Usporedba odnosa usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s nekim sociodemografskim varijablama i aspektima subjektivne i psihološke dobrobiti odraslih

/ Comparison between Relationships of Loneliness and Preference for Solitude with Some Socio-demographic Variables and Aspects of Subjective and Psychological Well-being of Adults

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Za razliku od usamljenosti kao neugodnog i emocionalno uznemirujućeg iskustva preferirana samoća je dobrovoljno povlačenje od drugih. Stoga ona, za razliku od iskustva usamljenosti, ne bi trebala imati nužno negativan utjecaj na dobrobit. Glavni je cilj ovoga istraživanja bio usporediti smjer i jačinu povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života. U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 325 osoba u dobi od 25 do 70 godina. Za ispitivanje relevantnih konstrukata korištene su: kratka verzija ljestvice usamljenosti UCLA, Adaptirana ljestvica preferirane samoće, Ljestvica zadovoljstva životom, Rosenbergova ljestvica samopoštovanja i Ljestvica smisla života. Rezultati su pokazali da su i usamljenost i preferirana samoća značajno negativno povezane sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života, iako su te povezanosti bile veće za usamljenost nego za preferiranu samoću. Rezultati su također ukazali i na potencijalnu medijatorsku ulogu usamljenosti u odnosu preferirane samoće i ispitanih aspekata subjektivne i psihološke dobrobiti. Razlike u usamljenosti i preferiranoj samoći s obzirom na spol, dob i partnerski status nisu se pokazale značajnima. Jedino je stupanj obrazovanja bio značajno negativno povezan s usamljenošću a pozitivno s preferencijom samoće. Rezultati ovoga istraživanja ukazuju na važnost razlikovanja usamljenosti i samoće u pogledu njihovog utjecaja na dobrobit. Dok je usamljenost u negativnoj vezi s različitim aspektima dobrobiti u različitim razdobljima odrasle dobi, čini se da su starije osobe posebno osjetljive na negativan utjecaj svojevoljnog povlačenja u samoću na subjektivnu i psihološku dobrobit.

Unlike loneliness as an unpleasant and emotionally disturbing experience, preference for solitude is a voluntary withdrawal from other people. Therefore, unlike loneliness, it should not have a necessarily negative effect on well-being. The main goal of this study was to compare the direction and the strength of relationships of loneliness and preference for solitude with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life. Three hundred and twenty-five adults, 25 to 70 years old, participated in the study. Relevant constructs were measured by the short version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale, Adapted Preference for Solitude Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, and Purpose in Life Scale. Results showed that both loneliness and preference for solitude significantly negatively correlate with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life, although those correlations were higher for loneliness than for preference for solitude. Results also pointed out the potential mediation role of loneliness in the relationship between a preference for solitude and aspects of subjective and psychological well-being. Gender, age, and partnership status-related differences in loneliness and preference for solitude were not significant. Only the education level significantly negatively correlated with loneliness, and significantly positively with preference for solitude. The results of this study emphasize the importance of differentiating between loneliness and solitude regarding their influence on well-being. While the relationship of loneliness with different aspects of well-being is negative during all periods of adulthood, it seems that older persons are particularly sensitive concerning the negative influence of voluntary withdrawal into solitude on subjective and psychological well-being.

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UVOD

Kao rizični čimbenik za brojne probleme tjelesnog i mentalnog zdravlja usamljenost je bila predmet mnogih istraživanja. Usamljenost se najčešće definira kao neugodno i emocionalno uznemirujuće subjektivno iskustvo koje je posljedica raskoraka između željene i ostvarene razine socijalnog kontakta (1). U dosadašnjim su istraživanjima ispitani brojni prediktori i korelati usamljenosti (2). Među prediktorima usamljenosti svoje mjesto imaju sociodemografske varijable kao što su spol, dob, stupanj obrazovanja, bračni, ekonomski i rezidencijalni status jer one, putem svog utjecaja na mogućnost formiranja i održavanja zadovoljavajuće socijalne mreže, mogu utjecati i na doživljaj usamljenosti. Međutim, rezultati dosadašnjih istraživanja odnosa različitih sociodemografskih varijabli i iskustva usamljenosti nisu jednoznačni. Primjerice, u pogledu spolnih razlika neka istraživanja ukazuju na veću usamljenost u djevojčica, djevojaka ili žena (3,4), druga nalaze veću usamljenost u dječaka, mladića ili muškaraca (5-9), dok treća nisu našla značajne spolne razlike (10-12). Različita su objašnjenja ovih nesuglasnih nalaza, a jedno od njih odnosi se na metodologiju istraživanja. Tako Borys i Perlman (3) objašnjavaju da dječaci, mladići i muškarci teže priznaju da su usamljeni jer su usamljeni muškarci više stigmatizirani od usamljenih žena i da zato postižu niže rezultate na mjerama u kojima se riječ usamljenost izravno koristi a više rezultate na mjerama u kojima se

INTRODUCTION

As a risk factor for many problems of physical and mental health, loneliness has been the subject of numerous studies. It is usually defined as an unpleasant and emotionally disturbing subjective experience that is the consequence of discrepancy between the desired and realized level of social contact (1). Numerous predictors and correlates of loneliness have been studied so far (2). Among the predictors of loneliness, socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, education, marital, economic, and residential status found their place because they, through their influence on the ability to form and maintain a satisfactory social network, can also affect the experience of loneliness. However, the results of previous research of the relationship between various socio-demographic variables and the experience of loneliness are not consistent. For example, regarding gender differences, some research suggests greater loneliness in girls or women (3,4), others find greater loneliness in boys or men (5-9), while the third did not find significant gender differences (10-12). There are various explanations of these inconsistent findings, one of which relates to the research methodology. Thus, Borys and Perlman (3) explain that boys and men are less likely to admit that they are lonely because lonely men are more stigmatized than lonely women and therefore men achieve lower results on measurements that use the word *loneliness*, and higher results on measurements that do not use

ta riječ ne koristi izravno. U ovom smo istraživanju koristili jednu od verzija u svijetu najčešće korištene mjere usamljenosti –ljestvice usamljenosti UCLA, u kojoj se riječ usamljenost ni jednom ne spominje, pa je oslobođena prigovora koje navode Borys i Perlman (3) a koji bi mogli utjecati na eventualne spolne razlike u usamljenosti. Kada je riječ o jednodimenzionalnim mjerama usamljenosti, u istraživanjima u kojima je utvrđeno da su žene usamljenije u odnosu na muškarce, to je uglavnom objašnjavano većom važnošću koju interpersonalni odnosi imaju za žene i u vezi s tim njihovim većim očekivanjima od tih odnosa iz kojih onda proizlazi i veći raskorak između željene i ostvarene razine odnosa. Drugo je objašnjenje da žene imaju bolji uvid u svoje emocije te da su spremnije priznati da su usamljene. Veća globalna usamljenost u muškaraca u odnosu na žene objašnjavana je slabijom socijalizacijom muškaraca u području interpersonalnih odnosa i njihovim lošijim strategijama suočavanja s usamljenošću.

Dobne razlike u usamljenosti rjeđe su ispitivane od onih spolnih a rezultati ovih istraživanja također nisu suglasni. Obično se naglašava kako je doživljaj usamljenosti osobito izražen u adolescenciji i preadolescenciji (2,13,14,) što se objašnjava intenzivnim razvojnim promjenama u ovom životnom razdoblju, kako na tjelesnom i hormonskom, tako i na kognitivnom, psihološkom i socijalnom planu. U pogledu dobnih razlika u usamljenosti u odrasloj dobi, većina studija ne podržava stereotip o starim osobama kao najusamljenijima, odnosno pokazuje da su adolescenti i mlađe odrasle osobe usamljenije od starijih, što se objašnjava u kontekstu teorije uloga (15) i razvojnih teorija kao što su Eriksonova teorija psihosocijalnog razvoja i Levinsonova teorija životnih razdoblja (2). Naime, starije osobe imaju manju potrebu u pogledu čestine socijalnih kontakata i širine socijalne mreže te, u skladu s teorijom socioemocionalne selektivnosti (16), smanjuju svoje

this word directly. In this research, we administered one of the most commonly used measurements of loneliness in the world - the UCLA Loneliness Scale, in which the word *loneliness* is not mentioned at all. Therefore, it is free of the objections raised by Borys and Perlman (3), which could affect potential gender differences in loneliness. When it comes to unidimensional measurements of loneliness, in research that found that women are more lonely than men, this is usually explained by the greater importance that interpersonal relationships have for women and, related to this, by their greater expectations from these relationships, which can result in the greater discrepancy between the desired and realized level of relationship. Another explanation is that women have a better insight into their emotions and are more likely to admit they are lonely. Greater global loneliness in men compared to women was explained by the poorer socialization of men in the area of interpersonal relationships and their less effective strategies of coping with loneliness.

Age differences in loneliness are less frequently examined than gender ones, and the results of these studies are also inconsistent. Usually it is emphasized that the experience of loneliness is particularly pronounced in adolescence and pre-adolescence (2,13,14), which is explained by intense developmental changes in this period of life, changes on the physical and hormonal as well as on the cognitive, psychological, and social level. Regarding age differences in loneliness in adulthood, most studies do not support the stereotype of older people as the loneliest ones. They show that adolescents and young adults are lonelier than older adults, which is explained in the context of role theory (15) and developmental theories such as Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and Levinson's theory of the seasons of life (2). Namely, older people have less need regarding frequency of social contacts and social network width and, according to the theory of socioemotional selec-

socijalne interakcije i svode ih na one s manjim brojem emocionalno bliskih osoba. Stavljaju veći naglasak na emocionalnu kvalitetu socijalnih iskustava nego na njihovu kvantitetu. Uz to, starijim ljudima su socijalni i emocionalni gubitci gotovo normativna iskustva a oni obično imaju dugotrajnije bliske veze koje ih štite od usamljenosti, dok mlađe osobe imaju širu mrežu odnosa koji često i nisu previše bliski (2). Sve je to razlog često nađenoj manjoj usamljenosti u starijih osoba u odnosu na mlađe odrasle osobe i adolescente.

U pogledu uloge bračnog statusa rezultati brojnih studija provedenih u različitim kulturama, uključujući i hrvatsko kulturno okruženje, nedvojbeno ukazuju na veće životno zadovoljstvo, sreću, bolje zdravlje i općenito, veću dobrobit, uključujući i manju usamljenost, kod osoba u braku i u trajnoj izvanbračnoj vezi u odnosu na samce koji nikada nisu bili u braku, rastavljene i udovce (17-19). Razumije se, ovdje je važnija kvaliteta partnerskog odnosa nego sam bračni/partnerski status i ta kvaliteta i prisnost s partnerom je ono što štiti od usamljenosti.

Obrazovanje je u odnosu na ranije spomenute sociodemografske varijable rjeđe bilo uključeno u skup potencijalnih prediktora usamljenosti. Rezultati ovih istraživanja na odraslim osobama uglavnom ukazuju na negativnu povezanost usamljenosti i stupnja obrazovanja (2).

Autorica Lacković-Grgin (2) u svom pregledu rezultata dotadašnjih istraživanja odnosa različitih sociodemografskih varijabli i usamljenosti zaključuje da se čini da se usamljenijima osjećaju mlađe osobe, one nižeg obrazovanja i, s njim često povezanog, nižeg ekonomskog statusa, te osobe koje nisu u braku.

Empirijski nalazi o odnosu usamljenosti i različitih indikatora tjelesnog i mentalnog zdravlja, dobrobiti i kvalitete života su prilično jednoznačni, i to u različitim dobnim podskupinama, iako se ti indikatori ponekad treti-

tivity (16), they reduce their social interaction to those with a smaller number of emotionally close persons. They place greater emphasis on the emotional quality of social experiences than on their quantity. In addition, for older people, social and emotional losses are almost normative experiences, and they usually have longer lasting close relationships that protect them from loneliness, while younger people have a wider network of relationships that often are not too close (2). All of the abovementioned is the reason for the frequently less pronounced experience of loneliness in older people compared to younger adults and adolescents.

With regard to the role of marital status, the results of numerous studies in different cultures, including the Croatian cultural setting, undoubtedly point to greater life satisfaction, happiness, better health, and in general, greater well-being, including lesser loneliness, in people who are married or cohabiting compared to single people who have never been married or are divorced and widowed (17-19). Of course, the quality of partnership is more important here than just being in a marital/partner relationship, and that quality and intimacy with the partner is the one that protects against loneliness.

Education compared to the aforementioned socio-demographic variables was rarely included in a set of potential predictors of loneliness. The results of these studies on adults mostly point to the negative correlation of loneliness and the level of education (2).

In her review of the results of previous research on the relationship between different socio-demographic variables and loneliness, Lacković-Grgin (2) concludes that young, less educated people, with lower economic status, and those that are not married seem to feel lonelier.

The empirical findings on the relationship between loneliness and various indicators of physical and mental health, well-being and quality of life are rather unambiguous in dif-

raju kao antecedenti, a ponekad kao posljedice usamljenosti. Ovi nalazi ukazuju na pozitivnu povezanost usamljenosti s depresijom (20-23), anksioznošću, neuroticizmom, pesimizmom (23-25) i različitim tjelesnim tegobama kao što su visoki krvni tlak (26), smetnje spavanja (27), pojačane reakcije imunološkog i neuroendokrinog sustava na stres (28) te povećani rizik obolijevanja od kardiovaskularnih bolesti (29). S druge strane pokazalo se da je usamljenost negativno povezana sa zadovoljstvom životom, srećom i samopoštovanjem (24,30-32).

Za razliku od usamljenosti kao subjektivnog stanja koje nedvojbeno ima negativan utjecaj na dobrobit pojedinca, samoća kao objektivno stanje u kojem je osoba odvojena od drugih i lišena svih aspekata socijalne interakcije, mnogo je rjeđe bila predmet istraživačkog interesa. Uz iznimku godina odgoja djece, količina svakodnevnog vremena provedenog u samoći tijekom životnog vijeka raste (33). Tako djeca u dobi između 9 i 12 godina izvješćuju da sami provode oko 17 % vremena, srednjoškolci oko 26 %; odrasli izvješćuju o 29 % vremena provedenog u samoći, dok starije umirovljene osobe izvješćuju da same provode čak 48 % vremena (33). I druge studije iznose slične rezultate pokazujući da starije, u odnosu na osobe mlađih dobnih skupina, provode mnogo više vremena same, tj. polovicu ili više vremena tijekom budnih sati (33). Pitanje je kakav učinak vrijeme provedeno u samoći ima na dobrobit pojedinca i je li taj odnos linearan. Studije pokazuju da, za razliku od usamljenosti čiji je utjecaj na dobrobit isključivo negativan, utjecaj samoće na dobrobit može biti i pozitivan i negativan, ovisno o preferenciji pojedinca da bude sam (34), ovisno o situacijskim i osobnim čimbenicima (35), odnosno ovisno o tome je li samoća željena, koji joj je cilj i čime je ispunjena (2). Tako je samoća koja nije nužno izbor pojedinca povezana s izraženijom sramežljivošću, depresijom, samosviješću i

ferent age subgroups, although these indicators are sometimes treated as antecedents and sometimes as results of loneliness. These findings indicate a positive correlation of loneliness with depression (20-23), anxiety, neuroticism, pessimism (23-25), and various physical disorders such as high blood pressure (26), sleep disturbances (27), increased immune and neuroendocrine stress response (28), and increased risk of cardiovascular disease (29). On the other hand, loneliness has been shown to be negatively associated with life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem (24,30-32).

Unlike loneliness as a subjective state that undoubtedly has a negative impact on the well-being, solitude as an objective state in which a person is separated from others and deprived of all aspects of social interaction was much less subject to research interest. With the exception of years of upbringing, the amount of daily time spent in solitude during lifetime grows (33). Thus, children between the ages of 9 and 12 report that they spend about 17% of their time alone, high school students around 26%; adults report about 29% of their time is spent in solitude, while older retired persons report that they spend even 48% of their time alone (33). Other studies also show similar results, demonstrating that older people, compared to younger age groups, spend much more time alone, i.e. half or more of their awake hours (33). The question is what kind of effect the time spent in solitude has on the well-being of an individual and whether this relationship is linear. Studies show that, unlike loneliness, whose effect on well-being is exclusively negative, the impact of solitude on well-being can be both positive and negative, depending on the individual's preference to be alone (34), situational and personal factors (35), that is depending on whether solitude is desired and what its purpose and content are (2). Therefore, loneliness that is not necessarily an individual's choice is associated with more a pronounced expression of shyness, depression, self-con-

inhibicijom te nižim samopoštovanjem (36). Larson (33) na temelju rezultata većeg broja istraživanja zaključuje da većina ljudi, različitih dobnih skupina, iz normalnih i kliničkih uzoraka, pripadnika različitih kultura, izvješćuje da se osjeća manje sretnima i usamljenijima kada su sami nego kada su u društvu drugih, iako ova negativna povezanost dobrobiti i samoće s dobi slabi. Čini se da je utjecaj samoće na psihološku prilagodbu najnegativniji u djetinjstvu i adolescenciji, a najmanje negativan u starosti. S obzirom na različite razvojne zadatke pojedinih životnih razdoblja adolescenti doživljavaju razdoblja samoće posebno bolnima i usamljenima, dok, s druge strane, umirovljene starije osobe samoću doživljavaju najmanje prijetećom u smislu doživljaja usamljenosti (33). Pokazalo se da je u adolescenata i mladih, koji su više nego starije osobe izloženi društvenim očekivanjima da kreiraju široku socijalnu mrežu koja bi trebala imati mnoge korisne funkcije, čak i *preferencija* samoće negativno povezana s pokazateljima mentalnog zdravlja, odnosno da je povezana s negativnim afektom i nižim samopoštovanjem (37), kao i s povećanim rizikom suicidalne ideacije i samoozljeđivanja (38). Međutim, velika količina vremena provedenog u samoći može imati negativne učinke na zdravlje i subjektivnu dobrobit i odraslih i starijih osoba, dok kratkotrajna samoća nije nužno negativno iskustvo, a njezini pozitivni učinci s dobi jačaju (39). Ovdje je potrebno razlikovati samoću kao objektivno stanje odvojenosti od drugih, bez obzira na to je li svojevoljno izabrana ili ne, od *preferencije* samoće gdje je samoća željeno i dobrovoljno stanje lišenosti socijalnih kontakata. Naime, ljudi se međusobno razlikuju u svojoj preferenciji samoće, odnosno optimalan omjer socijalne uključenosti i vremena provedenog u samoći razlikuje se od pojedinca do pojedinca.

U odraslih se osoba često govori o povoljnim učincima ovakve preferirane samoće ili do-

sciousness and inhibition, and lower self-esteem (36). On the basis of the results of a number of studies, Larson (33) concludes that most people, from different age groups, from normal and clinical samples, and from different cultures, report that they feel less happy and lonelier when they are alone than when they are with other people. However, this negative association between well-being and solitude weakens with age. It seems that the impact of solitude on psychological adjustment is the most negative in childhood and adolescence, and the least negative in old age. Given the different developmental tasks of various periods of life, adolescents experience periods of solitude as particularly painful and lonely, while, on the other hand, elderly retired people experience solitude as the least threatening for developing the experience of loneliness (33). It has been shown that in adolescents and young people, who are more so than older people exposed to social expectations to create a wide social network that should have many useful functions, even the *preference* for solitude is negatively related to mental health indicators. That is, this preference is associated with a negative affect and lower self-esteem (37), as well as with an increased risk of suicidal ideation and self-harm (38). However, a large amount of time spent in solitude can have negative effects on the health and subjective well-being of adults and the elderly as well, while short-term solitude is not necessarily a negative experience and its positive effects increase with age (39). Here it is necessary to differentiate between solitude as an objective state of separation from others, regardless of whether it is voluntarily chosen or not, and the *preference* for solitude where solitude and the voluntary state of deprivation of social contacts are desired. Namely, people differ in their preference for solitude, that is, the optimal ratio of social inclusion and the time spent in solitude differs from one individual to another.

In adults, the beneficial effects of such a preference for solitude or voluntary withdrawal from

brovoljnog povlačenja od drugih. Riječ je o željenom stanju u kojem se pojedinac ne osjeća usamljeno. Funkcije ovakvog dobrovoljnog povlačenja u osamu su različite: opuštanje, kontemplacija, odmor od zahtjeva socijalnih uloga, umjetničko i kreativno izražavanje, samoevaluacija, integracija osobnih iskustava, duhovne težnje, postizanje unutarnjeg mira, učenje, suočavanje ili oporavak nakon stresnih događaja, itd. (2, 40-43). Zato se samoću nerijetko opisuje kao ljekovitu. Lacković-Grgin (2, str. 46) navodi da je „ljekovitost samoće u mogućnosti susreta sa sobom i prestanka bježanja od samoga sebe".

Dakle, s obzirom na razlike između iskustva usamljenosti i preferirane samoće, glavni je problem i cilj ovoga istraživanja bio usporediti smjer i jačinu njihove povezanosti s tri ispitana aspekta dobrobiti. To su zadovoljstvo životom, kao aspekt subjektivne dobrobiti, te samopoštovanje i smisao života, kao aspekti psihološke dobrobiti. U psihologijskoj literaturi subjektivna dobrobit odnosi se na tzv. hedonističku komponentu dobrobiti i uključuje zadovoljstvo životom, pozitivne emocije, iskustva ugode i sl. (44). S druge strane, pojam psihološke dobrobiti više se odnosi na tzv. eudemonistički aspekt dobrobiti te uključuje konstrukte poput samoprihvaćanja, samoaktualizacije, osobnog rasta i razvoja, doživljaja smisla života i sl. (44,45).

Pretpostavljeno je da će usamljenost kao neugodno subjektivno iskustvo biti značajno negativno povezana s ispitanim aspektima dobrobiti. S druge strane, pretpostavljeno je da preferirana samoća, kao dobrovoljno povlačenje od drugih koje ne bi trebalo izazivati neugodne emocije, neće biti negativno povezana s varijablama dobrobiti. Konkretnije, pretpostavljeno je da s njima ili neće biti značajno povezana ili će ta povezanost biti čak značajna i pozitivna.

Sljedeći je problem bio usporediti povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s ispitanim aspektima dobrobiti u podskupinama mlađe, srednje i starije odrasle dobi.

others are often discussed. It is a desirable condition in which an individual does not feel lonely. The functions of this kind of voluntary withdrawal are different: relaxation, contemplation, relief from the demands of social roles, artistic and creative expression, self-evaluation, integration of personal experiences, spiritual aspirations, reaching inner peace, learning, coping or recovery after stressful events, etc. (2,40-43). So, solitude is often described as healing. Lacković-Grgin (2) states "the healing capacity of solitude is in its ability for an individual to meet with and stop running away from oneself" (p. 46).

Therefore, given the differences between the experience of loneliness and preference for solitude, the main problem and aim of this research was to compare the direction and strength of their relationship with the three examined aspects of well-being. These are life satisfaction, as an aspect of subjective well-being, and self-esteem and the purpose in life, as aspects of psychological well-being. In psychological literature, subjective well-being refers to the so-called hedonic component of well-being and includes life satisfaction, positive affects, pleasurable experiences, etc. (44). On the other hand, psychological well-being is more related to the so-called eudaimonic aspect of well-being and includes constructs such as self-acceptance, self-actualization, personal growth and development, purpose in life, etc. (44,45).

It is assumed that loneliness, as an unpleasant subjective experience, will be significantly negatively related to the examined aspects of well-being. On the other hand, it is hypothesized that preference for solitude, as a voluntary withdrawal from others that should not cause unpleasant emotions, will not be negatively associated with the variables of well-being. More specifically, it is hypothesized that preference for solitude will either not be significantly associated with well-being indices or that this relation will be even significant and positive.

Pretpostavljeno je da će jačina povezanosti usamljenosti s tri aspekta dobrobiti biti slična u tri podskupine, jer se u svakom životnom razdoblju usamljenost doživljava kao bolno iskustvo. S druge strane, u skladu s ranije iznesenim nalazima o pozitivnijem ili manje nepovoljnom utjecaju samoće na psihološku dobrobit u starijih u odnosu na mlađe osobe, pretpostavljeno je da će preferirana samoća biti jače pozitivno odnosno manje negativno povezana s varijablama dobrobiti u starijih u odnosu na mlađe i sredovječne osobe.

Prije odgovora na ova dva glavna problema istraživanja, prvi je problem bio ispitati razlike i povezanost usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s nekim sociodemografskim varijablama, točnije, spolom, dobi, bračnim statusom i stupnjem obrazovanja.

METODA
Sudionici

Rezultati opisani u ovom radu prikupljeni su u okviru šireg istraživanja nekih odrednica dobrobiti odraslih osoba. Istraživanje je provedeno na prigodnom uzorku od 325 osoba u dobi od 25 do 70 godina (M = 51,1, SD = 13,56), od kojih 165 žena i 160 muškaraca. Sudionici su živjeli u 13 hrvatskih županija pri čemu je najveći dio bio iz Šibensko-kninske (28,5 %), Splitsko-dalmatinske županije (25,7 %) i Grada Zagreba (14,7 %). Prigodom formiranja uzorka vodilo se računa o tome da različite dobne podskupine (npr. od 25 do 35 godina, od 35 do 45, itd.) imaju sličan broj sudionika i da budu heterogene s obzirom na sociodemografska obilježja. Najveći je broj sudionika u vrijeme ispitivanja živio u bračnoj zajednici (73 %), dok su ostatak uzorka činili samci koji nikada nisu bili u braku (13 %), udovci (8 %), osobe koje žive u nevjenčanoj zajednici (3 %) i razvedene osobe (3 %). Većina sudionika završila je najviše srednju školu, a broj završenih godina školovanja

The next problem was to compare the correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with examined aspects of well-being in subgroups of younger, middle-aged, and older adults.

It is hypothesized that the strength of the correlation of loneliness with three aspects of well-being will be similar in three age groups because loneliness is perceived as a painful experience in every period of life. On the other hand, in line with the abovementioned findings of a more positive or less adverse effect of solitude on psychological well-being in older compared to younger people, it is assumed that preference for solitude will be more positively or less negatively correlated with well-being variables in older compared to young and middle-aged adults.

Before answering these two main research problems, the first problem was to examine differences and correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with some socio-demographic variables, namely, gender, age, marital status, and education.

METHOD
Subjects

The results described in this paper have been collected in the more extensive research of some of the determinants of well-being of adults. The study was conducted on a convenience sample of 325 people, 25 to 70 years old (M = 51.1, SD = 13.56), of which 165 were women and 160 were males. The participants lived in 13 Croatian counties, most of them in the county of Šibenik-Knin (28.5%), Split-Dalmatia (25.7%), and the City of Zagreb (14.7%). When recruiting participants, it was taken into account that different age groups (e.g. 25 to 35 years, 35 to 45, etc.) should have a similar number of participants and should be heterogeneous regarding socio-demographic characteris-

iznosio je između 8 i 21 godine (M = 12,24, SD = 2,67).

Muškarci i žene ovoga uzorka nisu se značajno razlikovali s obzirom na dob (t = 0,18, p > ,05), godine školovanja (t = 0,57, p >,05) i bračni status (χ^2 = 0,63, p >,05).

Mjerni instrumenti

Podatci su prikupljeni upitnikom koji je uključivao:

1. Pitanja o sociodemografskim značajkama: spol, dob, ukupne godine školovanja (bez ponavljanja godine) i bračno stanje (samac/ica, oženjen/udana, nevjenčana zajednica, razveden/a, udovac/ica).

2. *Kratka verzija ljestvice usamljenosti UCLA* (31,46) uključuje sedam čestica. Ljestvica ispituje usamljenost kao opći jednodimenzionalni konstrukt definiran kao neugodno stanje uvjetovano nemogućnošću pojedinca da zadovolji svoje potrebe za bliskošću, ljubavi i pripadanjem. Na čestice se odgovara pomoću ljestvice Likertovog tipa od pet stupnjeva, od 1 (uopće se ne odnosi na mene) do 5 (u potpunosti se odnosi na mene). Ukupan rezultat izračunava se kao zbroj procjena na pojedinim česticama podijeljen brojem čestica. Kako na stranim, tako i na našim uzorcima, potvrđena je jednodimenzijska struktura ljestvice i njezina visoka pouzdanost (31). U ovom je istraživanju također dobivena jednofaktorska struktura ljestvice i Cronbach alfa koeficijent od ,84.

3. *Adaptirana ljestvica preferirane samoće* (47) sastoji se od sedam čestica koje ispituju preferenciju pojedinca da bude sam, pri čemu se ne osjeća neugodno već ugodno. Na čestice se odgovara pomoću ljestvice Likertovog tipa od pet stupnjeva, od 1 (uopće se ne odnosi na mene) do 5 (u potpunosti se odnosi na mene). Ukupan rezultat izračunava se kao prosjek procjena na poje-

tics. The majority of participants were married (73%), while the rest of the sample consisted of single persons who had never been married (13%), widows (8%), cohabitating unmarried individuals (3%), and divorced people (3%). The highest level of education for most of the participants was high school, and the number of finished years of education ranged between 8 and 21 (M = 12.24, SD = 2.67).

The men and women of this sample did not differ significantly with respect to age (t = 0.18, p>. 05), years of education (t = 0.57, p>.05) and marital status (χ^2 = 0.63, p>. 05).

Measures

The data were collected using a questionnaire that included:

1. Questions about socio-demographic characteristics: gender, age, years of education (without repeating the year), and marital status (single, married, cohabitating, divorced, widowed).

2. *A short version of UCLA Loneliness Scale* (31,46) includes seven items. The scale measures loneliness as a general unidimensional construct defined as an unpleasant experience caused by the inability of an individual to meet his/her needs for intimacy, love, and affiliation. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (does not apply to me at all) to 5 (totally applies to me). The total score is a sum of ratings of all items divided by the number of items. Both on foreign and on Croatian samples, the unidimensional structure of the scale and its high reliability were confirmed (31). In this study, a single-factor structure is also obtained and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .84.

3. *The Adapted Preference for Solitude Scale* (47) includes seven items that examine the individual's preference to be alone, which does not feel uncomfortable but pleasant. Each

dinim česticama. U ranijim primjenama ljestvice na našim uzorcima studenata i odraslih osoba utvrđena je jednofaktorska struktura ljestvice i zadovoljavajuća pouzdanost tipa unutarnje konzistencije, između ,74 i ,79 (47). U ovom je istraživanju potvrđena jednofaktorska struktura ljestvice. Cronbach alfa koeficijent iznosio je ,76.

4. *Ljestvica zadovoljstva životom* (*The Satisfaction With Life Scale*, SWLS) (48) ispituje zadovoljstvo životom kao kognitivnu komponentu subjektivne dobrobiti, odnosno opću svjesnu evaluaciju života na osnovi vlastitih kriterija. Ljestvica uključuje pet čestica. Odgovori se daju na ljestvici Likertovog tipa od sedam stupnjeva. Ukupan rezultat je prosječna vrijednost procjena na pojedinim česticama. U brojnim primjenama ljestvice na različitim uzorcima potvrđena je njezina jednofaktorska struktura, visoka pouzdanost i kroskulturna primjenjivost (49). U ovom je istraživanju ljestvica također pokazala jednofaktorsku strukturu i visoku pouzdanost Cronbach alfa (,82).

5. *Rosenbergova ljestvica samopoštovanja* (50) mjeri samopoštovanje definirano kao opći konstrukt koji se odnosi na pozitivan ili negativan stav prema sebi. Ljestvica se sastoji od deset čestica od kojih je pet u pozitivnom, a pet u negativnom smjeru. Odgovori se daju na ljestvici Likertovog tipa s pet stupnjeva. Ukupan rezultat formira se kao prosječna vrijednost procjena na pojedinim česticama, nakon obrnutog bodovanja negativno formuliranih čestica. U brojnim primjenama ljestvice pokazalo se da ona pouzdano mjeri globalno samopoštovanje (51-54). U ovom je istraživanju također utvrđena jednofaktorska struktura ljestvice i njezina visoka pouzdanost (Cronbach alfa= ,82).

6. *Ljestvica smisla života* (55) sastoji se od 23 čestice koje zahvaćaju emocionalni aspekt smisla, tj. kvalitetu egzistencije i kogni-

item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (does not apply to me at all) to 5 (totally applies to me). The total score is calculated as the average of ratings of all items. In the previous administration of the scale on Croatian samples of students and adults, the one-factor structure of the scale and the satisfactory internal consistency coefficients, between .74 and .79, were determined (47). In this study, the one-factor structure of the scale was confirmed. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .76.

4. *The Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS) (48) measures life satisfaction as a cognitive component of subjective well-being, i.e. a general conscious evaluation of life based on one's own criteria. The scale includes five items. The respondents answer on a 7-point Likert scale. The total score is the average of responses on all items. In numerous applications of the scale in various samples, its one-factor structure, high reliability, and cross-cultural applicability have been confirmed (49). In this study also, the scale showed a one-factor structure and high Cronbach alpha coefficient (.82).

5. *Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale* (50) measures self-esteem defined as a global construct that refers to a positive or negative attitude toward oneself. The scale includes ten items, five of which are positively formulated while five are negatively formulated. The respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale. The total result is the average of ratings on all items after recording negatively formulated items. In numerous applications of the scale, it has been proven to be a reliable measure of global self-esteem (51-54). In this study, the single-factor structure of the scale and its high reliability (Cronbach alpha = .82) were also determined.

6. *The Purpose in Life Scale* (55) consists of 23 items that gripe the emotional aspect of

tivni aspekt smisla, tj. svrhu egzistencije. Ljestvica je nastala adaptacijom PIL skale (*Purpose in Life Test*) autora Crumbaugha i Maholicka (55). Polazi od Franklovih teorijskih postavki i egzistencijalističkog pristupa smislu života i iskustvu egzistencijalne praznine. PIL ljestvica ima dugu tradiciju i najčešće je korištena mjera za procjenu stupnja u kojem osoba doživljava svoj život smislenim. Na tvrdnje Ljestvice smisla života ispitanici odgovaraju pomoću ljestvice od pet stupnjeva, od 1 (uopće se ne odnosi na mene) do 5 (u potpunosti se odnosi na mene). Ukupan rezultat izračunava se kao zbroj procjena na pojedinim česticama uz prethodno obrnuto bodovanje negativno formuliranih tvrdnji. Mogući raspon rezultata kreće se od 23 do 115 pri čemu viši rezultat označava veći doživljaj smisla života. U ranijim istraživanjima na uzorcima srednjoškolaca (55) i odraslih (56) Ljestvica smisla života je pokazala jednofaktorsku strukturu i visoku pouzdanost. U ovom je istraživanju ta jednofaktorska struktura potvrđena, a Cronbach alfa koeficijent iznosio je ,88.

Postupak

Sudionike su metodom snježne grude regrutirali voditeljica istraživanja i studenti diplomskog studija psihologije Sveučilišta u Zadru, posebno uvježbani za primjenu upitnika. Kako se pokušao formirati uzorak u kojem bi pojedine dobne podskupine bile približno podjednako zastupljene, svaki je ispitivač imao zadatak da regrutira određeni broj muškaraca i žena u pojedinim dobnim podskupinama (od 25 do 35, od 35 do 45 godina, itd.). Uz to, iako je riječ o prigodnom uzorku, nastojalo se da uzorak obuhvati sudionike iz različitih hrvatskih krajeva i heterogenih sociodemografskih obilježja, kao što su stupanj obrazovanja i bračni status, u pojedinim dobnim podskupinama. Podatci su prikupljani individualno pomoću upitnika koji su

meaning i.e. the quality of existence and the cognitive aspect of meaning i.e. the purpose of existence. The scale is a result of the adaptation of the PIL scale (*Purpose in Life Test*) by Crumbaugh and Maholick (55). It is based on Frankl's theoretical assumptions and existentialist approach to the meaning of life and the existential emptiness experience. The PIL scale has a long tradition and is the most commonly used measure of the extent to which individuals experience their lives as meaningful. Respondents rate the items of The Purpose in Life Scale on a 5-point scale, from 1 (does not apply to me at all) to 5 (totally applies to me). The total score is calculated as a sum of ratings on all items, after recoding of negatively formulated items. The total results can range from 23 to 115, with the higher score indicating a greater sense of purpose in life. In previous research on high school students (55) and adults (56), a one-factor structure and high reliability of the scale were determined. In this study, the one-factor structure was confirmed, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .88.

Procedure

Participants were recruited by the researcher and with the assistance of psychology students of the University of Zadar, specially trained in the administration of the questionnaires. The sample was recruited by using the snowball sampling method. Since aiming to form a sample in which different age groups would be approximately equally represented, researchers had the task of recruiting a certain number of men and women in certain age groups (25 to 35, 35 to 45 years, etc.). Additionally, despite convenience sampling, the researchers made an effort to include participants from different Croatian regions and of heterogeneous socio-demographic characteristics, such as the level of education and marital status, in each age sub-

sudionici popunjavali samostalno u prisutnosti ispitivača ili su, prema potrebi, ispitivači čitali pitanja i tvrdnje sudioniku. Primjena upitnika trajala je između 20 i 35 minuta.

REZULTATI

Osnovni deskriptivni pokazatelji

Osnovni deskriptivni podatci ispitanih varijabli prikazani su u tablici 1.

Iz pregleda prosječnih vrijednosti rezultata postignutih na pojedinim mjerama može se primijetiti da su rezultati na ljestvicama usamljenosti i preferirane samoće pomaknuti prema nižim vrijednostima, dok su rezultati na mjerama zadovoljstva životom, samopoštovanja i smisla života pomaknuti prema višim vrijednostima. Ovi rezultati ne iznenađuju s obzirom da se ne radi o kliničkim uzorcima.

Razlike i povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće sa sociodemografskim značajkama

Kako bi se odgovorilo na prvi problem istraživanja, tj. ispitale razlike i povezanost usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s nekim sociodemografskim varijablama, izračunati su Pearsonovi koeficijenti korelacije usamljenosti i samoće s dobi i ukupnim godinama školovanja, zatim dvosmjerne analize varijance za ispitivanje glavnog učinka spola i dobi te njihovog interakcijskog utjecaja na usamljenost i samoću, te t-testovi za nezavisne uzorke u svrhu ispitiva-

group. The data were collected individually. Participants filled out questionnaires by themselves in the presence of the researcher or, if necessary, the researcher read the questions and items to the participant. The administration of the questionnaire lasted between 20 and 35 minutes.

RESULTS

Basic descriptive parameters

The basic descriptive data of the examined variables are presented in Table 1.

From the overview of the means on all measurements, it can be noticed that the results on the loneliness and preference for solitude scales are moved toward lower values, while the results on the life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life scales are shifted toward higher values. These results are not surprising given that the sample of this research is not clinical.

Differences and correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with socio-demographic characteristics

In order to answer the first research problem, i.e. to examine differences and correlation of loneliness and preference for solitude with some socio-demographic variables, Pearson's coefficients of correlation of loneliness and solitude with age and years of education were calculated. Besides, the two-way ANOVAs for testing the main effects of gender and age and the effect of their interaction on loneliness and solitude, and t-tests independent by groups for testing the differences in loneliness and solitude with respect to marital or partnership status, were also conducted.

The correlation of age with loneliness (.10) and preference for solitude (-.02) was not significant (p> .05), while the years of education as an indicator of the level of education signifi-

TABLE 1. Basic descriptive parameters of examined variables (N=325)

	M	SD	Range
Loneliness	2.0	0.85	1.00 – 4.82
Preference for Solitude	2.6	0.78	1.00 – 4.91
Life Satisfaction	4.9	1.05	1.20 – 7.00
Self-esteem	4.0	0.62	1.88 – 5.00
Purpose in Life	91.58	12.53	45 – 115

nja razlika u usamljenosti i samoći s obzirom na bračni, točnije, partnerski status.

Povezanost *dobi* s usamljenošću (,10) i preferiranom samoćom (-,02) nije bila značajna (p> ,05), dok su završene *godine školovanja* kao indikator stupnja obrazovanja značajno korelirale i s usamljenošću (-,17; p <,01) i sa samoćom (,14; p <,05). Kako su godine školovanja bile značajno negativno povezane s dobi (-,31), tj. starije osobe ovoga uzorka bile su manje obrazovane, provjerene su i korelacije usamljenosti i samoće s godinama školovanja, uz kontrolu dobi. I uz kontrolu dobi, povezanost godina školovanja s usamljenošću (-,14; p <,05) i sa samoćom (,13, p <,05), iako niža, ostala je značajna, sugerirajući da su obrazovanije osobe manje usamljene i da više preferiraju samoću.

Kako bi se provjerile spolne i dobne razlike u usamljenosti i preferiranoj samoći, izračunata je dvosmjerna analiza varijance sa spolom i dobi (osobe mlađe, srednje i starije odrasle dobi) kao nezavisnim varijablama te njihovim interakcijskim utjecajem, te s usamljenošću i preferiranom samoćom kao zavisnim varijablama (tablica 2). Za potrebe ove analize uzorak je podijeljen u tri dobne podskupine: mlađu (N = 108, raspon dobi: 25 – 40 godina, M = 33,3, SD = 4,85), skupinu srednje dobi (N = 115, raspon dobi: 41 – 60 godina, M = 52,7, SD = 6,52) i skupinu starije dobi (N = 102, raspon dobi; 61 – 70 godina, M = 67,2, SD = 3,8). Ni za usamljenost ni za preferiranu samoću nije utvrđen značajan glavni učinak ni spola, ni dobi niti njihove interakcije. Nadalje, provjereno je postoje li razlike u usamljenosti i preferiranoj samoći s obzirom na bračni status. Zbog neraz-

cantly correlated both with loneliness (-.17; p < .01) and solitude (.14, p < .05). As the years of education significantly negatively correlated with age (- .31), i.e. older people of this sample were less educated, the correlations of loneliness and solitude with years of education, after controlling for age, were also calculated. After controlling for age, the correlation of years of education with loneliness (-.14; p < .05) and solitude (.13, p < .05), though lower, remained significant, suggesting that people with a higher level of education are less lonely and have a higher preference for solitude.

In order to test the gender and age differences in loneliness and preference for solitude, a two-way ANOVAs with gender and age (young, middle-aged, and older adults) as independent variables and their interactive effect, and with loneliness and preference for solitude as dependent variables, were conducted (Table 2). For the purposes of this analysis, the sample is divided into three age groups: young adults (N = 108, age range: 25-40 years, M = 33.3, SD = 4.85), middle-age adults (N = 115, age range : 41 – 60 years, M = 52.7, SD = 6.52) and older adults (N = 102, age range: 61-70 years, M = 67.2, SD = 3.8). The significant main effect of gender, age, or their interaction was not obtained either for loneliness or for preference for solitude.

Furthermore, the differences in loneliness and preference for solitude with regard to marital status were tested. Due to a disproportionally larger number of married participants compared to other categories of marital status (i.e. cohabitating, single, divorced and widowed participants), for the purposes of this analysis,

TABLE 2. Means and the results of two-way ANOVAs (gender x age) for loneliness and preference for solitude

	Gender		Age			ANOVA		
	Men M	Women M	Young M	Middle-aged M	Older M	Gender $F_{1,323}$ [a]	Age $F_{2,322}$ [a]	Gender x Age $F_{2,322}$ [a]
Loneliness	2.00	2.21	2.01	2.15	2.18	0.87	1.03	0.33
Preference for Solitude	2.51	2.67	2.61	2.65	2.59	1.24	1.12	2.53

[a] p> .05

mjerno većeg broja sudionika u braku u odnosu na ostale kategorije bračnog statusa (tj. one u nevjenčanoj zajednici, samce, razvedene i udovce), za potrebe ove analize sudionici su podijeljeni u dvije skupine: one u partnerskoj vezi (u bračnoj zajednici i nevjenčanoj vezi; N=247) i one koji nisu u vezi (samci, razvedeni i udovci; N=78).

Rezultati t-testova za nezavisne uzorke pokazali su da razlike između tih dviju skupina u usamljenosti i samoći nisu značajne (tablica 3).

Povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s varijablama dobrobiti

Glavni problem ovoga istraživanja bio je usporediti smjer i jačinu povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i smislom života. Rezultati korelacijskih analiza prikazani su u tablici 4.

Rezultati su pokazali da su usamljenost i preferirana samoća značajno te relativno nisko pozitivno povezane ukazujući da usamljenije osobe više preferiraju samoću. U skladu s očekivanjima usamljenost značajno negativno korelira sa sva tri ispitana aspekta dobrobiti. Te su korelacije međusobno vrlo slične i umje-

the participants were divided into two groups: those having partners (married and cohabitating; N=247) and those without partners (single, divorced and widowed; N=78).

The results of t-tests independent by groups showed that differences between these two groups in loneliness and solitude are not significant (Table 3).

Correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with well-being variables

The main problem of this research was to compare the direction and strength of the correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life. The correlation analysis results are shown in Table 4.

The results have shown that there is a significant and relatively low positive correlation between loneliness and preference for solitude, suggesting that lonelier people have higher preference for solitude. In line with expectations, loneliness significantly negatively correlates with all three examined aspects of well-being. These correlations are very similar and moderately high. Contrary to expectations,

TABLE 3. Means and the results of testing the differences in loneliness and preference for solitude regarding partnership status

	Have partner M	Do not have partner M	$t_{1,323}$	p
Loneliness	2.09	1.93	1.32	.18
Preference for Solitude	2.52	2.72	1.77	.08

TABLE 4. Correlations of examined variables (N=325)

	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Loneliness	1.00			
2. Preference for Solitude	.27**	1.00		
3. Life Satisfaction	-.42**	-.22** (-.11)	1.00	
4. Self-esteem	-.48**	-.22** (-.01)	.54**	1.00
5. Purpose in Life	-.48**	-.14* (-.10)	.65**	.59**

*p< .05, **p< .01
Note: The brackets contain coefficients of partial correlations of preference for solitude with well-being variables, after controlling for loneliness

reno visoke. Suprotno očekivanju, preferirana samoća je također značajno negativno korelirala sa životnim zadovoljstvom, samopoštovanjem i smislom života. Te su korelacije ipak bile značajno niže (p <,05) u usporedbi s korelacijama usamljenosti s istim aspektima dobrobiti. Dakle, dobiveni rezultati pokazuju da su usamljenije osobe, kao i one koje preferiraju samoću, manje zadovoljne životom, imaju manje samopoštovanje i život doživljavaju manje smislenim. Ta je negativna veza s ispitanim aspektima subjektivne i psihološke dobrobiti ipak jača za usamljenost nego za preferiranu samoću. Međutim, koeficijenti parcijalne povezanosti preferirane samoće sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života, uz kontrolu usamljenosti, nisu više bili značajni. To ukazuje na značajnu medijatorsku ulogu usamljenosti u odnosu preferirane samoće i ispitanih aspekata dobrobiti.

Najveće su korelacije utvrđene između pojedinih aspekata dobrobiti (tj. životnog zadovoljstva, samopoštovanja i smisla života) te su, što je i logično, bile pozitivne te umjereno visoke.

Povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s varijablama dobrobiti u tri dobne podskupine

U tablici 5 prikazani su koeficijenti korelacije usamljenosti i preferirane samoće sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života u tri dobne podskupine.

Iz tablice 5 vidljivo je da u sve tri dobne podskupine usamljenost značajno negativno i umjereno visoko korelira sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i smislom života. Te su korelacije u tri podskupine po veličini dosta slične. Međutim, razlike su vidljive prigodom usporedbe povezanosti preferirane samoće s tri aspekta dobrobiti i s usamljenošću u tri podskupine. U skupini mlađih odraslih preferirana samoća je značajno, i to negativno, korelirala samo sa za-

preference for solitude also significantly negatively correlated with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life. These correlations were, however, significantly lower (p < .05) compared to the correlations of loneliness with the same aspects of well-being. Thus, the results show that more lonely people, as well as those who prefer solitude more, are less satisfied with their life, have lower self-esteem and find less purpose in life. This negative relationship with the aspects of subjective and psychological well-being is, however, stronger for loneliness compared to preference for solitude. However, coefficients of partial correlations of preference for solitude with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life, after controlling for loneliness, were no longer significant. This points to a significant mediation role of loneliness in the relationship between preference for solitude and examined aspects of well-being.

Different aspects of well-being (i.e. life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life) were highly inter-correlated. Logically, these correlations were positive and moderately high.

Correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with well-being variables in three age subgroups

Table 5 shows coefficients of correlation of loneliness and preference for solitude with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life in three age subgroups.

From Table 5 it could be seen that in all three subgroups loneliness correlates significantly negatively and moderately highly with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life. These correlations in three subgroups are quite similar. However, differences are apparent when comparing the correlations of preference for solitude with three aspects of well-being and loneliness in three subgroups. In young adults, the preference for solitude significantly, and

TABLE 5. Correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life in three age groups

	YOUNG ADULTS (N=108)		MIDDLE-AGED (N=115)		OLDER ADULTS (N=102)	
	Loneliness	Preference for Solitude	Loneliness	Preference for Solitude	Loneliness	Preference for Solitude
Life Satisfaction	-.43**	-.21*	-.36**	-.17	-.48**	-.30**
Self-esteem	-.45**	-.08	-.53**	-.28**	-.43**	-.32**
Purpose in Life	-.50**	-.13	-.44**	-.07	-.49**	-.28**
Loneliness	---	.14	---	.26**	---	.48**

*p< .05, **p< .01

dovoljstvom životom. U skupini osoba srednje odrasle dobi preferirana je samoća značajno, i opet negativno, korelirala sa samopoštovanjem, a značajno pozitivno s usamljenošću. U usporedbi s ovim mlađim dobnim podskupinama, suprotno očekivanju, preferirana je samoća bila u najužoj vezi s ispitanim aspektima dobrobiti i s usamljenošću u podskupini starijih osoba. Te su povezanosti bile značajne i umjereno visoke pri čemu su korelacije sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i smislom života bile negativne, a s usamljenošću povezanost je bila pozitivna.

negatively, correlated only with life satisfaction. In a middle-aged group, preference for solitude significantly, and again negatively, correlated with self-esteem, and significantly positively with loneliness. Compared to these two younger age groups, contrary to expectation, preference for solitude was most strongly associated with the examined aspects of well-being and loneliness in the group of older adults. These correlations were significant and moderately high, with correlations with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life being negative, while correlation with loneliness was positive.

RASPRAVA

Glavni je cilj provedenog istraživanja bio usporediti razlike u odnosu usamljenosti i preferirane samoće sa životnim zadovoljstvom kao aspektom subjektivne dobrobiti te samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života kao aspektima psihološke dobrobiti u dobno heterogenom uzorku odraslih osoba. Rezultati su, sukladno očekivanju, pokazali da je usamljenost kao neugodno subjektivno iskustvo značajno negativno povezana sa životnim zadovoljstvom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života. Ovi nalazi koji ukazuju na to da su usamljenije osobe manje zadovoljne životom i da ga doživljavaju manje smislenim te da imaju niže samopoštovanje sasvim su razumljivi uzimajući u obzir važnost koju interpersonalni odnosi imaju za dobrobit pojedinca. Deci i Ryan (57), primjerice, u svojoj teoriji samoodređenja

DISSCUSION

The main aim of this study was to compare differences in the relationship of loneliness and preference for solitude with life satisfaction as an aspect of subjective well-being, and self-esteem and purpose in life as aspects of psychological well-being in a sample of adults of different ages. The results, as expected, have shown that loneliness as an unpleasant subjective experience significantly negatively correlated with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life. These findings suggesting that lonelier people are less satisfied with their life, find it less meaningful, and have lower self-esteem are quite understandable given the importance that interpersonal relationships have for the well-being of individuals. Deci and Ryan (57), for example, in their self-determination theory denote a need for relatedness, that is,

potrebu za povezanošću, tj. za bliskim i zadovoljavajućim odnosima s drugima, spominju kao jednu od tri osnovne psihološke potrebe koja je nužna za optimalno funkcioniranje i dobrobit pojedinca. Stoga je i očekivano da će se percipirani manjak u socijalnim odnosima i nezadovoljena potreba za željenom količinom i kvalitetom socijalnih kontakata negativno odraziti na dobrobit pojedinca, kako na procjenu zadovoljstva vlastitim životom, kao komponentu subjektivne dobrobiti, tako i na samopoštovanje i doživljaj životne svrhe i smisla, kao komponente psihološke dobrobiti. Dobiveni rezultati u skladu su s rezultatima drugih istraživanja o povezanosti usamljenosti s nižim zadovoljstvom životom, nižim samopoštovanjem, doživljajem da je život manje smislen i sretan, i to u različitim dobnim skupinama (24,30-32). O negativnom utjecaju usamljenosti na psihološku dobrobit i prilagodbu svjedoče i rezultati drugih istraživanja koja su potvrdila povezanost usamljenosti s depresivnošću (20-23), anksioznošću, neuroticizmom, pesimizmom (23-25). S druge strane, očekivana neznačajna ili pozitivna veza preferirane samoće i ispitanih aspekata dobrobiti ovim istraživanjem nije potvrđena. Točnije, pokazalo se da preferirana samoća, kao i usamljenost, značajno negativno korelira sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života ukazujući da su osobe koje više vole provoditi vrijeme same manje zadovoljne životom i u njemu nalaze manje smisla te da imaju nepovoljniju sliku o sebi. U ovom istraživanju nije ispitana količina vremena koju ljudi provode sami ni razlozi tome. Stoga se može samo pretpostaviti da osobe koje preferiraju samoću uistinu i provode više vremena same te da se možda zato i osjećaju usamljenije što onda može imati negativan učinak na njihovu dobrobit. U prilog tome je i utvrđena značajna i pozitivna korelacija preferirane samoće i usamljenosti utvrđena u ispitanom uzorku odraslih osoba. Moguće je i obrnuto, tj. da usamljenije osobe zbog lošijih socijalnih vještina,

for close and satisfactory relationships with others, as one of the three basic psychological needs necessary for optimal functioning and well-being of an individual. It is therefore expected that the perceived deficit in social relations and the unsatisfied need for the desired quantity and quality of social contacts will have a negative impact on the well-being of an individual. Namely, it could negatively affect the evaluation of satisfaction with one's own life, as a component of subjective well-being, as well as self-esteem and experience of life purpose and meaning, as components of psychological well-being. The results obtained in this study are consistent with the results of other studies on the association of loneliness with lower life satisfaction, lower self-esteem, experience of life as less meaningful and happy found in different age groups (24, 30-32). The negative impact of loneliness on psychological well-being and adaptation also demonstrates the results of other studies that confirmed the relationship of loneliness with depression (20-23), anxiety, neuroticism, and pessimism (23-25).

On the other hand, the expected non-significant or positive relationship between preference for solitude and examined aspects of well-being has not been confirmed by the results of this study. More specifically, it has been shown that preference for solitude, like loneliness, correlates significantly negatively with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life, suggesting that people who prefer to spend their time alone are less satisfied with their life, find it less meaningful, and have a less favourable self-image. In this study, the amount of time that people spend alone or the reasons for doing so have not been investigated. Therefore, we can only hypothesize that people who prefer solitude more actually spend more time alone. So, they may feel lonelier, which can negatively affect their well-being. A significant and positive correlation between preference for solitude and loneliness found in the sample of this study is in favour of this assumption. In-

socijalne anksioznosti, smanjene poticajne vrijednosti socijalnih interakcija i drugih razloga više pribjegavaju samoći kako bi se odmorile od socijalnih pritisaka ili kako bi se suočile sa svojom usamljenošću kada u samoći procjenjuju uzroke svoje usamljenosti i ponašanja koja su koristile u ranijim socijalnim odnosima (1,2,41).

Utvrđene su korelacije preferirane samoće s mjerama dobrobiti bile značajno niže u odnosu na korelacije usamljenosti s ovim mjerama, pokazujući da je usamljenost ipak u užoj vezi s negativnim aspektima dobrobiti nego preferencija samoće. Međutim, kada je kontroliran utjecaj usamljenosti, povezanost preferirane samoće sa životnim zadovoljstvom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života više nije bila značajna. To ukazuje da je usamljenost medijator u odnosu preferirane samoće i ispitanih aspekata dobrobiti, odnosno da preferirana samoća samo onda kada vodi usamljenosti negativno utječe na dobrobit pojedinca.

Iako u ovome istraživanju nije ispitano koliko vremena sudionici uistinu provode sami već samo izraženost sklonosti tome da provode vrijeme u samoći, općenito se može reći da rezultati ovoga istraživanja više idu u prilog ranijim empirijskim nalazima koji su pokazali da samoća negativno utječe na afektivno stanje i dobrobit pojedinca nego u prilog onima koji govore o blagotvornim učincima samoće na dobrobit. Primjerice, u nekim je istraživanjima utvrđena povezanost samoće sa izraženijom sramežljivošću, depresijom i inhibicijom te nižim samopoštovanjem (36). Nadalje, Larson (33) na temelju pregleda većeg broja istraživanja zaključuje da većina ljudi, neovisno o dobi ili kulturnoj pripadnosti, navodi da se osjeća usamljenije i nesretnije kada su sami nego kada su u društvu drugih. Neki empirijski nalazi ukazuju na negativan utjecaj koji velika količina vremena provedenog u samoći može imati na zdravlje i dobrobit odraslih i starijih osoba (39). Međutim, čini se da u negativnom odnosu preferirane samoće

verse explanation is also possible, i.e. that lonely individuals, due to their poorer social skills, social anxiety, diminished stimulating value of social interactions, and other reasons, are more prone to being alone in order to escape social pressures or to cope with their loneliness by solitary assessment of the reasons for their loneliness and behaviours that they used in earlier social interactions (1,2,41).

The correlation of preference for solitude with the measures of well-being was found to be significantly lower compared to the correlations of loneliness with the same measurements, demonstrating that loneliness is more closely associated with negative aspects of well-being than a preference for solitude. However, after controlling for loneliness, the correlations of preference for solitude with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life were no longer significant. This suggests that loneliness is the mediator in the relationship between a preference for solitude and the examined aspects of well-being, that is, preference for solitude negatively affects the well-being of an individual only when it leads to loneliness.

Although this study has not investigated how much time participants actually spend alone, but merely their tendency to spend time in solitude, it can generally be said that the results of this research are more in line with earlier empirical findings that have shown that solitude negatively affects the emotional state and well-being than with those that demonstrated the beneficial effects of solitude on well-being. For example, some studies demonstrated the association of solitude with greater shyness, depression, and inhibition and lower self-esteem (36). Furthermore, Larson (33), based on a review of a number of studies, concludes that most people, regardless of their age or culture, report that they feel lonelier and unhappier when they are alone than when they are in the company of other people. Some empirical findings demonstrate a negative impact that a large amount of

i dobrobiti utvrđenom u ovom uzorku sudionika posreduje doživljaj usamljenosti. Vjerojatno bismo o odnosu preferirane samoće i dobrobiti s većom sigurnošću mogli zaključivati kada bismo imali podatak i o količini vremena koju pojedinci provode sami i o razlozima zbog kojih pribjegavaju samoći pa se ovo može istaknuti kao sugestija za buduća istraživanja.

Kada je uspoređena jačina povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće, te povezanost jedne i druge s tri ispitana aspekta dobrobiti u podskupinama osoba mlađe, srednje i starije odrasle dobi, pokazalo se da su koeficijenti povezanosti usamljenosti sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života dosta slični u tri dobne podskupine. To je i očekivano s obzirom da se može pretpostaviti da je iskustvo usamljenosti u kvalitativnom smislu neugodno i bolno u svakom životnom razdoblju pa bi stoga i njegov utjecaj na subjektivnu i psihološku dobrobit trebao biti sličan u različitim razdobljima odrasle dobi. U sve tri podskupine te su povezanosti usamljenosti s aspektima dobrobiti bile umjereno visoke i negativne ukazujući na manje zadovoljstvo životom, niže samopoštovanje i manji doživljaj smisla života u usamljenijih osoba i mlađe, i srednje i starije odrasle dobi. S druge strane, sukladno razvojnim očekivanjima o većoj selektivnosti u socioemocionalnim odnosima te manjoj socijalnoj mreži u starijoj dobi (16), o prihvaćanju različitih socijalnih i emocionalnih gubitaka kao gotovo normativnih događaja u starijoj dobi (2) i sukladno nekim ranijim nalazima o lakšem prihvaćanju samoće i njezinom manje prijetećem utjecaju na dobrobit starijih osoba (33,39), pretpostavljeno je da će preferirana samoća biti jače pozitivno odnosno manje negativno povezana s ispitanim aspektima dobrobiti u starijih u odnosu na mlađe dobne skupine odraslih. Međutim, rezultati ovoga istraživanja ovu pretpostavku nisu potvrdili. Upravo suprotno, pokazalo se da je preferirana samoća u najužoj vezi s ispi-

time spent in solitude can have on the health and well-being of adults and older people (39).

However, it seems that the experience of loneliness mediates in the negative relationship between a preference for solitude and well-being found in the sample of this study. We could probably discuss the relationship between preference for solitude and well-being with more certainty if we had information about the amount of time people spend alone and the reasons they resort to solitude, so this can be pointed out as a suggestion for future research.

The comparison of the strength of the association between loneliness and preference for solitude, and the comparison of the relationship of one and the other with the three examined aspects of well-being in the groups of young, middle-aged, and older adults, have revealed that the coefficients of correlation of loneliness with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life are quite similar in three age groups. This is expected, since it can be assumed that the experience of loneliness is qualitatively unpleasant and painful in each period of life. Therefore, its impact on subjective and psychological well-being should be similar in different periods of adulthood. In all three age groups, those correlations of loneliness with aspects of well-being were moderately high and negative, pointing to lower life satisfaction, lower self-esteem, and the experience of life as less meaningful for lonelier young, middle-aged, or older adults. On the other hand, it was assumed that the preference for solitude will be more positively or less negatively related to examined aspects of well-being in older age groups of adults when compared to younger ones. This is in accordance to the developmental expectations of greater selectivity in socioemotional relationships and the smaller social network in old age (16), acceptance of different social and emotional losses as almost normative events for older people (2), as well as in accordance with some earlier findings of easier acceptance of

tanim aspektima dobrobiti i s usamljenošću upravo u skupini starijih osoba. Pri tome je veća sklonost samoći bila povezana s manjim zadovoljstvom životom, nižim samopoštovanjem i s nalaženjem manje smisla u životu, kao i s izraženijim doživljajem usamljenosti. Ovi nalazi ukazuju na starije osobe sklone osamljivanju (bez obzira na razloge tome) kao posebno vulnerabilnu skupinu u pogledu ugrožene subjektivne i psihološke dobrobiti. O razlozima tome mogli bismo s većim pouzdanjem govoriti kada bismo imali podatak o funkcijama takve preferirane samoće u starijih osoba, odnosno kada bismo znali služi li povlačenje u osamu lakšem suočavanju s usamljenošću, samorefleksiji, relaksaciji, duhovnom traženju, postizanju unutarnjeg mira, učenju, kreativnom izražavanju ili nekom drugom cilju, što bi moglo utjecati na odnos takvog dobrovoljnog osamljivanja i dobrobiti pojedinca.

Rezultati ispitivanja razlika u usamljenosti i preferiranoj samoći s obzirom na neke sociodemografske varijable (spol, dob, obrazovanje i partnerski status), dijelom suprotno očekivanjima, pokazali su da ove sociodemografske varijable općenito nemaju značajniju ulogu u objašnjenju individualnih razlika u usamljenosti i samoći u ispitanom uzorku odraslih osoba. Konkretno, nisu utvrđene značajne razlike s obzirom na spol, dob i njihovu interakciju. Također, ni razlike između osoba u partnerskoj vezi i onih koje nisu u vezi u usamljenosti i samoći nisu bile značajne. Ovi su rezultati samo dijelom sukladni nekim ranijim nalazima. Primjerice, u nekim ranijim studijama također nisu utvrđene razlike između starijih i osoba mlađe odrasle dobi ni u globalnoj usamljenosti ni u njezinim različitim dimenzijama, kao što su socijalna i emocionalna usamljenost (58). Nadalje, slične razine doživljaja usamljenosti u muškaraca i žena utvrđene u ovom istraživanju sukladne su nekim ranijim nalazima koji također nisu potvrdili značajne

solitude and its less threatening impact on the well-being of older people (33,39). However, the results of this study did not confirm this assumption. On the contrary, it has been shown that a preference for solitude is most closely related to the examined aspects of well-being and loneliness in the group of older subjects. The greater tendency to solitude correlated with lower life satisfaction, lower self-esteem, and finding less meaning in life, as well as with increased experience of loneliness. These findings suggest that older people prone to solitude (regardless of the reasons for this) are a particularly vulnerable group in terms of endangered subjective and psychological well-being. We could discuss with greater confidence the reasons for this if we had information on the functions of such a preference for solitude in older people, that is, if we knew whether this withdrawal from others serves as an easier mechanism for coping with loneliness, self-reflection, relaxation, spiritual search, reaching inner peace, learning, creative expression, or some other purpose, which could affect the relationship between such voluntary isolation and the well-being of the individual.

The results of testing the differences in loneliness and preference for solitude with respect to some socio-demographic variables (gender, age, education, and partnership status), partly contrary to expectations, have shown that these socio-demographic variables generally have no substantial role in explaining individual differences in loneliness and solitude in the sample of this study. Specifically, no significant differences were found with respect to gender, age, and their interaction. Besides, the differences between people with partners and those without partners in loneliness and solitude were not significant. These results are only partly consistent with some earlier findings. For example, some earlier studies have also found no differences between older and younger adults, neither in global loneliness nor in its different

spolne razlike (10-12). Jedino je povezanost godina školovanja s usamljenošću i samoćom, iako niska, bila značajna, i uz kontrolu dobi. Ta je povezanost s usamljenošću bila negativna, a sa samoćom pozitivna ukazujući na to da se obrazovanije osobe osjećaju manje usamljeno i da više preferiraju samoću. Moguće je da obrazovanije osobe, odnosno one višeg SES-a, uspješnije zadovoljavaju svoje socioemocionalne potrebe, vjerojatno zbog bogatijih osobnih i materijalnih resursa na koje se mogu osloniti (59). Ovaj je nalaz u skladu s očekivanjem i s nalazima nekih ranijih istraživanja (2,59). Veća sklonost samoći obrazovanijih osoba možda bi se mogla objasniti njihovom većom potrebom za učenjem, umjetničkim i kreativnim aktivnostima, kontemplacijom i sličnim pobudama koje je lakše ostvariti u samoći nego socijalnim aktivnostima (59). Različiti smjer povezanosti usamljenosti i preferirane samoće sa stupnjem obrazovanja još je jedan dokaz u prilog zaključku da su usamljenost i preferirana samoća, premda povezani, ipak različiti konstrukti.

Kao glavno ograničenje ovoga istraživanja može se navesti relativno mali i prigodni uzorak odraslih te transverzalni nacrt istraživanja. Neke sugestije za buduća istraživanja već su ranije navedene, a odnose se na ispitivanje i količine vremena koju ljudi provode sami te razloga zbog kojih to čine, kako bi se potpunije zahvatio fenomen samoće i njegov utjecaj na dobrobit. Uz to, za pouzdaniju provjeru odnosa usamljenosti s varijablama dobrobiti, kao i provjeru dobnih i spolnih razlika te utjecaja partnerskog statusa na usamljenost, u budućim bi istraživanjima, uz jednodimenzionalne, bilo uputno koristiti i višedimenzionalne mjere usamljenosti (npr. emocionalne i socijalne), budući da su neka istraživanja utvrdila drugačiji smjer tih razlika za različite dimenzije usamljenosti ili postojanje značajnih razlika s obzirom na pojedine sociodemografske varijable samo za neke dimenzije

dimensions, such as social and emotional loneliness (58). Furthermore, similar levels of the experience of loneliness in men and women found in this research are consistent with some earlier findings that also did not confirm significant gender differences (10-12). Only the association of years of education with loneliness and solitude, although low, was significant, even after controlling the age of participants. This correlation with loneliness was negative, while that with solitude was positive, suggesting that people with higher levels of education feel less lonely and prefer solitude more. It is possible that people with higher levels of education, i.e. higher SES, meet their socioemotional needs more successfully, probably due to their richer personal and material resources they can rely on (59). This finding is in line with the expectations and findings of some earlier research (2,59). A greater affinity to be alone in more educated people could maybe be explained by their stronger need for learning, artistic and creative activities, contemplation, and similar motives, which are easier to meet in solitude than through social activities (59). A different direction of correlations of loneliness and preference for solitude with the level of education is yet another argument in support of the conclusion that loneliness and preference for solitude, although related, are still different constructs.

The main limitations of this research are a relatively small convenience sample of adults and a cross-sectional research design. Some suggestions for future research, which have already been mentioned, refer to the exploration of the amount of time people spend alone, and the reasons for which they do so, in order to comprehend the phenomenon of solitude and its effect on well-being more thoroughly. Besides, for a more reliable test of the relationship between loneliness and well-being variables, as well as age and gender differences and the impact of partnership status on loneliness, future research should use multidimensional measures

usamljenosti. Također, preporučuju se longitudinalna istraživanja na većim i reprezentativnijim uzorcima koja mogu dati spoznaje o pravim dobnim promjenama u usamljenosti i preferiranoj samoći tijekom različitih životnih razdoblja.

Valjalo bi istaknuti i moguće praktične implikacije rezultata ovoga istraživanja. Sve intervencije i programi namijenjeni boljem razumijevanju iskustva i uzroka usamljenosti, te načina njenog reduciranja, od iznimne su važnosti imajući u vidu koliko je iskustvo usamljenosti bolno i koliko može ugroziti zdravlje i dobrobit kronično usamljenih ljudi. Neke od tih intervencija, kao što je, primjerice, trening socijalnih vještina, mogu biti usmjerene širim skupinama, a druge poput individualnog i grupnog terapijskog rada s ciljem redukcije doživljaja usamljenosti i popratnih kliničkim simptoma, mogu biti namijenjene posebno vulnerabilnim skupinama.

U pogledu tendencije provođenja vremena u samoći rezultati ukazuju da ona može biti nepovoljna za dobrobit pojedinca ako vodi doživljaju usamljenosti. Međutim, osvješćivanje potencijala koje samoća ima za kreativan rad, učenje, bolje upoznavanje sebe, kontemplaciju itd. može pomoći ljudima da je dožive na pozitivan način te ona onda neće rezultirati usamljenošću. To je posebno važno kod starijih osoba koje općenito, u odnosu na mlađe dobne skupine, provode više vremena same.

ZAKLJUČAK

Zaključno se može reći da, bez obzira na ograničenja, ovo istraživanje doprinosi spoznajama o odnosu usamljenosti i preferirane samoće s različitim aspektima dobrobiti u odraslih osoba. Tim više što su ovakva istraživanja u populaciji odraslih osoba u nas vrlo rijetka. Rezultati ovoga istraživanja pokazali su da su i usamljenost i preferirana samoća značajno ne-

of loneliness (e.g. emotional and social loneliness) besides one-dimensional ones. Namely, in some research a distinct direction of these differences for the different dimensions of loneliness was found, or significant differences with respect to some socio-demographic variables only for some dimensions of loneliness. Additionally, longitudinal studies on larger and more representative samples are also recommended since they can give insights into real age-related changes in loneliness and a preference for solitude during different periods of life.

Possible practical implications of the results of this research should also be emphasized. All interventions and programs aimed towards understanding the experience and the causes of loneliness, and the way to reduce it, are of utmost importance given how painful loneliness is and how it can endanger the health and well-being of chronically lonely people. Some of these interventions, such as training of social skills, may be organized for larger groups of people, while others, such as individual and group therapy with the aim of reducing the experience of loneliness and accompanying clinical symptoms, may be targeted at particularly vulnerable individuals.

With regard to the tendency of spending time alone, the results suggest that this tendency may be unfavourable for the well-being of the individual if it leads to loneliness. However, awareness of the potentials that solitude has for creative work, learning, self-understanding, contemplation, etc. can help people to perceive it in a positive way. Then, it will not lead to loneliness. This is especially important for older people who, in general, spend more time alone compared to younger age groups.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be stated that, regardless of limitations, this study contributes to the knowledge of the relationship of loneliness

gativno povezane sa zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života u ispitanom uzorku odraslih osoba, iako su te povezanosti bile veće za usamljenost nego za preferiranu samoću. Rezultati ukazuju i na potencijalnu medijatorsku ulogu usamljenosti u odnosu preferirane samoće i ispitanih aspekata subjektivne i psihološke dobrobiti. Uloga ispitanih sociodemografskih varijabli, osim stupnja obrazovanja, u objašnjenju individualnih razlika u usamljenosti i preferiranoj samoći nije se pokazala značajnom. S druge strane, rezultati ukazuju na razlike u jačini povezanosti preferirane samoće s usamljenošću, zadovoljstvom životom, samopoštovanjem i doživljajem smisla života u različitim dobnim podskupinama odraslih osoba. Čini se da je pritom najstarija skupina najosjetljivija na negativan utjecaj svojevoljnog povlačenja u samoću na subjektivnu i psihološku dobrobit. Stoga bi posebno starije osobe mogle profitirati od osvješćivanja pozitivnih strana aktivnosti koje se mogu obavljati u odsutnosti drugih, a koje mogu poboljšati kvalitetu života, dok odrasli svih dobnih skupina, posebno oni s povećanim rizikom razvoja kronične usamljenosti, mogu imati koristi od intervencija i programa usmjerenih smanjenju usamljenosti.

and preference for solitude with different aspects of well-being in adults, especially since such studies of the Croatian adult population are very rare. The results of this research have shown that both loneliness and preference for solitude significantly negatively relate to life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life in the adult sample of this research, although these correlations were higher for loneliness than for preference for solitude. The results also point to a potential mediation role of loneliness in the relationship between preference for solitude and the examined aspects of subjective and psychological well-being. The role of tested socio-demographic variables, with the exception of education, in explaining individual differences in loneliness and preference for solitude did not prove to be significant. On the other hand, the results demonstrate differences in the strength of the relationship of preference for solitude with loneliness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and purpose in life in different age groups of adults. It seems that the oldest group is the most vulnerable to the negative effect of voluntary withdrawal from others on subjective and psychological well-being. For this reason, elderly people could especially benefit from the awareness of the positive side of solitary activities that can improve the quality of their lives, while adults of all age groups, especially those in greater risk of developing chronic loneliness, may benefit from various interventions and programs aimed at reducing loneliness.

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