

# “Middle age” as Prime Time of Human Life

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**Abstract**— In the article, the socio-economic indicators of the population layer of the working age are studied. Psycho-physiological, socio-cultural characteristics of this layer are described in disciplines. The analysis of statistical data on the problem is presented.

Also, sociological factors of socio-economic activity of the middle-aged population are revealed. This is based on the conclusions of empirical research conducted internationally in recent years.

In the article, the population layer of the working age is interpreted as the main human Reserve in ensuring the sustainable development of society.

**Keywords**—life cycle, age indicators, periodization by age, age strata, middle age, "prime time", psychophysiological and sociocultural features, double responsibility, middle age crisis, mental and physical potential, social balance, ability to work, socio-economic activity.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

By age indicator, the strata of the population are cycled on the basis of social criteria established in the relevant society. As a result, young stratification of the population is formed. This form of stratification divides the population into age categories. In its place, different age categories of the population are considered to be carriers of specific psychophysiological, socio-cultural characteristics.

The periodization of a person's life cycle by age indicator has a feature that changes according to time criteria. The holistic system of criteria of periodization is important when understanding the content of age categories. One of the components of this system is individual development (ontogenesis), which is distributed as "stages of development" due to age-specific characteristics of the individual. Furthermore, sociological processes and sociological structure in society form units of measurement such as "age strata", "age groups", "generation" as an element of periodization by age.

It should be noted that the concept of "average age" and "middle-aged", which are widely used in scientific consumption, is used in two different contexts. The average age of the population is a concept related to the life expectancy of the population of the corresponding state, with an increase in the life expectancy, which causes an increase in the average age. And "middle-aged" is used in relation to one of the layers of the

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population in terms of age stratification. These two concepts are inextricably linked with each other, although separate content acquires. That is, the life expectancy of the population is one of the factors determining these two categories. Moreover, the life expectancy is naturally ensured by a combination of socio-economic and spiritual factors.

The average age of the population of our planet is 28 years. According to the average age indicator, Japan is advanced, while the average age of the population of this state is 44 years, the lowest rate is in Nigeria, that is, the average age of the population of this state is currently 15 years. However, according to research from the United Nations, by 2050, the average age is expected to rise to 10 years and reach 38 years of age. By 2045 year, it is predicted that the number of 60-year-olds will be more than 14-year-olds. Such trends can be observed not only in developed but also even in developing countries. Life expectancy in developing countries is expected to increase and birth control is expected to lead to an increase in the last 100 years, that is, from 1950 to 2050 years, the total share of the population of the adult population from 8% to 22% of the population. In 2000, the adult population was 600 million, (3 times higher than 1950) currently accounts for 737 million [1, b. 2].

Another component of the periodization of the population strata by age categories is explained by the socio-cultural status of society. In this regard, by the way of age-related changes and features perceived by socioeconomic and ethnic groups, "young stereotypes " and "young customs" are formed.

Today in the world of science there are a number of developments in the periodization of the human life cycle by age. However, the strict establishment of criteria, factors and principles for establishing age limits has not come to a standstill in interdisciplinary interrelationships.

In particular, in psychology, the stage of childhood and adolescence has been studied extensively in relation to the period of maturity. It is precisely from the characteristics of development in childhood and adolescence that A.Gezell's long-term longitudinal studies play an important role in establishing age limits. In L.S.Vygotsky's researches, children and adolescents from birth to 17 years of age are divided into periods by developmental crises [2, p.15]. In the concept of mental development concept developed by D.B.Elkonin, the age of up to 15 years was studied in different parts [3, p.4-9].

In contrast to these scientific approaches, E.Erikson divides the stages of human psychosocial development into 8 phases. It not only checks with childhood and adolescence, but also comprehends the whole life cycle of the individual from birth to the end of his life. In his opinion, the age periods of a person are distributed as follows:

- infancy (from birth to 1 year of age);
- first childhood (1-3 years);
- preschool, playful period (4-7 years);
- school period (1-12 years);
- adolescence (13-19 years);
- youth (19-35 years) - the beginning of the period of maturity, the first years of family life;
- mature (35-60 years) - a period of individual's life closely related to a certain type of occupation, the growth of children;
- old age (after 60 years) [4, P.6-22].

Consequently, the periodicity of the middle age population, which is the subject of our research, is 35-60 years, according to E. Erikson.

The limit of middle-aged population by representatives of pedagogical science is categorized as follows in the sexual section:

- the first period of middle age: in men – from 22 years to 35 years, in women-from 21 years to 35 years;
- the second period of middle age: in men – from 36 to 60 years of age, in women-from 36 to 55 years of age [5, P.45].

According to this periodization, people over 61 years of age are considered to have passed the old age.

In medicine, age periods are distributed according to the anatomical and physiological characteristics of the development of the human body. In this, the age indicators of the maturity period are distributed as follows;

- adolescence –16 - 20 years (among girls), 17-21 years (among boys).
- the 1st stage of the maturity period (youth)-20-35 years( among women), 21-35 years (among men).
- the 2nd stage of the maturity period-35-55 years (among women), 35-60 years (among men).
- elderly-above the age of 55/60 [6, p.154].

It should be noted that the above-mentioned scientific research on the periodization of the life cycle of a person came from the 20th century and was carried out. However, the XXI century put forward its own requirements in this regard. Socio-economic changes taking place in the last decade on a global scale have propelled new trends in the periodization of the middle-aged population. In particular, it was noted that the world population is rejuvenating. As a result, the International Health Organization revised the definition of age limits and officially established them as follows:

- Young age period -25-44 years;
- Middle age-44-60 years;
- The elderly - over 60 years of age [7, p.1].

From this periodization it is clear that the starting point of middle age has been pushed back almost 10 years. Previously, 35-40-year-old man was considered middle-aged and joined the ranks of older adults, now a 44-year-old man is standing on the eve of stepping into middle age, reaching the top point of his youth. The factors that led to the revision of the age limits in relation to the average 40-year-old population are as follows:

- increasing life expectancy;
- rejuvenating the psycho-physiological state of a person with improved external vision;
- the fact that in people over 40 years of age there is a peak of physical and mental potential and is engaged in intensive labor activity;
- the fact that the ability to ensure the continuity of generations has been preserved for many years.

Human evolution has reached such a level of its development today that, now, not only the quantitative growth of the population, but also the developed intellect, life experience and perfect appearance have become a value. As a result, there is a slowing down of the biological aging process.

So what are the factors that make up the social image of a middle-aged person? In this regard, a number of empirical studies conducted in recent years provide the clear evidence. In particular, the logic study,

conducted by Lea Pulkkinen in Finland on the topic "from childhood to maturity", observed that 8-year-old children reach the age of 50 years. This cohort study gave empirically proven scientific conclusions in clarifying the characteristics inherent in middle age, and established that this age in many respects is the best period of human life, namely, "prime time" [8, p.1].

In particular, Lea Pulkkinen noted that the establishment of the periodic boundaries of middle age does not play a principal role. This age period is conditionally determined by the influence of various factors. The social responsibility of a middle-aged person is determined by the care of the family and children, the strict civil position, stable labor activity, the level of material and spiritual prosperity, the imprint of human relations. According to the biologist Markus Rantala, who participated in the study, the concept of middle age conditionally in women from a biological point of view is explained by the duration of the reproductive function, that is, the ability to bring a child into the world. And in men, after 30 years of age, hormonal processes begin to slow down [8, p.1]. Well, from the biological point of view, the concept of middle age plays a purely individual role, closely related to the natural-physiological characteristics that serve to ensure the continuity of generation.

In this study, the term "middle age crisis" is criticized. In particular, during this period, the decline in physical and mental activity of women, under the double hardship of family and professional life, they received results that contradict the stereotypes about the ineffectiveness of their labor. According to the conclusions from the study, "middle-aged people are sufficiently satisfied with their lives. There is no countdown in the life of people who have reached the age of 50 years. On the contrary, social welfare increases in women and men." [8, 6.2]

One of the trending studies that studied the sense of life satisfaction of middle-aged people was conducted by the National Statistical Service of Great Britain (Office for National Statistics, ONS). In this study, conducted in 2012-2015 years, 300 thousand respondents of adults took part. In the study, respondents were asked to assess the level of satisfaction, sense of happiness and anxiety from their own lives. Contrary to the conclusions of the study conducted in Finland, this study established that the sense of satisfaction from life in respondents over 35 years of age falls, and only after the age of 60 years an elevated mood is observed in this regard. In particular, in a group of 40-59-year-old respondents, the feeling of dissatisfaction with life was higher than in others, indicating that this condition reached its peak at the age of 50-54 years. The study found that 85% of them reported bad mood due to financial problems. The group, who had a deep sense of satisfaction with their lives, was 70-74-year-old respondents. According to the findings of the study, even 90-year-old respondents were found to be happier than middle-aged respondents [9, 6.1].

The study found that these ages – specific conflicts and their "double responsibility" as a chief factor in the sense of dissatisfaction with life—that is, care about growing children as well as their old parents. According to traditional ideas, people of the same age, in accordance with the norms established in society, must have reached the peak of his career, ensuring stability in his personal and professional life. For this, it is necessary not only to achieve positive achievements, but also to withstand the heavy tests of his/her personal life and in his/her professional life to experience instability in the labor market.

According to the CIS statistics office, the demographic situation in the CIS countries (also in Uzbekistan) was studied and the distribution of the population by age indicators was carried out. According to

this statistic, 25.2% of children and young people under 19 years old, 16.5% of people aged 60 years and older, and 58.3% of the working age population aged 20-59 years. That is, according to the CIS countries, 1 person aged 60 and older corresponds to 4 people of working age 20-59 years. This indicator differs according to the composition of the population of different countries in the territory of the CIS. For example, in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, the gap between the population of 60 and older is 64% and the number of working-age population is equal (3 working age people per person 60 and older) to 1/3. In the countries of Central Asia (including Uzbekistan), this figure was 1/8. By age indicators, the population aged 0-19 in Uzbekistan is 38%. 20-39 year-old people (the first stage of the maturity period) are 35%, while 40-59 year-old people (the second stage of the maturity period) are 24% [10]. So, from the point of view of the working age, 20-59 young people constitute 59% of the population in our country, while the middle age studied in our scientific research constitute almost a quarter of the population of Uzbekistan.

The number of permanent population in Uzbekistan in the status of October 1, 2018 exceeded 33 million and 85 thousand. According to the state statistics office, this figure is expected to grow by 1.3% to 428 thousand and 500 hundred people [11]. In Uzbekistan, the normative framework for establishing the periodic boundaries of the middle-aged population has not been integrated. Nevertheless, it is possible to specify the age group of the conditionally. To do this, we propose, as a basis, to obtain the upper point of the age limit of the socio-demographic group of young people and the age of retirement in accordance with the established in the legislative acts. In Article 3 of the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "on state policy on youth: it is clearly defined as " young people (young citizens) – persons who have reached the age of fourteen and have not reached the age of thirty [12, p.1]. So, the 30 age, which is the high point of youth – can be taken as the lower limit of the transition of the population of our country to middle age.

In accordance with Article 17 of Chapter 4 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a person has been alienated from the age of 18 as a full-fledged subject of legal relations [13, p.5]. And the 30-year-old, which is considered the period of achieving social maturity, is perceived as the lower point of youth. Therefore, according to these legislative acts, it is recognized that the middle-aged population should be indicated from the age of 30 years.

It should be noted that middle-aged people are considered the most numerous and most active part of the population. They constitute the core layer of the intellectual field and industry as the owner of the activeness in the labor process, the high level of business ability and dynamic social behavior.

In the scientific literature, the middle ages are a specific socio-professional layer, at the same time distinguished as carriers of labor activity and social functions [14, p.166].

In Article 7 of Chapter 2 of the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On state pension provision of citizens", the right to receive an age pension was established for men – at the age of 60, for women – at the age of 55 [15, p.3]. So, as a high point of belonging to the middle age, it is desirable to take the age of 55 (for women) – 60 (for men). In such a periodization, the first criterion is, first of all, the legislative acts that were recorded. Secondly, according to the gerontologist scientist MaryaYulkha, the only column closely related to the age indicator in the periodization of human life is the retirement age [8, 6.4]. It is the person who has stepped into this age to think seriously about old age.

In our opinion, since the lower point of middle-age affiliation differs significantly from the international criteria, we see that the upper point of the youth age is appropriate for the age of 30 to 34 years and, accordingly, the lower age of middle-aged people is defined as 35 years. After all, recent empirical studies do not add today's 30-year-olds to the ranks of middle-aged people, and the characteristics inherent in the age period under study indicate the formation of an average of 40 years old [8, p.4]. Based on our research on this problem, we suggest that the age limits of the middle – aged population in our country are conditionally defined as the age of 35-55 (for women)/60(for men).

To sum up, it should be noted that the middle-aged population, as an owner of enormous mental and physical potential, is a central layer that ensures the well-being and stability of socio-economic life in modern societies and serves the maintenance of universal social balance.

Representatives of this layer are distinguished by intelligent management of their activities and actions within their age strata. The responsibility of this layer is not only in the organization and management of one's personal life, but also in the making of decisive decisions in the organization, regulation, control of the life of society, state and nation.

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