



## OVERVIEW OF THE USE OF LEISURE TIME FOR THE ELDERLY

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### ABSTRACT

The elderly is someone who is  $\geq 60$  years old. In Indonesia, which has entered the old structured phase, it must be balanced with an effective quality of life. Therefore, an effort needs to be made, namely, taking advantage of leisure. Leisure is used to relax, entertain, or develop skills to obtain happiness. This study aims to describe the use of leisure for the elderly at the Gambirsari Health Center. This study used a quantitative descriptive design with a purposive sampling technique involving 98 elderly people who met the research criteria. The research data was measured using a questionnaire analyzed univariately using frequency and percentage distributions. The study results showed that 56.1% of respondents made good use of their leisure time. Based on each domain, in the religious domain, 56.1% of respondents utilized their leisure in the good category; in the social domain, 67.3% of respondents utilized their leisure in the sufficient category; and in the hobby domain, 54.1% of respondents utilized their leisure in the sufficient category. In conclusion, leisure for the elderly at the Gambirsari Health Center is dominated by the good category.

Keyword: elderly; hobbies; leisure; religion; social

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## INTRODUCTION

The elderly can be said to be someone who has entered the peak period of life in the life cycle. Based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 1988, it is stated that the elderly are those who are 60 years old or older. The elderly are categorized as young elderly (60-69 years old), middle elderly (70-79 years old), and elderly ( $\geq 80$  years old) (BPS, 2021). WHO (2022) data shows that the number of elderly people in the world will continue to grow and is estimated to reach 2.1 billion by 2050. Initially, the spread of the elderly population occurred in high-income countries, such as Japan, where 30% of the population is over 60 years old, but now the shift is occurring in low- and middle-income countries, such as Indonesia.

In 2021, the number of elderly people in Indonesia reached 10.82% or  $\pm 29.3$  million elderly people. This identifies that Indonesia has entered an old structured phase (the population aged  $\geq 60$  years exceeds 10% of the population). By gender, more elderly women than men (52.32% compared to 47.68%). Central Java is one of the provinces with an elderly population with a percentage of 13.21% or as many as 4,892,304 elderly people. The city of Surakarta has a total of 71,487 elderly people (BPS, 2021). Several researchers have previously stated that the increase in the elderly has not been balanced with a better quality of life. The quality of life in question is not only physical health but also mental, social, and emotional health. Efforts that can be made to optimize the welfare of life are to take advantage of free time, especially for those who have retired from work. Factors that can affect the condition of the elderly (physical, cognitive, and emotional), family and community support, and the level of knowledge of the elderly (Yuniartika, 2019).

The aging process will be experienced by everyone, where in this process, a person will experience many changes, such as physical, psychological, and social weaknesses, gradually until they are unable to carry out their daily responsibilities. Natural changes that cannot be avoided can be in the form of dry to wrinkled skin, gray or gray hair, partial or total decreased vision, porous bones, thickening of the walls of blood vessels so that blood pressure increases, and so on. Abnormal changes such as cataracts, joint abnormalities, and incontinence. Cognitive problems such as memory decline and difficulty socializing with the community. In emotional matters, the elderly have a strong feeling of being with their family, which leads to very high levels of attention in the elderly. Furthermore, the elderly feel angry quickly because of something that is not following their wishes (Mulyana & Hayati, 2022). Spiritual problems may arise in the form of the elderly finding it difficult to memorize the scriptures due to decreased memory, feelings of lack of calm when family members have not carried out worship, and anxiety when dealing with difficult difficulties in life (Gani et al., 2023).

Leisure refers to the time that individuals have outside of daily activities such as work, education, and important tasks such as eating and sleeping (Rojabi et al., 2023). Free time is the time that individuals use to do activities they enjoy, relax, and feel happy. Thus, leisure time is defined as time devoted to desired activities, such as relaxing, calming down, developing insights, or improving skills to achieve happiness. This activity can provide benefits in the form of improving physical, mental, and emotional health, improving work skills to drive productivity, and means of learning and developing the abilities of the elderly. Activities that can be done by the elderly include social interactions, hobbies, and physical exercise (Marques & Teixeira, 2022). However, it is not uncommon for the elderly to have obstacles related to leisure time, such as physical and social limitations, family and work responsibilities, low family-community support, and low level of knowledge of the elderly.

Based on the results of previous research conducted by Phan Tuan (2022), the use of leisure time in the elderly, such as sports activities, social interactions, and culture, can significantly reduce depression and improve health and life satisfaction. This is in line with Endang's research (2019), which found that skill activities carried out in groups can maintain the social, cognitive, and motor functions of the elderly. This research was conducted at the Gambirsari Health Center located on Jalan Kelud Barat rt.03 rw.04 Joglo, Banjarsari District, Surakarta City, Central Java. Various studies from within and outside the country have proven that the use of free time has a positive impact on improving the quality of life of the elderly. The main purpose of this study is to find out how to describe the use of the elderly's free time at the Gambirsari Health Center.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative descriptive research design with a Cross-sectional approach. Data collection was carried out at the Gambirsari Health Center in February 2025 with a sample of 98 elderly people under the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study. Sampling uses the purposive sampling technique, where respondents are selected based on the research objectives (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020). The inclusion criteria include the elderly who live in the work area of the Gambirsari Health Center UPTD, are willing to be respondents, and the elderly can understand the questions. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include the elderly who are seriously ill, the elderly with hearing limitations (deaf), and the elderly with memory impairments (senile). The variable of this study is a single variable, namely the use of free time measured using a questionnaire. The 12-item questionnaire, which covers three domains (religious, social, and hobbies), has been tested for validity and reliability. Validity tests are used to confirm that research instruments can be used to test what is being measured. On the hand, reliability tests aim to indicate the extent to which the measurement results are relatively aligned when measuring the same aspect (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020). The

questionnaire test was carried out at the Gilingan Health Center in February 2025 with a total of 30 elderly respondents. The results of the validity test stated that three questions were declared invalid because of the value of  $r < 0.361$  for  $n = 30$ . Invalid question items will be removed from the question set at the time of research. Meanwhile, in the results of the reliability test, it was found that the alpha Cronbach value was 0.715, so the questionnaire question item was considered reliable. The data analysis used is descriptive analysis, which describes or describes research data in the form of frequency tables or graphs (Qodim et al., 2018). The variables to be studied include respondent characteristic data (age, gender, education, occupation, monthly income, cohabitation status, family, role of the elderly as the backbone, and history of elderly diseases), distribution of leisure time utilization in general and distribution of leisure time utilization in each domain.

## RESULT

Table 1.  
Respondent Characteristics (n=98)

Respondent characteristics	f	%
Age		
60-70 years old	77	78,6
>70 years old	21	21,4
Gender		
Male	38	38,8
Female	60	61,2
Education		
No school	9	9,2
Elementary school	36	36,7
junior high school	19	19,4
Senior high school	28	28,6
College	6	6,1
Work		
Not working	56	57,1
Self-employed/trader	29	29,7
PNS	1	1
Pensioner	12	12,2
Monthly Revenue		
< Rp.2,000,000	45	45,9
≥ Rp. 2,000,000	53	54,1
Cohabitation status		
Alone	12	12,2
Husband/Wife	53	54,1
Child	30	30,6
Grandchild	3	3,1
Role as the backbone of the family		
Yes	38	38,8
No	60	61,2
History of the disease		
None	36	36,7
Diabetes mellitus	11	11,2
Hypertension	40	40,8
Diabetes and hypertension	7	7,1
Cholesterol	4	4,1

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents have characteristics of 60-70 years old (78,6%), female (61.2%), elementary school education backgrounds (36.7%), not working (57.1%), monthly revenue  $\geq$  Rp.2,000,000 (54.1%), live with husband/wife status (54.1%), do not play a role as the backbone of the family (61.2%), and had a history of hypertension (40.8%).

Table 1.  
Distribution of Leisure Utilization in General (n=98)

Utilization of free time	f	%
Bad	4	4,1
Enough	39	39,8
Good	55	56,1

Table 2, it was found that the use of leisure time for the elderly in the good category was 55 people (56.1%), the fair category was 39 people (39.8%), and the bad category was 4 people (4.1%).

Table 2.  
Distribution of Leisure Utilization by Domain (n=98)

Utilization of free time	f	%
Religious		
Bad	8	8,2
Enough	35	35,7
Good	55	56,1
Social		
Bad	6	6,1
Enough	66	67,3
Good	26	26,5
Hobby		
Bad	18	18,4
Enough	53	54,1
Good	27	27,6

Table 3 concludes that in the religious domain, the majority of respondents make good use of their free time, namely 55 people (56.1%). In the social domain, the majority of respondents took advantage of the leisure time of the sufficient category, as many as 66 people (67.3%). Similarly, in the hobby domain, the majority of respondents took advantage of the leisure time of the sufficient category, as many as 53 people (54.1%).

## DISCUSSION

Respondent characteristics based on age showed that the majority of elderly people aged 60-70 years were 77 people (78.6%), while respondents aged  $\geq 70$  years were 21 people (21.4%). This number shows that the majority of respondents are classified as young and elderly. This is in line with previous research conducted by Nurhidayah and Aniek (2022), explaining that young seniors tend to be more active in utilizing their free time due to their better physical abilities and many activity choices. Based on gender, it was found that there were more female respondents than male respondents (61.2% to 38.8%). The comparison is made by BPS (2023), which states that the distribution of elderly females (52.82%) is more than that of men (47.72%). In Indonesia, the life expectancy of females reaches 73.83 years while men are around 69.93 years. Biological factors such as chromosomes and hormones, healthy lifestyles, and social support have a significant role in life expectancy (Prasastisiwi, 2024).

Based on the level of education, the majority of respondents have an elementary school education background of 36.7% and a few elderly with a University education background of 6.1%. Seniors with higher education backgrounds tend to be more active in positive activities, such as actively participating in communities or social activities that can improve the quality of life, both physically and psychologically. Ninik's research study (2018) revealed that the level of education greatly affects the way the elderly use their leisure time. Based on occupation, the majority of respondents answered that they were no longer employed (57.1%), and most others answered that they were self-employed/traders (29.6%). Because of the many responsibilities that must be met, the elderly usually have less free time. However, in the elderly who are still working, activities outside of work are usually more systematic and

include social or recreational activities. Meanwhile, for the elderly who do not work, it is usually filled with various activities, such as gathering with family and doing hobbies or religious activities. The cause of the elderly staying in work shows that work is a must for the elderly to meet their needs. According to Jamalludin (2020), workers who do not have a pension guarantee or additional source of income are the cause of the elderly still working. Based on monthly income, the majority of the elderly have an income of  $\geq$  Rp.2,000,000, which is 54.1%, while 45.9% of the elderly have an income of  $<$  Rp.2,000,000 every month. The monthly income of the elderly greatly affects the way the elderly spend their free time. In a study conducted by Made and Purwanti (2020), it was found that income has a significant positive influence on the welfare of the elderly in Denpasar. Seniors with high incomes are more prosperous because they can obtain goods and services to meet their living needs.

Based on residence status, most respondents lived with their families. As many as 54.1% of respondents lived with their husband/wife, 30.6% with children, 3.1% lived with grandchildren, and 12.2% of respondents lived alone. Seniors who live with family tend to have many opportunities for social interaction. Meanwhile, the elderly who live alone usually choose more individual activities, such as gardening, handicrafts, or other hobbies. However, a lack of social interaction can result in a decline in mental health and the desire of the elderly to make positive use of their free time. A research study by Andi, Elis, and Kasmawati (2022) stated that one of the risk factors for depression in the elderly is the absence of social contact with family, friends, and neighbors and living alone. Based on the role of the elderly as the backbone, many of the respondents are not the backbone of the family. The elderly who are no longer working receive pension guarantees, while others receive sources of income from family members or government programs. Older adults who are not the backbone of the family usually have much free time because they do not have the burden of economic responsibility. Activities such as exercising, gathering with friends, and religious or volunteer activities can improve physical and mental health, strengthen social relationships, and find meaning in the elderly's lives. Research conducted by Soowon (2023) stated that social interactions such as meeting friends or participating in community activities were positively related to the life satisfaction of the elderly group who did not work in Korea.

Based on the history of the disease, 40% of respondents had a history of hypertension. The selection of activities for the elderly who have a history of illness in utilizing leisure time is very important to improve the quality of life and manage chronic conditions. Seniors with a history of certain illnesses may have limitations in certain types of activities. For example, seniors who have joint problems are likely unable to do strenuous exercise, but can still engage in light activities such as walking or yoga. A research study by Marques and Teixeira (2022) stated that many elderly people have barriers in the form of lack of access and physical limitations. However, the elderly who remained actively involved in low-intensity activities still received significant health benefits. Therefore, the selection of leisure time utilization activities must be adjusted to the health condition of each individual to get maximum benefits.

Utilization of free time Based on the results of the study, the majority of the elderly use their free time in the good category, which is 56.1%, while in the fair category, it is 39.8%, and in the bad category, it is 4.1%. Good use of free time can optimize the quality of life of the elderly. A study in Vietnam by Thuan (2022) found that participation in leisure activities, such as social gatherings and cultural events, was shown to reduce depression and reduce anxiety in the elderly. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Ninik and Aniek (2022), it was found that 50% of elderly respondents in Kemiri Kebakramat Village, Karanganyar, who were involved, took advantage of free time in the medium category and 33% of the elderly were included in the good category. Another finding revealed that the leisure time utilization among the elderly in Ikaria in physical activities was moderate

or high (71.8%). For the elderly, physical activity can reduce the risk of falls and inhibit the occurrence of cognitive impairment (Romain et al., 2021).

The analysis results on each domain of leisure time utilization found that 56.1% of the elderly used leisure time in the good category of religious domains. This aspect includes religious activities such as worship, prayer, attending recitations, and other efforts made by individuals to get closer to God. In addition, religious activities can also provide benefits in the form of reducing stress and improving mental health. A research study states that religious activities are the most popular activities carried out by the elderly. The study also states that religious activities are effective in improving cognitive function and lowering the risk of cognitive decline, such as dementia. Focusing on pesantren programs, seniors who focus on spiritual activities experience improved mental and emotional health (Dianingrum, 2016). In the social domain, it was found that 67.3% of the elderly took advantage of leisure time in the sufficient category. Activities included in this domain include activities to establish relationships and social (family, friends, and community). Research conducted in Ngresrep Village, Boyolali, shows that social activities participated in by the elderly have a positive impact on reducing anxiety levels and increasing life satisfaction. Activities such as recitations, PKK meetings, and activities at the elderly Posyandu provide opportunities for the elderly to interact and share experiences that affect the psychological well-being of the elderly (Wahyuni & Prasetyaningsih, 2020). Supported by the research of Donca et al. (2025), conducted on the elderly at a Northern Romanian hospital, it was found that regular social engagement was associated with lower rates of depression and the prevention of cognitive decline.

In the hobby domain, it was found that 54.1% of the elderly took advantage of the leisure time category sufficiently. Several studies show that the elderly tend to use their free time to do various hobby activities. The activities carried out can be in the form of gardening, handicrafts, and arts that not only provide personal satisfaction but also help the elderly maintain mental and physical health. This is in line with research conducted by Kartinah et al. (2023), which states that gardening activities as complementary therapy have been proven to reduce stress levels in the elderly at the Tresna Werdha Abiyoso Social Service Center Yogyakarta. Another study mentioned that the elderly become loyal visitors to Montigo Resort to fill their free time. Activities such as walking around the beach, cycling, fishing, soaking, and distributing hobbies are the main choices of elderly tourists

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of a study on the use of leisure time in the elderly at the Gambirsari Health Center UPTD, it was found that most respondents were 60-70 years old, most of whom were female. The last educational background is elementary school, does not work, and has an income <Rp.2,000,000 per month. The majority of the elderly live with their husbands/wives, are no longer the backbone of the family, and have a history of hypertension. The use of leisure time by the elderly in general is in the good category. Meanwhile, an overview of the use of leisure time in the elderly based on each domain was found: the religious domain was in the good category, the social domain was in the sufficient category, and the hobby domain was sufficient.

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