fundamental to its activity<sup>12</sup> (p. 195).

In the interviews, the participants reflected on the habit of reading together with the aging process. They are able to perceive the daily use of learning through their readings, in family situations and with friendships. Using their knowledge to advise or decide the best way to act in certain situations.

60 - Book for me has always been therapeutic [...] all books have some word, phrase or everyday situation.

B 68 - There was a time when I went to therapy with my middle daughter who needed help. She had

hyperactivity. I studied a lot to help her and then the psychologist asked me if everything I had in my life I solved through books. I remembered now, yes, everything I look for in books in all my life stages! Currently I research all the time about vitamins, what I should take, the percentage I should take, what I should do to reduce pain, which are the best therapies at the moment, holistic, for my life, everything, everything I search, on the internet, on Google I do not stop searching to find books and to find readings that improves my life.

G 78 - You also come to understand better the situations you live in your country, in your daily life, I think that every book if you read with that intention, let's say, to understand, to situate yourself as a partner of the characters in books, you are also able to take from those experiences that the character lives. You are able to take things for your own life, you are able to understand a little better the events of your own life.

F 74 - It's wonderful it helps how you see your problems, that is, it changes your perspective on life, because it changes the way you look at your problems, it's a great tool.

According to Zilberman<sup>13</sup> is possible to analyze the action of reading literature, in particular, going beyond the concept of reading. The author defines reading as a way that the individual can position himself in the world; which enables a greater understanding of the subject, about themselves and their environment. In addition, the author suggests that when the literature is read, the possibilities increase, in terms of being connected with our imagination, strengthening it through our readings.

With that, it clarifies the importance of reinforcing our imaginary, the same according to Zilberman<sup>13</sup>, is related to the solution of problems, to which the individual is exposed. Thus, it combines with the available creativity - from our literary experiences - with our intelligence and as a result, there is a better number of alternatives on how to act and to solve problems in our daily lives.

It is a consensus for the interviewees that the number of readings increased after retirement. They describe that now they have more freedom to read which they like, without having to relate their reading to something professional, for example. Another aspect is the quality with which they can do the readings.

E 72 - As I retired, I was able to cultivate my reading habit much more [...] I think that after I got older I started to be more interested in things like that it's possible to do a more analysis psychological or someone looks at me, says the book, that it is a novel / fiction if it is based on such a thing, then I like it more, when there will be something psychosocial and I saw this more in retirement, it's a pleasure, but it's a leisure that makes me grow too, I learn a lot.

B 68 - I was pressured to read with time, now I read and I interact with what I'm reading, I write a lot in the books... I interact better with the book, I always write on the edges of the book some ideas and some thoughts I'm having at that moment. I write, I interact with them, I already have my own books for this reason, I communicate with them, I interact with them.

F 74 - My reading habit became more solid as I got older, because I think that's what happens as we get older, some things we stop practicing and others we intensify. And if you have good eyes, reading is always available (laughs).

D 72 - In the last 22 years of retirement, I can say that I think I read a lot more daily, it became a routine.

According to Ferreira and Dias<sup>14</sup>, readers only reach the comprehension of a text when they are able to go beyond what it makes explicit: "he needs to link ideas within the text and activate their general knowledge to intelligence their comprehension" (p.324). Therefore, when performing a reading, the subject

needs to make interferences, based on prior knowledge or even elements that arise within this text, in order to achieve full understanding.

Reading is directly involved with motivation and the way the individual is committed to it, “should know why they read and feel motivated for this activity”<sup>14</sup> (p. 324). So that meanings are identified, depending on how much the reader remains available for reading, using their past experiences and mental representations to understand it.

Soares, Ribeiro and Araújo<sup>15</sup> describe that the reading habit can stimulate people's sensitivity, expanding their view of the world, also enabling transformations and modifications to it. They describe the book as a way to stay informed and entertained, “makes company for the human being, able to get them out of alienation and the prey of ignorance, making them capable of producing and building a true nation that is a reader. A nation constantly dissatisfied, are always looking for to learn more” (p. 7-8). We found an excerpt from one of the interviewees that illustrates the authors' understanding.

F 74 – I guide my readings, if I can't identify exits, I say “no, what is he proposing?” “Where will this end?” “What is the consequence of all this?” I can not read anything. Maybe this is even my problem “Si hay gobierno, soy contra” in principle, that is, if they are affirming something to me I say wait then let's think, what are they affirming to me? I don't swallow, I don't swallow anything, nothing, nothing, you know what nothing is? Nowhere, it even makes me a little boring, I even have to take care because it bothers people, so I have to take care of who I do it with or I do it with myself “how is that?” And then I go and get it and if I'm clear that it's not like that, I go back to the person and say “I don't agree with this, this and this”. If I'm clear at the time, I say, if I don't have it, I'll get it and if it's okay, if not, I can't swallow it.

Soares, Ribeiro and Araújo<sup>15</sup> describe that reading is the starting point for a transformation of the human being, therefore, this action must become intrinsic to the individual, being included in their daily lives and in their personal habits: “[...] not just a stimulating educational practice. A healthy habit, a passion” (p. 2).

Torquato, Massi and Santana<sup>16</sup> point out that the importance of the individual having access to writing and reading is essential for the exercise of citizenship, considering that changes at the social level are correlated with this insertion. They describe that reading and writing make it possible to: “guarantee social, civil and political rights, as well as by enabling the participation of the aging subject in the cultures of power, leisure and pleasure” (p. 96).

Corroborating the authors above, Soares, Ribeiro and Araújo<sup>15</sup> when they focused on the theme of passion and pleasure related to reading, began their study by addressing how much action permeates, at first, a matter of citizenship: “Bad citizens graduates, with no rights and no notion of the world, hardly manage to reach their social space. And reading is one of its many social rights, since through it one can have access to the most varied types of information, leisure and social integration” (p. 2).

An important aspect described by Zinani, Santos and Wagner<sup>17</sup> emphasizes that mental development requires characteristics such as experiences, critical reflections, abilities to be included in the social sphere. For this to occur, stimulation is essential, and this is one of the ways to achieve reading. “The wisdom of the mature man will be in the inexhaustible exercise of learning” (p. 388). The authors dedicated their material to the problem of teachers and the difficulties involved in teaching and reading pleasure at school. In addition, they brought contributions regarding reading as an essential tool for the development of the



human being as a whole, being an action of unique beauty, uniting in the same act the performance of cognition and affection.

Pinto and Neri<sup>18</sup> clarify that the benefits of building social participation in aging only arise if the activities performed are in accordance with the elderly in question. The crucial aspect for this activity to be beneficial is to enable the elderly to maintain their autonomy, so that this participation generates pleasure and satisfaction and they can identify themselves with the way they are filling their free time.

Another characteristic point in the interviews was the role of the habit of reading as a tool that makes it possible to use time in a pleasurable way, where the participants do not report loneliness or anguish, referring to the free time that retirement makes possible.

Marmol and Viana<sup>19</sup> give the book the denomination of “a great companion”, considering its contribution to physical and emotional health in aging process. They cite the action of reading as a way to exercise cognitive functions, and to prevent neurological declines. “Decreasing the distance between books and readers, especially those of the third age, will be amazing for elderly and will contribute to making this, in fact, the best age” (p. 654).

Torquato, Massi and Santana<sup>16</sup> corroborate by reporting that reading can enable autonomy for the elderly. According to the authors, the action enables “the elderly to be a subject and author of their history” (p. 91), going beyond their independence. It is also related to increasing your overall quality of life.

C 71 - I always joke I don't feel alone I like to have company, but I love having from 8 pm to 10 pm / 11 pm to have my book of the night too, I don't have this problem of staying in the case... Reading was something introduced, like: “I have to do lunch, wash clothes and collect clothes”, it's time for the book! Each thing in its time. But for sure, when you're reading a book, you can only gain, there's no doubt about it, it can even be an uninteresting reading that then at least you train the reading, if it is not good, think like this: it is teaching you to know how to be patient!

E 72 - So these habits, this was changing more now with aging so that I could read at any time without having to blame, the problem was guilt, and also not worrying too much about, suddenly “bah, but I'm reading in the middle of the afternoon, weekday” but what's the problem? I'm the one who commands me, I support myself, so it's not a sin (laughs)... I think that age is coming and we are looking for topics that can help us, to be happier, to work with our own idea of aging for sure!

Reading will always go through the construction of meanings, which is carried out by the reader. A text to be written will not be able, in this way, to have the author's prediction as to the possibilities of construction of meaning. The construction of meaning is intertwined with the reader, making a direct dialogue with the reader's subjective, accessing memories and sometimes comparisons with previous readings. So a text will never be inflexible, as it is always in the construction of different meanings, for different readers.<sup>20</sup>

Corroborating these statements Castro and Torga<sup>21</sup> describe reading as a fundamentally interactive action, as it activates the dialogue between what the author has placed in the text and the construction of meanings that arise through the reader's contact with it. “The reader subject is the active principle of interpretation, and it is up to him to fill in the constructive incompleteness of the text” (p. 2).

Yunes and Oswald<sup>22</sup> also corroborate this thought by stating that reading is not only characterized by written words. Reading uses moments and images to assign sense and meaning. The authors further describe that we will not always use conscious sensations and memories.

Ferreira and Dias<sup>14</sup> describe that the reader is composed of the union of their experiences and knowledge, including general and world knowledge, and their own possibilities, referring to their interests, beliefs, values. Their readings, at the same time that they bring meaning to the text, are shaped through their new knowledge, provided by the readings “modifying their way of perceiving and transiting the world, giving them autonomy” (p. 324).

Yunes and Oswald<sup>22</sup> highlight the action of reading going beyond a tool or a school task. The authors clarify the importance of putting the imaginary to work together with real experiences. They refer to reading as a possibility of knowledge and discovery of the human being, by enabling the reader to find values, discover interests and maintain new perspectives on what represents them as an individual. They mention that the experience of reading offers the individual possibilities of being: “In them the subject experiences and transforms themselves while transforming the text” (p. 14).

Bringing the act of reading to the stage of human aging, Marmol and Viana<sup>19</sup> describe the importance of reading in brain maintenance, as it enables continuous stimuli to the mind and also includes new knowledge. The authors emphasize that reading can delay or prevent the onset or progression of degenerative neurological diseases that occur during the aging process. The authors also add that reading provides benefits with regard to the existence of the human being. “Through reading it is possible to live new experiences, be enchanted with a story, in addition to learning that provides a broader view of the world and life” (p. 652).

G 78 - I think that one of the things is one of the richest habits we have is the habit of reading, it's the habit that allows you to travel, allows you to be informed, allows you to cook delicious food, allows you to see what is happening in the world, what people are saying about current events, I mean you have an insight like never before in the world, about the things of the world. [...] So all these things there, all these articles that come out in newspapers and everything we read, to exemplify, right now I think all of this helps you to face with a little more rationality as things you experience, so women, the processes for example of women's health, aging of women about all this I read, what does aging of women represent? What does menopause represent? All this I read. So it's a way for you to bring reading to understand your entire life process, your health, your body, your social insertion, all of this is at stake.

Witter, Galvão, Buriti and Silva<sup>23</sup> describe reading during aging as an activity that enables “leisure, filling time, escaping from unpleasant situations, in addition to providing an essential cognitive stimulus” (p. 376). They reinforce that reading, in addition to mental stimulation in the elderly, benefits their daily lives, as it allows for better autonomy. Assists in activities such as the use of medications and public transport; in addition to enabling financial independence and updating for the use of technologies.

Silva, Farias, Oliveira and Rabelo<sup>24</sup> describe that the perception that elderly people have about their emotional and social adjustments are related to their psychological well-being. The authors mention that adjusted seniors develop better continuous growth and they are more flexible to new experiences. They emphasize that to experience old age in the best way, the individual must look for balance their potential with the limitations they have.

For the authors Oliveira, Cruvinel and Santos<sup>25</sup>, cognitive activities allow the elderly the “ability to reorganize and regulate information” (p. 248), regarding their aging, considering that one of the main means of performing such activity is done with the practice of reading. According to the authors, the elderly is able to recognize their limitations and potential, where reading will be a tool for this stage of the development cycle to be experienced with more hope.

According to the description by Witter<sup>26</sup>, literature should be considered as one of the cultural dimensions where the best conditions exist for human beings to develop fully. Reading enables learning in several areas, being a tool that promotes access to knowledge as a whole.

For the elderly, reading can, as for all ages, take on different meanings, whether poetry, stories, technical books or newspaper news, the package insert of a medicine or a cooking recipe, its domain can represent autonomy, leisure or even a means of acquiring knowledge about specific issues in the construction of knowledge or even about the benefits of physical activity<sup>23</sup>(p. 376).

Jardim and Camargo<sup>7</sup> refer that the term literature is not just a path where experiences and information (fictitious or not) are crossed, they reinforce that literature is a way of experiencing the world outside the paper or screen, bringing understanding to the environment in which the individual is included. Understanding the importance of literature for authors is associated with a resource with three points in particular, which are training, interaction and information.

Reading becomes challenging, as it goes beyond mere signs on a paper or canvas, such action allows us to extract meaning, transforming what were once just letters, words, sentences. “[...] reading is perceived as a very automatic and instantaneous process, but in fact it involves the coordination of several different skills, from very basic to very complex”<sup>27</sup> (p. 105).

### **3. Conclusion**

This study allowed us to understand a little more about human complexity, how aging can occur in different ways, as it brings positive and negative marks of those who are gone throughout their lives. The interviewees pointed out aspects of their lives from childhood to the present day, some mothers, some grandmothers, others married for decades, others who lived through divorce or even widows. The study can access beautiful and inspiring stories of women who experience their successful aging/development in a healthy and autonomous way. In this research, it is possible to analyze how the experience of aging is unique, that is, subjective, and that reading can serve all people in different ways.

There are endless ways in which we can face the difficulties that come with aging. However, for them to become effective, it will be necessary for them to be appropriate for the subject in question, and it is therefore essential to consider the present and past of the elderly person, considering that each one will understand that they are facing a stressful event according to the subjectivity.

Therefore, it is concluded that all healthy habits that promote successful aging must be worked from childhood, understanding the aging / development process as a continuum throughout life. In this sense, reading also has a prominent place along with other physical and mental health care habits.

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