



UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA



**Older people participants
in university educational programs:
motivations, perceived gains and evaluation**

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Background

- Older people demanding higher education are increasing
- Universities have an important role meeting these educational necessities
- In Spain, there are 40 different university programs for older students
- Differences in the nature of the program could attract different older students and have a different impact on older learner



Models of university programs for older people

1

Cycle of conferences (CC):

Independent lectures taught by university lecturers twice to four times a week

The role of university is secondary, only as a content adviser and provider of lectures and, sometimes, infrastructure



Models of university programs for older people

2

University of experience (UE)

University programs designed with an integrated curriculum (three to five years), similar to regular university degrees but adapted to older people



Models of university programs for older people

3

Intergenerational university of experience (IUE)

Programs with an integrated curriculum that include intergenerational contact.

Similar to model 2, but including some regular university courses where older learners mix up with ordinary younger students



Aims

The **aim** of the present research is to compare different kind of university programs in three aspects:

- Motivations to attend to university programs
- How older learners evaluate the program
- Perceived gains in their life stimulated by program attendance



Method: Sample

- 692 questionnaires handed in
- 15 days to voluntarily fill in the questionnaire
- Global return rate: 65.8%

	Delivered	Returned
Cycle of Conferences (University of Barcelona)	247	182 (73,6%)
University of Experience (University of Elche)	155	96 (61,9%)
Intergenerational U. of Experience (University of Valencia)	290	178 (61,3%)



Method: Sample

- 62.1% of the sample were women
- The average age of participants was 66.4 years
- Participant profiles varied among universities

	Cycle conferences	Univ. Experience	Intergen. U. Experience
% Women	71.3%	76.1%	46.8%
Mean age	71.7	63.2	63.7
% Living alone	35.7	28.1	21.9
Attendance (days a week)	2	2	3.2
Attendance (hours a week)	4	5.6	9.1
Years attending older people university	2.9	2.8	3



Method: instruments

Motivation for participating

18-item questionnaire

- Knowledge motives (5 items)
"To satisfy my curiosity"
- Social motives (5 items)
"To get to know different people"
- Family motives (4 items)
"To keep up with my children and grandchildren"
- Escapist motives (4 items)
"To avoid boredom"



Method: instruments

Perceived benefits of the course

7-items questionnaire:

- Health
- Self-satisfaction
- Relationships with family
- Level of activity
- Friendships
- Enjoying life
- Feeling of being useful



Method: instruments

Evaluation of the course was obtained by means of a 8-item questionnaire.

The participants evaluated aspects such as:

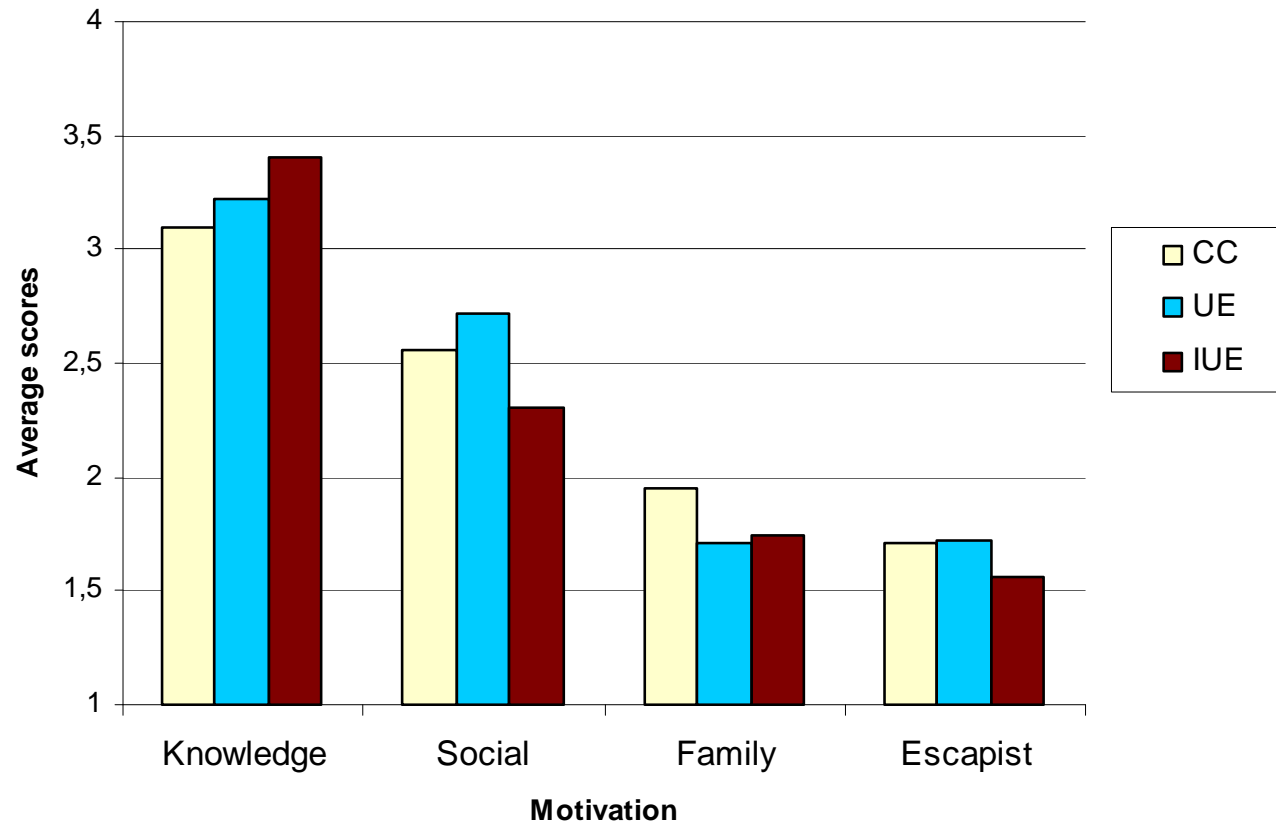
- Educational facilities and infrastructure
- Organization of the course
- The way lecturers explain
- Contents of the course
- Time assigned to every issue of the course
- Students' participation
- Relationship with classroom mates

And finally, a global satisfaction with the course



Results

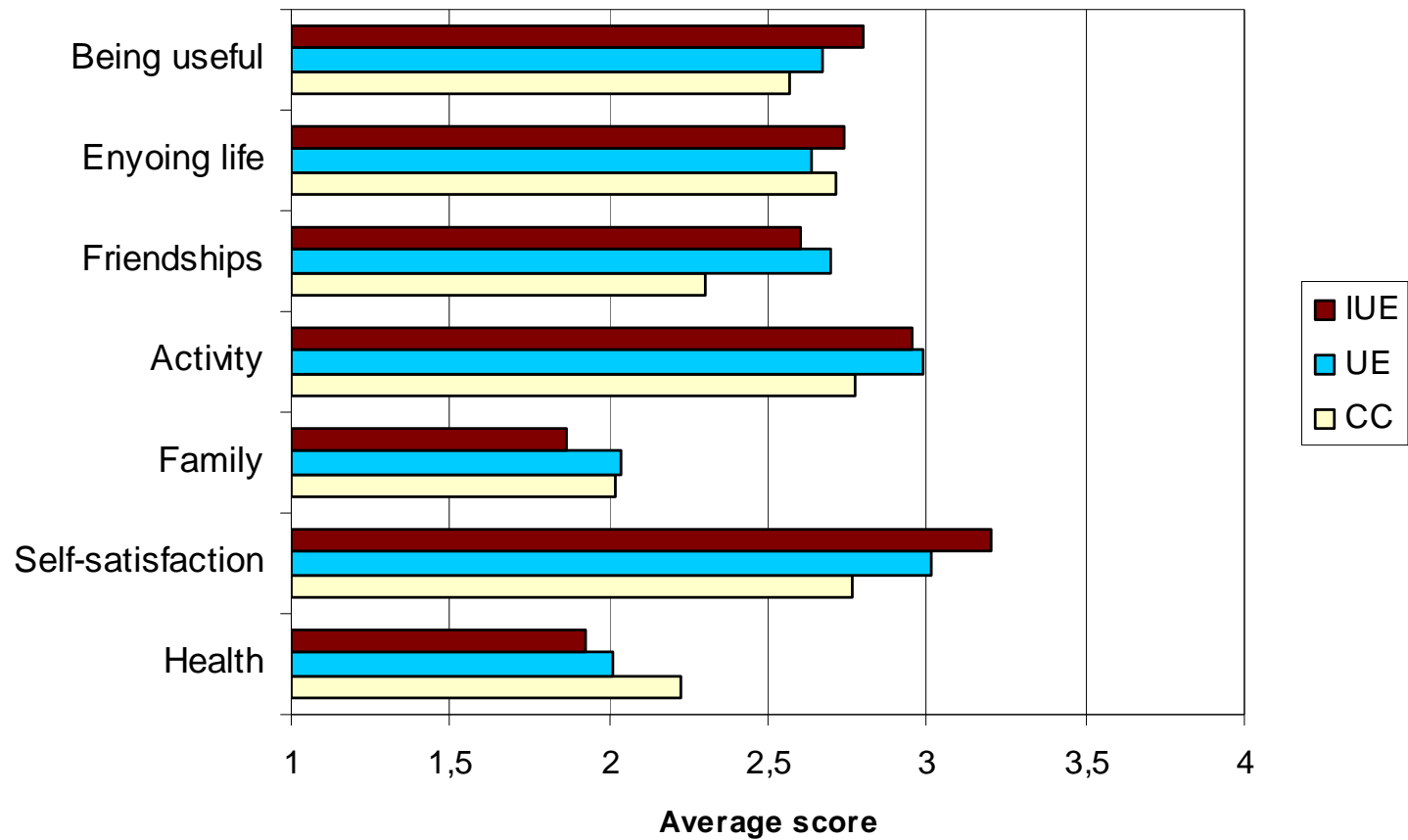
Motivation for attending the course





Results

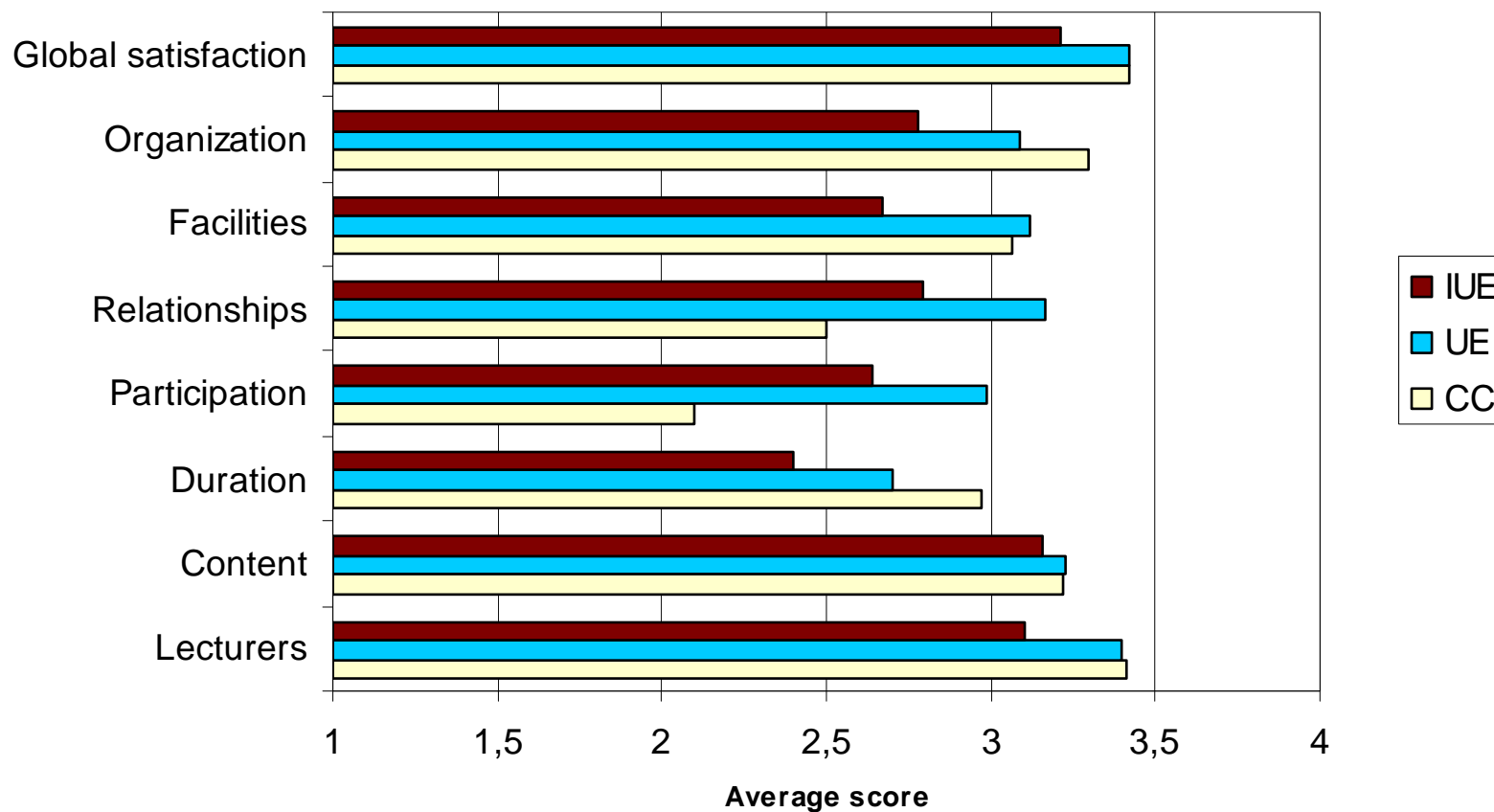
Perceived gains





Results

Evaluation of the program





Conclusions

- Attending university programs are a way to continue growing rather than a way to compensate losses
- Self and social benefits are the ones more recognized by participants, particularly on programs organized as degrees
- Participants evaluate very positively the programs, although they can also adopt a critical stance on some aspects
- Profile of participants are quite different among programs. It could have influenced on the differences found in motivations, benefits and evaluations



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Thank you for your attention