

## Why Do People Want to Look Younger Than Their Age? Psychological Correlates and Predictors of Desired Perceived Age

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### Abstract

**Introduction.** Researchers have found that the desire to look young in modern people has increased as a result of the emergence of the concept of active aging and the 'cult of youth', which has been cultivated for at least a hundred years. Besides the social conditions of this desire, there are also reasons to assume its psychological determination. The purpose of the study was to identify the influence of gender- and age-specific factors (gender, age) and psychological factors (subjective age, attitude toward appearance) on the severity of individuals' need to look younger than their age. **Methods.** *Sample:* 637 participants aged 21-75 years (235 men, 402 women). *Diagnostic tools:* (a) a set of diagnostic tools for assessing individuals' attitudes towards their own appearance by V. A. Labunskaya, (b) the Self-Esteem of Age questionnaire by T. A. Vorontsova, and (c) the Photo-Video Presentation of External Appearance procedure by T. A. Vorontsova. *Methods of mathematical statistics:* descriptive statistics, Student's T-test, Mann-Whitney U-test, Levene's test of equality of variances, Spearman correlation analysis, Kruskal-Wallis test, and multiple regression analysis. **Results.** (a) 88.5% of the participants indicated that they needed to look younger than their age. (b) The severity of the need was influenced by the gender- and age-specific factors (in a sample of young participants aged 21-34 years). (c) The psychological correlates of the need of adults to look younger than their age are described, including subjective age, self-assessment of perceived age and ideas about other people's estimates of perceived age, actual perceived age, appearance perfectionism, importance of appearance, assessment of the correspondence of individual appearance to age, and expected lifespan. (d) A regression model of the need

of adults to look younger than their age has been constructed, which includes predictors such as subjective and chronological age. **Discussion.** The study was the first to examine the severity of the need of adults to look younger in different gender and age groups and to identify its correlations and predictors. The results are discussed in relation to the development of an empirical model of perceived age construction.

### Keywords

appearance, age, perceived age, subjective age, age construction, need, desired perceived age

### Funding

The study was supported by the Russian Science Foundation grant no. 22-28-01763, Construction of Perceived Age in Social Cognition: Analysis of Mechanisms and Factors, <https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-01763/>, Southern Federal University.

### For citation

Vorontsova, T. A. (2024). Why do people want to look younger than their age? Psychological correlates and predictors of desired perceived age. *Russian Psychological Journal*, 21(1), 108–126. <https://doi.org/10.21702/rpj.2024.1.6>

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### Introduction

The desire of modern people to look younger is based on managing the impression of their age created by others who perceive them, or on the so-called “apparent age”, “perceived age”, which is defined as “the age attributed to a person (object of perception) by another person (subject of perception, assessor) as a result of his/her appearance perception.” (Shkurko & Labunskaya, 2018, p. 450).

We form an impression of the age of an unacquainted subject of perception based on the “construction” of his/her age. Therefore, both the characteristics of the object and the subject of perception have an impact on this process (Andreeva, 2000; Bodalev, 2015). In this study, we considered the desired perceived age, which we define as the age that a person wants to look like. The difference between a person’s passport (chronological) age and the age he/she wants to look like in the eyes of other people is defined by us as the need to look younger than his/her age (NLY). Considering the discrepancy between chronological and desired perceived age as a need, we relied on one of the definitions of need as a necessity for something (Zinchenko & Meshcheryakov, 2008), which determines a person’s behavior as an individual (biological needs) and his social behavior (social

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needs). The NLY is a social need formed and realized through social interaction with other people, and its manifestation is influenced by some of the social factors discussed below.

First, people want to look younger because of the concept of active ageing that is widespread in our time. A. V. Yurevich writes that the basis of the 20th-century philosophy of life was "the cult of youth": "... respect for old age is weakening even in traditional societies, negative stereotypes of old age dominate, but at the same time its "rejuvenation" is observed – a change in the traditional ideas about this age in relation to the increase in average life expectancy" (Yurevich, 2018, p. 5). V. A. Buryakovskaya (2015) also believes that the cult of youth is one of the myths of mass consciousness. K. Shemet and E. N. Makovetskaya (2021) write that the cult of eternal youth and fear of aging form the basis of the new age philosophy of modern man; modern society imposes cultural stereotypes on a person who, by all means, delays the beginning of old age and tries to maintain youth – a man through union with a younger woman, a woman through the use of surgical and cosmetic technology. In the context of the concept of active aging, the "youthfulness" of appearance is a standard of aging and self-care. Many authors (Campos, Cheban, 2018; Shemet, Makovetskaya, 2021) emphasize the inconsistency of this concept, which "forces a person to live in pursuit of elusive beauty and youth" (Shemet, Makovetskaya, 2021, p. 253), encourages him/her to return to early stages of their life path, compete with young people for a youthful appearance, "play on someone else's field" with minimal chances of winning.

The age stereotype associated with this concept is that "young people are better than older people", which existence has been documented in a number of studies (Diaz, Arsentieva, 2018; Folster, Hess & Werheid, 2014). It has therefore been shown that there are phraseological units in different languages that disparage elderly people (Dias, Arsent'eva, 2018). Older people who want to date have been found to post older photographs of themselves as young people on dating sites (Gewirtz-Meydan & Ayalon, 2018). The authors conclude that sexuality is socially conditional: "Intimacy and friendship are only intended for those who are "forever young". It is also recorded (Vorontsova, 2022b) the dynamics of attitudes towards older people who have obvious changes in their appearance associated with their age: a decrease in sympathy (hostile ageism) and an increase in respect (benevolent ageism).

The above-mentioned age stereotype – "young people are better than older people" – has a gender-specific dimension. Thus, the description of the age of an elderly woman in English phraseological units defines her appearance and has a negative emotional connotation: "old cat" (old witch); "old trout" (old nag). The description of a man's age, on the contrary, is a reference to his internal state: "a man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks" (Akhmedova, 2018).

From a psychological point of view, in English language discourse, it is stated that the age of a man is the result of his internal self-determination (the subjective age), and the age of a woman is the result of her perceived age. Scientists have discovered the

existence of a 'double standard about aging' (Berman, O'Nan & Floyd, 1981; Grigor'eva, 2018; Kletsina & Ioffe, 2019; Kletsina, 2020): society places higher demands on aging women than men. For example, taking care of one's appearance is prescribed by norms for female role behavior (Kletsina & Ioffe, 2019). At the same time, I. S. Kletsina (2020) points out that the status of an older man in traditional society is significantly higher than that of an older woman. The philosopher Pascal Brückner, in his book *On the Philosophy of Life* (Brückner, 2021), describes gender- and age-related stereotypes: "A woman becomes ugly with age, but a man becomes more beautiful." I. A. Grigor'eva (2018), in her work with the powerful title "Older women: "Down the ladder" of age and gender", analyzes the specificity of the "prescribed" scenarios of elderly women in our country and concludes that "old women are subject to double stigmatization – as women and as the elderly" (Grigor'eva, 2018, p. 5).

Individual personal factors also influence the realization of the need to look younger. As a result, the growing need to look younger can be seen as a way for aging people to deal with "the stress of aging". A. A. Os'minina, T. L. Kryukova (2020) showed that natural age-related changes in appearance that accompany aging are a stress factor that actualize the intensity of resorting to various practices of care and transformation of appearance, including surgical interventions, in order to improve the appearance towards a more youthful age. A study conducted by O.V. Kuryshcheva and S.V. Tarasova (2014) showed that appearance and two other issues (health, general attitude to life) are the main aspects of people's experiences in old age.

Modern men started living much longer than 30 years ago, not to mention life expectancy of 100 or 200 years ago. P. Brückner writes about modern people aged 50 to 60 years: "these people wanted to retire, but they have to remain in service" (Brückner, 2021, p. 26); they "expect about another thirty years of active life, which corresponds to the entire life expectancy of a European three centuries ago" (Brückner, 2021, p. 40). These ten years, which P. Brückner ironically calls a "delay," due to the increase in the retirement age and the achievements of modern medicine, become a period of active social life for a person who is "no longer young," but also "not yet old." A study focusing on the attitude of adults aged 50-60 years to their appearance (Vorontsova, 2022a) shows that during this period of life, the importance and value of the appearance increases, indicating an increase in the maturity of the person's understanding of the investment power of appearance and its influence on career, personal life, well-being, etc. This fact enables us to assume that various parameters of attitude towards external appearance can determine the severity of the NLY.

Another possible reason for the increase in the NLY is the gap between the chronological and subjective age of mature and older people, as recorded in some works (Melekhin, 2018; Melekhin, Sergienko, 2015; Pavlova, Sergienko, 2019; Sergienko & Kireeva, 2015). Scientists have described the age-specific dynamics of the difference between subjective and chronological age, which is called the "**cognitive illusion of age**" (Sergienko & Kireeva, 2015). This illusion increases with age – the older they

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become, the younger they feel. That is, in the process of aging, an individual faces the contradiction between his/her subjective perception of age (which corresponds to a younger age group) and the reactions/behaviors/attitudes of others, which are based on their perceptions of age (the age of this individual which is based on perceptions of his/her external appearance). This contradiction (like cognitive dissonance) will lead to the fact that the individual will either age internally (correlating his/her subjective age with attitudes/treatments/perceptions of others), or actively transform his/her external appearance in accordance with his/her self-perception of age.

Therefore, the realization of the NLY in modern people is a result of the influence of social factors (active aging concepts, gender- and age-related stereotypes) and personal factors that we consider to be subjective age (and its difference from chronological age), as well as individuals attitudes toward their own appearance (awareness of value, importance, desire for improvement, etc.), which together set the practice of transformation, design, appearance care, aimed at managing the impression of age, creating a younger "apparent" perceived age.

### ***Research hypotheses***

Analysis has enabled the formulation of a number of research hypotheses: 1) The NLY may depend on age and gender. 2) Adult NLY severity may be associated with age self-perception and attitude parameters. 3) Subjective age and parameters of an individual's attitude towards his/her own appearance may predict the NLY severity.

### ***Purpose of the study***

The purpose of the study is to identify the influence of gender- and age-specific and psychological factors (subjective age, attitude toward appearance) on the severity of the NLY in adults aged 21–75 years.

**The subject** of the study was the NLY (the difference between chronological and desired perceived age), subjective age, and the attitude of adults aged 21–75 toward their appearance.

**The theoretical and methodological foundations** of the study were (a) ideas about perceived age as a socio-psychological phenomenon associated with complex biopsychic and psychophysiological processes (Vorontsova, 2022a, 2022b; Shkurko & Labunskaya, 2018; Christensen et al., 2009; Ganel & Goodale, 2022; Uotinen, Rantanen & Suutama, 2005), (b) the psychology of social cognition (Andreeva, 2000; Bodalev, 2015), (c) the social psychology of external appearance by V. A. Labunskaya, understanding external appearance as a phenomenon that reflects "different stages of life based on dynamic, variable relationships of three components: 1) physical, 2) social appearance, 3) expressive behavior" (Labunskaya, Drozdova, p. 202); and (d) gender methodology (Semenova, Semenova, 2014; Grigor'eva, 2018; Kletsina, Ioffe, 2019; Kletsina, 2020).

## Methods

### *Study sample*

The study sample comprised of 637 individual participants aged 21–75 years (235 men, 402 women).

The study sample was divided into the following age subgroups (Elkonin, 1971):

1. "Youth" (21–34-year-olds,  $n = 114$ , 28 men, 86 women, mean age: 26.48 years);
2. "Maturity up to 50 years" (35–49-year-olds,  $n = 153$ , 52 men, 101 women, mean age: 42.35 years);
3. "Maturity after 50 years" (50–59-year-olds,  $n = 215$ , 90 men, 125 women, mean age: 53.93 years);
4. "Older age" (60–75-year-olds,  $n = 155$ , 65 men, 90 women, mean age: 64.93).

Each participant in the study signed an ethical agreement allowing the use of photographic images in scientific research.

### *Diagnostic tools*

1. The Photo-Video Presentation of Appearance procedure (Shkurko, 2018) was used to determine the perceived age of the study participants. The procedure includes:

- photographing participants (portrait photo / full-length photo);
- exposing photographs to assess the age of subjects of perception;
- calculating perceived age (the arithmetic mean of all age estimates obtained);
- calculating the coefficient of the difference between chronological and perceived age, or the "years saved" indicator (Zimm, Modabber, Fernandes, Karimi, Adamson, 2013). The indicator can take negative (participants look older than their age) and positive (participants look younger than their age) values.

2. The Self-Assessment of Age questionnaire by T. A. Vorontsova (Labunskaya et al., 2019) was used to record chronological age (CA), subjective age (SA), self-assessment of perceived age (SPA), desired perceived age (DPA), ideas about other people's estimates of age (OEA), as well as expected lifespan (EL) (respondents were asked, "What age do you plan to live to?"). Next, the coefficients of discrepancy between chronological and other types of age were calculated, which reflect how old the study participants feel (CA-SA), think they appear (CA-SPA), want to appear (CA-DPA), report that other people perceive them to appear (CA-OEA) younger or older than their age. We interpret the indicator CA-DPA as the severity of NLY.

3. A set of diagnostic tools for assessing individuals' attitudes toward their own appearance by V. A. Labunskaya (Labunskaya & Serikov, 2018):

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- The Attitude Towards Own Appearance: Satisfaction and Concern by V. A. Labunskaya, E. V. Kapitanova;
- The Value and Importance of Appearance in Various Spheres of Life questionnaire by V. A. Labunskaya;
- The questionnaire for the Evaluative and Informative Interpretation of Individual External Appearance in Various Spheres of Life by V. A. Labunskaya;
- The Appearance Perfectionism Scale by K. Srivastava.

**Methods of mathematical statistics**

Descriptive statistics, Student’s t-test, Mann-Whitney U-test, Levene’s test of equality of variances, Spearman correlation analysis, Kruskal-Wallis test, and multiple regression analysis.

**Results**

In the first phase of the study, descriptive statistics on the severity of the NLY (CA–DPA) were used in various gender- and age-specific subgroups (Table 1). For the overall sample, the CA–DPA parameter ranges from -7 to 55 years,  $M = 9.85$ , standard deviation = 7.67. Negative values (respondents want to look older than their age) of the CA–DPA parameter were found in only 5 participants (0.8%), zero values (respondents want to look at their age, which indicates that they do not have NLY) were found in 68 participants (10.7%). Positive values of the CA–DPA parameter, which indicates the presence of NLY, were found in 564 (88.5%) respondents.

Most respondents (88.5%) had a need to look younger than their chronological age.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics for the CV-LIV parameter in gender- and age-specific subgroups*

Minimum	Maximum	Arithmetic Mean	Standard deviation
OVERALL SAMPLE (21-75 years, N = 637)			
-7	55	9.85	7.67
<i>Men (N = 235)</i>			
-7	55	10.08	9.41
<i>Women (N = 402)</i>			
-2	33	9.72	6.45
YOUTH (21-34 years, N = 114)			
-7	10	2.67	2.94
<i>Men (N = 28)</i>			
-7	5	0.57	2.52
<i>Women (N = 86)</i>			
-2	10	3.36	2.74

Minimum	Maximum	Arithmetic Mean	Standard deviation
MATURE UP TO 50 YEARS (25-49 years, N = 153)			
0	26	8.59	5.08
	<i>Men (N = 52)</i>		
0	22	7.77	6.08
	<i>Women (N = 101)</i>		
0	26	9.01	4.45
MATURE AFTER 50 YEARS (50-59 years, N = 215)			
0	35	11.77	6.73
	<i>Men (N = 90)</i>		
0	35	10.90	7.25
	<i>Women (N = 125)</i>		
0	33	12.39	6.29
OLDER AGE (60-75 years, N = 155)			
-1	55	13.68	9.42
	<i>Men (N = 65)</i>		
-1	55	14.89	12.25
	<i>Women (N = 90)</i>		
0	32	12.81	6.61

The arithmetic mean of the CA–DPA indicator increases with age, as well as its maximum value. Let us analyze the significance of the differences in the studied subgroups in terms of age and gender. The analysis of indicators of the NLY severity of representatives of different age groups according to Kruskal-Wallis test is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Impact of the age-specific factor on the severity of NLY (CA–DPA parameter), Kruskal-Wallis test*

Age group	CA–DPA Arithmetic Mean	Average rank by group	Criterion statistics
Youth	2.67	113.02	
Maturity up to 50 years	8.59	298.28	Chi-square = 201.058; p = 0.000
Maturity after 50 years	11.77	378.97	
Older age	13.68	404.38	



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The results presented show the influence of the age-specific factor on the severity of the NLY: The NLY increases significantly with age. If at a young age, the difference between the desired age and the chronological age is only 2.67 years, then at the age of 'maturity before 50 years' it is already 8.59 years, at the age of 'maturity after 50 years' – 11.77 years, and at the old age – 13.68 years.

To identify the influence of the gender-specific factor, we used the Student's t-test to compare the CA-DPA parameter in male and female subsamples, first in the overall sample, and then separately in age-specific subgroups (Table 3). If the Levene's test of equality of variances showed the inappropriateness of using the Student's t-test, then we used the Mann-Whitney U test.

**Table 3**  
*Impact of the gender-specific factor on the severity of NLY (CA-DPA parameter), Student's t-test or Kruskal-Wallis test (in age-specific subgroups)*

Age group	M men	M women	Criterion statistics
Overall sample	10.08	9.72	The Mann-Whitney U test was used: Group 1 average rank = 311.61; Group 2 average rank = 322.54; Z = -0.725 at p = 0.468
Youth	0.57	3.37	The Student's t-test was used: t = -4.767 at p = 0.000
Maturity up to 50 years	7.77	9.01	The Mann-Whitney U test was used: Group 1 average rank = 69.57; Group 2 average rank = 80.83; Z = -1.493 at p = 0.136
Maturity after 50 years	10.90	12.39	The Student's t-test was used: t = -1.609 at p = 0.109
Older age	14.89	12.81	The Mann-Whitney U test was used: Group 1 average rank = 79.28; Group 2 average rank = 77.08; Z = -0.302 at p = 0.763

As can be seen from Table 3, the influence of the gender-specific factor was found in the Youth subsample. Women are focused on a younger perceived age than men; they want to look younger than their age (on average by 3.4 years), compared to men who want to look younger on average by 0.6 years. Therefore, their desired perceived age is close to chronological. In the Maturity before 50 and Maturity after 50 subgroups; the arithmetic mean of the CA-DPA parameter is greater in women than in men. However, the difference is not significant. In the elderly, the CA-DPA parameter in men even exceeds the same parameter in women, but the difference is also not significant from in terms of mathematical statistics. Therefore, we cannot draw a conclusion about the

influence of the gender-specific factor on the severity of the NLY at the age of 35–75 years. Also, no significant gender-specific differences in this parameter were found in the overall study sample.

Spearman's correlation analysis was used to identify psychological correlates of the CA–DPA parameter. Table 4 presents significant correlations (at a 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels).

**Table 4**

*Correlation analysis of the NLY (CA–DPA) severity with the parameters of the respondents' self-assessments of their age and attitudes toward their own appearance (Spearman correlation coefficient / significance level; \*\* 0.01; \* 0.05).*

Parameter	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Difference between chronological age and subjective age (CA-SA)	0.521**	0.000
Difference between chronological age and self-assessment of perceived age (CA-SPA)	0.513**	0.000
Difference between chronological age and the assessment of perceived age (CA-OEA) according to the respondents	0.495**	0.000
Difference between chronological age and perceived age (CA-SPA, 'the saved years')	0.363**	0.000
Expected lifespan	0.139**	0.002
Appearance perfectionism	0.155**	0.000
Value, the importance of appearance for academic performance	0.164**	0.000
Value, the importance of appearance for career	0.099*	0.021
Value, the importance of appearance for lifestyle	0.123**	0.004
Assessment of the correspondence of appearance to age	-0.099*	0.013

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The highest correlation coefficients of the CA–DPA parameter were found with other indicators of self-assessment of age (CA-SA, CA-SPA, CA-OEA), as well as with the real perceived age of respondents, measured using the Photo-Video Presentation of External Appearance procedure (CA-SPA). In other words, the participants in the study with a severe NLY (a) have a younger subjective age (CA-SA parameter), (b) believe that they are much younger than their age (CA-SPA parameter), (c) report that others consider them to be younger than their age (CA-OEA parameter), (d) actually appear younger than their age ('the saved years', CA-SPA parameter).

Connections were also found with the cognitive (importance of appearance for academic performance, career and lifestyle, assessment of the correspondence of appearance to age) and behavioral (appearance perfectionism) components of the respondents' attitudes towards their own appearance. The participants in the study with a severe NLY record that their appearance does not correspond to their age. Also of interest is the relationship that we discovered between the EL (expected lifespan) parameter and CA–DPA: The higher the expected life span parameter, the longer the life expectancy a person determines for himself/herself.

In the next stage of data processing, multiple regression analysis (stepwise method) was performed to identify psychological predictors of the NLY. Prior to the procedure, we conducted correlation analysis between possible predictors and excluded variables with a correlation above 0.5 (the existence of these variables reduces the value of regression analysis).

The final list of possible predictors was as follows:

- difference between chronological and subjective age;
- difference between chronological and perceived age;
- expected lifespan;
- economic status (was included in the final list of predictors, as it showed its influence on the variable being studied at the stage of preliminary calculations);
- satisfaction and concern with appearance;
- importance of appearance in communication;
- integral assessment of external appearance;
- severity of appearance perfectionism.

The results of multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
*Multiple regression analysis (dependent variable: severity of NLY (CV-DPA); method: stepwise)*

Model	B	Standard error	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	12.472	1.642		7.597	0.000
Difference between chronological age and subjective age (CA-SA)	0.357	0.040	0.368	8.885	0.000
Difference between chronological age and perceived age ('saved years')	0.252	0.065	0.160	3.873	0.000
Economic status	-1.685	0.475	-0.143	-3.550	0.000
Overall regression rates	<b>R = 0.445; R<sup>2</sup> = 0.198; F = 40.982; p = 0.000</b>				

The results of the regression analysis showed that **the main NLY predictors** are subjective age ( $\beta = 0.368$ ), perceived age ( $\beta = 0.160$ ) and economic status ( $\beta = -0.143$ ), with the first 2 parameters increasing the need, and economic status decreasing it.

The determination coefficient was 19.8%, which indicates that other factors affecting this need, which is considered in this study to be a number of social factors, exist. The previous evidence showed that age-specific factors had an influence on the parameter studied, so we conducted a regression analysis (Table 6); the list of independent variables included CA-SA, CA-SPA and the age of the subjects.

**Table 6**

*Multiple regression analysis (dependent variable: NLY severity (CV-NLY); method: stepwise)*

Model	B	Standard error	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	-3.989	0.929		-4.294	0.000
Age	0.239	0.020	0.425	12.096	0.000
Difference between chronological age and subjective age (CA-SA)	0.247	0.033	0.262	7.467	0.000
Overall regression rates	<b>R = 0.579; R<sup>2</sup> = 0.335; F = 159.3902; p = 0.000</b>				

Analysis showed that the highest determination coefficient (33.5%) was obtained from a model in which the NLY predictor was the chronological age ( $\beta = 0.425$ ) and subjective age ( $\beta = 0.262$ ): The older the person, the pronounced discrepancy between subjective age and chronological age was, the greater the NLY realization.

## Discussion

The study enabled the first hypothesis to be proven, i.e. the influence of the age-specific factor on the severity of the individuals' need to look younger than their age was determined. It has been found that the NLY increases with age. The empirical data confirmed the conclusions made in some papers (Buryakovskaya, 2015; Yurevich, 2018; Campos & Cheban, 2018; Shemet & Makovetskaya, 2021).

Effects of the gender-specific factor was found, but only in subgroups between 21 and 34 years of age; in other age groups, there are no significant differences between men and women: the NLY is relevant to both women and men. Given the stereotypes related to gender and age and the above-mentioned 'double standard about aging', we expected gender-specific factors to have a more serious impact (Berman, O'Nan & Floyd, 1981; Grigor'eva, 2018; Kletsina & Ioffe, 2019; Kletsina, 2020). To determine gender impacts, additional variables such as income levels, residence types (urban/rural), and marital status are likely to need to be introduced. Identification of such factors may provide opportunities for further research.

The second hypothesis of the study was confirmed. **Psychological correlates of individuals' desire to look younger than their own age** have been discovered, making it possible to clarify the psychological portrait of a person striving for a younger age. This is a person who (a) has a young subjective age and actually looks younger than his/her age (has a younger perceived age), (b) describes himself/herself as looking younger than his chronological age, (c) reports that other people tell him/her that he looks younger than his age, (d) has a high level of appearance perfectionism, (e) has a high value and importance of appearance (especially in the areas of academic performance, career, lifestyle), (f) has a low assessment of the correspondence of his/her appearance to his/her age (believes that his/her appearance does not correspond to his/her age), and (g) intends to live for a long time (has a longer expected lifespan).

The third hypothesis has been partially proven. We assumed that the NLY severity would be influenced by both individuals' self-assessments of age and attitudes towards their own appearance. Multiple regression analysis showed that the NLY predictors were chronological, subjective and perceived age, as well as economic status. We proposed two regression models: 1) The predictors of the need to look younger are subjective and perceived age, as well as economic status – the coefficient of determination of this model is 19.8%. (2) The predictors are chronological and subjective age – the coefficient of determination of the model is 33.5%.

The second model has the greatest prognostic value, in which **subjective and chronological age are the NLY predictors**. This enables us to understand the logic of the formation of a person's perceived age (the final point – how he/she looks in the eyes of others), starting with the starting point – his/her NLY. The older a person becomes and the younger he/she feels (in relation to his/her age), the more pronounced his/her NLY becomes. In accordance with fundamental ideas about social needs as the leading factor of social behavior (Andreeva, 2000; Zinchenko, Meshcheryakov, 2008; Bodalev, 2015), the NLY triggers a complex of interrelated forms of behavior and its cognitive-

emotional components, including attitudes towards own appearance, which leads to real rejuvenation of a person in others' eyes. The data obtained confirm the role of subjective age and individuals' attitudes towards their own appearance in life activity organization and in the choice of practices for caring for appearance (Melyokhin, 2018; Sergienko & Kireeva, 2015; Labunskaya, Serikov, 2018; Labunskaya, Serikov, Shkurko, 2019).

Thus, our study enabled us to record the NLY severity in various gender- and age-specific groups, as well as its socio-psychological correlations and predictors.

The study's **prospects** are to develop an empirical model to construct perceived age, based on generalization and systematization of all the factors that have been studied to date affecting perceived age. In this study, we have identified a part of this model: The location of the NLY was indicated and its predictor was identified.

### **Conclusions**

In the sample of adults aged 21–75 years, the difference between the chronological age and the desired perceived age ranges from -7 to 55 years with an average of 10 years. The vast majority of respondents (88.5%) indicated the presence of the NLY – the need to look younger than their age.

The severity of the NLY increases significantly with age. In 'youth' (21–34 years), the difference between chronological age and desired age is six months; in 'maturity up to 50' (35–49 years) – 8 years; in 'maturity after 50' (50–59 years) – 11 years; in 'older age' (60–75 years) – 15 years.

The NLY is relevant both for women and for men. In the subgroup of young people aged 21 to 34, gender-specific differences have been found (the difference between chronological age and desired perceived age for women is greater than for men).

Psychological correlates of individuals' desire to look younger than their own age were discovered. These are (a) subjective age, (b) self-assessment of perceived age and perceptions of others' assessments of perceived age, (c) actual perceived age, (d) appearance perfectionism, (e) the importance of appearance (in the areas of academic performance/career/lifestyle), (f) assessment of the correspondence of appearance to age, and (g) expected lifespan.

Subjective age and chronological age are the NLY predictors. Individuals' attitudes towards their own appearance do not affect the severity of this need.

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Received: October 26, 2023

Revision received: November 24, 2023

Accepted: November 24, 2023

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## **Conflict of Interest Information**

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.