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MIDLIFE CRISIS IN MEN AND WOMEN: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

Research on the anatomical differences that exist between the male and female brains has progressed significantly during the last several decades. The one conclusion that remains constant across all studies is that males have bigger brains than women do (postmortem: in vivo imaging: Studies that follow subjects over time have shown, throughout time, that there are variations in the patterns of brain development that occur between the sexes in children and adolescents. For instance, a longitudinal pediatric neuroimaging research conducted 829 scans on 387 participants ranging in age from 3 to 27 years old. The participants were all children. According to the findings of the study, the peak of total brain volume occurred earlier in girls than in boys.

Keyword: longitudinal, pediatric, neuroimaging, brain, volume.

INTRODUCTION

The study also found that white matter increased during the age range of 3–27 years in both boys and girls, but the rate of increase in adolescence was significantly higher in boys than in girls.

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To this day, there has not been a lot of research done to determine whether or not men and women experience different kinds of structural changes in their brains at the same time around middle age. According to the findings of a few cross-sessional post-mortem studies MRI studies as well as a few longitudinal studies the structural changes that occur in the brain over the course of a man's lifetime tend to be more profound than those that occur in a woman's brain. However, other studies have reported that there is no significant sex difference in brain structural changes, using a variety of study designs and examining various outcome measures such as global or regional measures (or both) or alternatively, that regional brain structural changes are greater in women than in men throughout the course of their lives For example, a multiple follow-up longitudinal study with three sets of scans spaced 15 months apart reported a significant greater brain volume reduction in the pons in women than in men after the age of 49 years . This study was part of a larger investigation into the effects of ageing on brain function.

A recent analysis investigated the structural changes that occur in the brain over the course of a healthy person's lifetime. The research included 56 longitudinal MRI studies with 2211 people, and it found that there is an inversed U shape to the decline in total brain volume that occurs over time. In particular, the research found that total brain volume expanded throughout infancy and adolescence, began to drop beginning at the age of 13, and then stayed the same or even increased to some degree during early adulthood between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. After that, a faster decline in total brain capacity began at the age of 35 years, with a fall of 0.2% in total brain volume per year. When a person reaches the age of 60, their total brain volume begins to decrease at a rate that is more than 0.5% each year It is unknown whether this acceleration in brain volume reduction affects men and women to the same extent, but these results suggest that the brain volume changes are not linear in the healthy population throughout the lifespan. These results suggest that the brain volume changes are not linear in the healthy population during the lifespan.

Because the bulk of research are either cross-sectional or longitudinal and concentrate on infancy or old age, it is currently uncertain whether or not there are distinctions in the ways that the brain volume varies throughout midlife based on gender. Notably, there are considerable drawbacks associated with making generalisations about developmental processes from cross-sectional research. Some examples of these drawbacks include age-related brain structural change. We had the opportunity to test whether there is a difference in

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the structural changes that occur in the brain during midlife between the sexes in a representative birth cohort sample in which all participants were the same age and whom we followed longitudinally. This provided an advantageous design for the study of brain ageing.

James M. Coetzee is the author of the book titled "Disgrace." He has been honoured with a great number of major literary honours, the most notable of which was the Nobel Prize in literature. The protagonist of the book is a professor who is about to approach middle age and is experiencing a great deal of dissatisfaction with his own life at this point. Other topics, such as social interactions, racial dynamics, gender roles, and the political climate in South Africa, are intertwined with the primary storyline of the novel, giving it an additional, more profound layer of depth. This book, along with others by the same author, has become a significant voice in the political discussions and in the cultural opinion of South Africa because it underlines the major predicaments and issues that are associated with a system of apartheid. As a result, Coetzee has crafted a narrative that analyses the current state of affairs in South Africa by breaking it down into a variety of subjects, many of which are highly problematic. According to Tiffin, Coetzee is dealing with a conflicted postcolonial terrain in which "... decolonization is process. Not arrival" (Tiffin 17). As is the case with other examples of postcolonial writing, the novel's action takes place against the background of an encounter between the cultures of the western world and those of the third world.

"as it embodies the conflicts and contradictions of marginality, race, gender, ethics, law, justice, and other values by which society governs itself," Coetzee explains, "the serious consideration of the circumstances in South Africa by a white, privileged author like Coetzee is generated by his concerns for a people that is no longer European, but not yet African." Coetzee is referring to the Xhosa people (Rath 1). The subject of the oppressed black man exacting his vengeance on the white colonial authority at the time of the downfall of the apartheid regime is one that has been stressed by numerous critics. The message is that those who were colonised have triumphed over those who did the colonising in South Africa at this particular period of change. The author is portraying a scenario in which a shift is taking place from a system of apartheid to a system that is less unequal, and this is mixed with his description of violence that takes place on a daily basis in South Africa.

The life narrative of David Lurie, the disgraced academic, has prompted a number of critics to focus on the ethical problems that it raises. He is a white guy who has sexually molested one of his own pupils by abusing the authority that was placed in him as a professor. He

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utilised this power in order to get away with it. After some time has passed, he watches as three black guys assault and rape his own daughter in front of him. The ethical conundrum that David Lurie finds himself in may be understood by every reader, regardless of their country of origin. Not only does David Lurie destroy the moral foundation of our discourse, but he also provokes the "hostile reaction of South Africa," which is described as "the professor's mind contains all of the elegant refinements of Britain's 4 Oxford dons, refinements that have become irrelevant to the new South Africa and his students." (Alan A., and Stone M. D. 2). Disgrace is "a collection which spans the region between criticism, fiction, and philosophy" as a result of Coetzee's awareness of a particular and often turbulent epoch in the history of his own nation (Fick 1). The vast majority of the remarks that have been made about Disgrace are of a highly politicised quality; however, there is still one significant psychological aspect of the novel that has been left out by almost all of the critics, and in only one instance is the nearly incestuous behaviour of David Lurie being called into question.

THEORIES OF MIDLIFE CRISIS

The sentences that you just read do a good job of capturing the hopelessness that David Lurie most likely is experiencing at different points during the book. Analysts employ the works of Dante and Shakespeare, two authors who are often referenced and whose texts and monologues are used, to depict the transition to midlife. Some researchers have utilised these findings to point out that the transition to midlife is associated with significant changes in mood, and that these changes are mostly caused by a combination of biological and psychological variables. When we read the above poem by Dante, we find similarities between the feelings of melancholy and sadness that can be felt by men not just in his time but also in the minds of men and women of our time; the feeling of being lost in the dark forest of life, which was experienced by men hundreds of years ago, is similar to the feeling described by middle aged men of our time who have participated in the recent researchstudies. The transition from youth to old age is referred to as midlife, and it has garnered a significant amount of attention over the last several decades as a result of increased psychological understanding in western nations. This came about due to the fact that ideals of individualism gave greater respect to human beings as individuals rather than as a group. In order to better comprehend the mind, contemporary psychology expertise has focused its attention on analysing and defining several stages in the life cycle of humans.

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Understanding the human being and the composition of her psyche is necessary in order to provide some fundamental definitions regarding these phases, which will be used in conjunction with the therapeutic approaches that will be utilised in the course of my research on David Lurie's psychological phase. The ancient scriptures of the Hebraic, Chinese, and Greek civilizations, which date back almost 2,500 years, tell us about the importance of understanding the development of humankind, despite the fact that the attitude towards getting older at that time may have been different from how we feel about it now.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to the 1990s, researchers did not place a significant emphasis on the middle years of human beings' lives as a subject of study. Despite this, a number of significant hypotheses on midlife appeared in the 1950s and 1960s (Erikson, 1950; Jaques, 1965; Neugartena, 1968a). Jung (1933) had already written on the midlife transition and the possibility of a crisis, but he did it within the context of a theory of lifetime development. Because of this, a study of the literature would not be considered complete without an investigation of what these early thinkers had to say particularly about the transition and crisis that occurs throughout midlife in its most general meaning. It is important to note that all of these early theorists adhered to the psychodynamic paradigm in their theoretical approach, which meant that very little quantitative or so-called scientific research was carried out during this time period. According to what was discussed in Chapter 1, the term "midlife crisis" became widely used in the popular press during the late 1960s and the 1970s. At the same time, new researchers (Gould 1978; Levinson et al., 1978) investigated the topic of adult development in greater depth, but they maintained a psychodynamic point of view. The decade of the 1980s saw the beginning of a more scientific approach to study into midlife (Farrell and Rosenberg, 1981;). This led in criticism of prior work, in particular the notion made by earlier theorists that personality altered in midlife. It is the most important research effort into many aspects of midlife in particular, and it enables current midlife researchers to not only examine specific aspects of midlife but also to critically reflect on earlier work in the field. The work of MIDMAC, which is described in Chapter 1 and which began in the 1990s, is the most important research effort into many of these aspects.

McAdams, 1993This literature review will centre its attention on the works produced through,out the modern and postmodern periods, beginning in the 1960s and continuing up to the current day. In addition, the research will follow a chronological order, beginning with theorists from the early part of the 1960s and ending with the work of 32 MIDMAC experts

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from the 1990s and 2000s. It is also obvious that the idea of experiencing a midlife crisis is a complicated one, and it is possible that a psychodynamic investigation might provide more in-depth understanding, but with less scientific rigour. Since this is the first known research study on midlife transition and midlife crisis in South Africa, it was agreed that a more quantitative approach would be adopted in the purpose of maintaining as much simplicity as possible throughout the process. As a result, the majority of the psychodynamic adultdevelopment literature that may be relevant has been omitted from our review of the literature (apart from the important theorists mentioned earlier). The conceptual model of midlife transition and crisis presented in Chapter 3 does, however, take into account a number of significant psychodynamic considerations. This is done for the purpose of completeness.

Sundel (1989) ,A survey of the academic works produced in Western countries reveals that very little efforts have been made to investigate the characteristics of middle age (midlife). As Hunter and point out, the practise of doing research in a methodical manner didn't start until around 15 years ago. Nevertheless, in spite of the dearth of supporting evidence from scientific research, various cultural myths and stereotypes exist. Specifically, the depiction of persons in middle adulthood having a "midlife crisis" is something that often emerges in the news and media (Chew, 1976; Conway, 1980; Nichols, 1986).

Sheehy, 1976, 1981,The phrase "midlife crisis" was first used by Jaques (1965), who, on the basis of his study of the personal experiences of artists, came to the conclusion that people in their midlife years went through a period of crisis that was triggered by the realisation of their own mortality and the change in time frame from "time since birth" to "time left to live." Jaques is credited with being the first person to use the term "midlife crisis." The concept of a midlife crisis or midlife transition was later presented in numerous models on adult development (Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978;). These models were published in the years Gould, Levinson, and Sheehy. It is suggested in these models that a person in their midlife would become increasingly conscious of their own mortality and the amount of time that remained, and in reaction to such an awareness, the individual would conduct an assessment of his or her life, particularly with regard to one's family, work, and existence.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research In Psychology

Chow (2002, page 2) defined research in psychology as the "systematic collection of data to answer a well-defined research question." Chow then elaborated on this definition by positing that research is systematic if it follows a prearranged plan, and the research question is well defined if it is an unequivocal conceptual assertion. Chow also elaborated on this definition by stating that research is systematic if it follows a prearranged plan and that research questions are well defined if they are.

In this chapter, the concepts of research design, research methodology, and research methods are defined, located, and distinguished contextually. In doing so, due regard is given to the literature survey presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the research questions and objectives presented in Chapter 1, and the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3.

According to Lachman (2001), the field of middle age did not make the transition from one consisting only of conjecture to one consisting of scientific inquiry until the early 1990s. When it comes to research endeavours, there was a shift away from relying only on interviews conducted one-on-one and toward the use of representative samples and scientific measurement instead. As was discussed in Chapter 1, scholars from all over the world who study midlife come from a variety of academic disciplines, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, and medical science. In addition, it has been hypothesised that there is a connection, and maybe even an overlap, between all of these different academic subfields (Brannen, 2008 Lachman, 2001). Social psychology is an area of study within the discipline of psychology that focuses on progression and change over one's lifetime (Giele & Elder, 1998b). When establishing the research programme for this present research study, therefore, sociometric features within the biographical data are also incorporated in addition to psychometrics (for example, the three temperament variables). This is done when designing the research programme.

DATA ANALYSIS

This research study included a total of 249 persons, ranging in age from 31 to 70 years old, of both sexes, who were invited to take part in it (see Chapter 4, Section 4.7). The individuals responded to the online questionnaire, following which the pool of potential participants was narrowed down to 220 people after the exclusion of records that were found to be incomplete.

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There were 115 men and 105 females among the total 220 people that participated in the investigation. As a result of the fact that the questionnaire includes a number of inquiries that, in the eyes of certain respondents, may be seen as delving into very private matters, it was decided not to inquire of respondents their names or the races to which they belonged. It was reasoned that this would guarantee that a greater number of individuals would finish the survey, that fewer people would give comments that were socially acceptable, and that the delicate nature of the race problem in modern-day South Africa would be taken into consideration. Participants were asked to provide their e-mail addresses in order to facilitate the sending of personalised reports to them.

For the objectives of the present research study, the 220 people who participated in the research were divided into the following age groups:

- I 49 persons less than 40 years old
- 95 individuals between the ages of 40 and 50 years old; and
- 76 individuals older than 50 years old.

The data from the study were analysed in two different ways: first, by age group and then by gender; second, without any divisions by age or gender. The analysis of the data was carried out with the use of tools included in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The Comprehensive Online Survey that is discussed in Chapter 4 (See Appendix 1) made it possible to obtain separate datasets for this research study's five most important components, which are as follows:

- The Midlife Transition Questionnaire has seventy items pertaining to transitions and crises experienced throughout midlife (MTQ).

- Forty-two different pieces of biographical information (BIODATA).
- Six aspects of three of the Big Five personality characteristics, namely neuroticism, extraversion, and openness, which are further subdivided into three contexts, specifically experience at work, experience within the family milieu, and experience in relationships. As a result, a total of 54 questions were asked on the three personality aspects or (BIG FIVE).
- Forty-nine items from the World Championship Quiz.

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- Information that is qualitative on the definition of a midlife crisis.

(DEFINITION OF MLC) as well as the possibility of experiencing or not experiencing a midlife crisis (EXPERIENCE OF MLC). Text analysis was performed on this qualitative data, which made it possible to convert them into numerical data encompassing four themes in the part defining "midlife crisis" (including "no theme") as well as four degrees of "midlife crisis experience This chapter will report on and discuss the findings of the statistical analysis performed on the data using the IBM SPSS statistical data analysis tool. The goal of this chapter is to report on and discuss the results.

STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES (SPSS)

Descriptive statistics, principal component analysis (PCA), and multiple regression analysis (MRA) were the three key statistical characteristics of SPSS that were employed in the data analysis for this present research project. These features were all used in the analysis of the data.

Factor analysis (FA) and principal component analysis (PCA)

According to Field (2009), social scientists often attempt to examine abstract notions that cannot be measured in a black-and-white manner. In the ongoing research project, the notion of a midlife crisis serves as such a thing, and factor analysis (FA) or principal component analysis (PCA) serves as a technique of assessing elements of the concept. Principal component analysis and factor analysis are two words that are sometimes used interchangeably with one another (Pallant, 2004). According to Guadagnoli and Velicer.

According to Field (2009), which can be found on page 639, "solutions created through principal component analysis vary little from those derived from factor analysis." It is probable that there will not be much of a difference if there are more than 30 variables and a small number of low communalities (less than 0.4). As a result, the principal component analysis is favoured by a significant number of scholars (Field, 2009). According to Pallant (2004), principal component analysis, much like FA, makes an effort to condense large amounts of research data into more manageable and digestible chunks of information. According to Field (2009, page 628), the existence of "clusters of strong correlation coefficients across subsets of variables imply that those variables might be measuring the features of the same underlying dimension." Field refers to dimensions like this as "latent variables."

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Principal component analysis accomplishes the study goal of parsimony by condensing a large data set or a number of interconnected variables into a more manageable number of elements, which in turn makes it easier to have a better grasp of the research data. The scores on the components, in turn, may be subjected to further analysis using techniques such as multiple regression analysis, for instance. Accordingly, the principal component analysis was the chosen approach for this particular research investigation.

Sampling adequacy

Sample size has a key role in determining the adequacy or reliability of the results obtained from principal component analysis (Field, 2009), as does the strength of the correlations that exist between the variables (Pallant, 2004). In terms of the appropriate size of the sample, there are a few divergent schools of thought. For instance, Nunnally (cited by Field, 2009) suggests having 10 research participants for each variable, whereas Tabachnick and Fidell (2006) believe that having five participants for each variable is sufficient in the majority of instances. These standards for each and every part of the survey were not only fulfilled, but greatly beyond as well (See section 5.1). The usage of coefficients that are bigger than 0.3 is advised by Tabachnick and Fidell, particularly in light of the fact that the strength of the inter-item correlations is of concern.

One further way for establishing whether or not a sample is enough is to ensure that variables with low communalities are excluded from the study (Field, 2009). The sample size is another important factor in determining this. In the present research investigation, which had a sample size of 220, the variables in question were eliminated if their communalities were less than 0.35 in any and all subgroups, such as age or gender groups.

Using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy is one more approach that may be used to determine whether or not the results can be trusted. According to Kaiser (quoted in Field, 2009), it is recommended to accept KMO values greater than 0.5. As a result, a score that is less than 0.5 would suggest that PCA is not an appropriate method for analysing a data set. If the KMO number is between 0.5 and 0.7, then this is considered to be acceptable, however KMO values that fall between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered to be excellent.

Reducing variables that have poor correlations with other factors is one strategy that has been proposed by Field (2009) as a means for improving both the outcomes and the KMO. It is important to take into account the possibility of excluding variables whose correlation values

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are lower than 0.4. (Field, 2009). This reduction procedure was carried out on all datasets that had PCA conducted on them, namely the MTQ data, BIODATA data, BIG 5 data, and WCQ data.

Factor or component extraction

The method of factor extraction entails determining the fewest number of factors that may be applied to provide the most accurate representation of the interrelationships among a collection of variables. This can be done by comparing the results of many different sets of variable combinations. In order to accomplish this goal (Field, 2009; Paillant, 2004), one strategy is to keep only the components that have big eigenvalues. A variety of different approaches may be used in order to get an idea of what factors towards a high eigenvalue. Examining the scree plot, which is a component of the factor reduction process in SPSS, is one way that may be used. The scree plot offers a graphical representation of the relative importance of each element in the model. The "cut off point for factor retention is at the point of inflexion of the scree curve," as stated by Cattell (who is mentioned in Field, 2009, page 639).

It is not possible for factor selection to be based entirely on the scree plot, as has been proposed by Kaiser (as stated in Field, 2009), therefore it is recommended that eigenvalues bigger than one be considered. be considered as a factor as well. Nevertheless, Field contends that this overestimates the number of components that should be retained, and he advises that the communalities of the factors should also be taken into consideration. We employed all three of the available approaches for factor selection, including the process of removing variables using communalities as outlined in Section 5.2.1 earlier in this article.

In the end, it is necessary to do research on the actual variables that are loaded onto the components in order to settle on a temporary title for the components. In the course of this procedure for the ongoing research project, the MTQ had its original components removed in three different ways (notwithstanding the fact that the scree plots for most data splits indicated that two components should be extracted). The analysis of the variables' loading on component three made it abundantly evident that it was a broad component that included features of components 1 and 2, making it impossible to define even temporarily. This became clear as a result of the investigation. The fact that the same variables loaded on all of the data splits after the extraction of two components suggests that this is the method that

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should be followed. As a consequence of this, it was agreed that the present research project would only include the extraction of two components.

Factor rotation

Utilizing factor rotation is one of the strategies that may be used in principal component analysis in order to enhance interpretation. Orthogonal rotation and oblique rotation are the two distinct varieties of rotation. When the components are rotated orthogonally, there is no correlation between them; but, when the factors are rotated obliquely, there is correlation between them. According to Field (2009), deciding which form of rotation to apply relies on whether there is a theoretical reason to think that the components should be connected or independent. If there is such a reason, then the decision between the two types of rotation is straightforward. One strategy for determining which methodology to use is to carry out both kinds of tests and compare the results. If the results of the oblique rotation show that there is no significant association between the rotated components, then the authors Pedhazur and Schmelkin (quoted in Field, 2009, page 643) recommend using the orthogonal rotation instead. According to the findings presented by Field (2009, page 644), orthogonal rotations constitute "total gibberish for naturalistic data and most definitely data involving people." As a result of this, he hypothesises that the Oblimin rotation should be utilised rather than the Varimax rotation; hence, the Oblimin rotation was selected as the recommended strategy for the present research project.

Loadings on the Factors

According to Field (2009), factor loadings are an evaluation of the inherent importance that a certain variable has in relation to a particular factor. Researchers would often consider a factor loading to be significant if it is more than or equal to 0.3. (Field, 2009). According to Stevens (who was quoted by Field, 2009), sample size is a modulator of the relevance of a factor loading. Stevens indicates that, for a sample of between 200 and 300 individuals, a factor loading of.364 is acceptable. Despite this, Stevens suggests employing factor loadings with a value of at least 0.4, which is the figure that was employed in the present research study. Field (2009) cites Stevens as a source for this recommendation.

Scores based on factors or components

Individual composite factor or component scores are computed by the SPSS based on the constituent scores of the variables that are connected with a specific factor. The SPSS has

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access to a variety of techniques for calculating factor scores, including the regression approach, the Bartlett method, and the Anderson-Rubin method, among others (Field, 2009). The second technique, which provides factor scores that are uncorrelated and have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, is the one that Tabachnick and Fidell (2006) suggest using since it follows a normal curve. The ability to utilise factor or component scores in subsequent analyses, such as multiple regression, rather than the need to either use the raw data or construct weighted scores, which is seen as a burdensome process, is one of the most important aspects of factor or component scores (Field, 2009). In this most recent research study, all instances of principal component analysis were performed using the Anderson-Rubin approach.

CONCLUSION

According to what was discussed in Chapter 1, the midlife is typically the time in an individual's life when a combination of factors, including work- and life-related knowledge, experience, skill, maturity, physical and mental fitness, and motivation, should be at its highest level. It is therefore not a coincidence that key roles in organisations are typically occupied by people in midlife. It is therefore very important that the organisational environment and climate be properly geared for such people to be willing, able, and allowed to perform optimally for both their own and the organization's continued productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. This is because it is not a coincidence that key roles in organisations are usually occupied by people in midlife (Lachman, 2001).

There is a paradoxical condition in South Africa known as structural unemployment. On the one hand, there is an overflow of people with unskilled and semi-skilled levels of education, while on the other hand, there is a scarcity of people with skilled levels of education. In addition, since many persons who are unskilled and semi-skilled have historically had educational deficiencies, the skills gap cannot be quickly levelled by increasing the abilities of those who are unskilled and semi-skilled. This is because of prior educational deficits. The issue is especially severe inside South Africa's managerial structures, and as a result, the government can ill afford for the occurrence of midlife crisis to make the situation even worse. At the same time, when individuals are between the ages of 40 and 65, it is also the time period in which ineluctably certain unpleasant life experiences and concerns and/or anxiety about getting older (trigger events) start happening. This time period is known as the middle age transition.

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