

The Effect of Participation in the Elderly School Program on the Quality of Life of Older Adults in West Pekalongan District

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of older adults in Indonesia has created various challenges, one of which is related to their quality of life. The Elderly School Program is an empowerment initiative designed to enhance older adults' knowledge, skills, and independence, enabling them to remain healthy, active, independent, productive, and prosperous. This study aimed to examine the effect of participation in the Elderly School Program on the quality of life of older adults in West Pekalongan District. This study employed a quantitative method with a cross-sectional design. The study population consisted of all participants of the Anggrek Elderly School in West Pekalongan District, with a sample of 96 respondents determined using the Lemeshow formula. Data were collected using an elderly participation questionnaire and the World Health Organization Quality of Life–Brief (WHOQOL-BREF) instrument. Data were analyzed using univariate analysis and the Spearman Rank correlation test. The results showed that the majority of respondents were aged 60–69 years (53.1%). Most respondents had a high level of participation in the Elderly School Program (93.8%), and all respondents (100%) were classified as having a good quality of life. The Spearman Rank correlation test yielded a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.542$, indicating a statistically significant positive relationship with a moderate correlation between participation in the Elderly School Program and the quality of life of older adults. It can be concluded that participation in the Elderly School Program has a positive effect on the quality of life of older adults in West Pekalongan District.

Keywords: Older Adults, Elderly School Program, Participation, Quality of Life, WHOQOL-BREF.

INTRODUCTION

Population aging has become a global issue as life expectancy continues to increase while fertility rates decline. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), the global population aged 60 years and over reached 1 billion in 2020 and is projected to increase to 2.1 billion by 2050. The concept of *healthy ageing*, introduced by the WHO, emphasizes that successful aging is not solely measured by increased life expectancy but

also by older adults' ability to remain active, independent, mentally healthy, and supported by an environment that promotes their well-being.

Indonesia officially entered the aging population phase in 2020. The Indonesian Ministry of Health (2023) reported that older adults accounted for 11.75% of the total population in 2023, equivalent to approximately 30 million people. The growing elderly population has significant implications for the healthcare system and community empowerment initiatives. The prevalence of degenerative diseases, including hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, and musculoskeletal disorders, continues to increase among older adults. Furthermore, Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2022) reported that approximately 45% of older adults experience limitations in activities of daily living (ADL), while around 30% report feelings of loneliness due to limited social interaction.

In response to these challenges, Indonesia has developed the Elderly School Program (*Sekolah Lansia*), a non-formal educational initiative established by the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) to promote the SMART Elderly concept (*Healthy, Independent, Active, Productive, and Dignified*). In Pekalongan City, particularly in West Pekalongan District, older adults comprise more than 12% of the total population (Pekalongan City Health Office, 2023). To address the challenges associated with population aging, the Anggrek Elderly School in West Pekalongan District was established as an educational and community empowerment initiative for older adults. Therefore, this study aimed to quantitatively examine the effect of participation in the Elderly School Program on the quality of life of older adults in West Pekalongan District using the World Health Organization Quality of Life–Brief (WHOQOL-BREF) instrument.

METHODS

This research utilized a quantitative method with an associative approach and a cross-sectional design. The research was conducted at the Anggrek Elderly School, West Pekalongan District, Pekalongan City.

The study population comprised all older adults registered in the 2024 family data portal in the West Pekalongan District area ($N = 9,427$ people). The sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula for population proportions with finite population correction, yielding a sample of 96 respondents. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling among active participants who met the inclusion criteria (aged ≥ 60 years, actively registered, and willing to be respondents).

The instruments used included:

- Elderly Participation Questionnaire: Measures attendance level, internal motivation, and social interaction.
- WHOQOL-BREF Quality of Life Questionnaire: Consists of 26 items measuring 4 main domains (Physical, Psychological, Social Relationships, and Environment).

Data analysis included:

- Univariate Analysis: To describe the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics, participation levels, and elderly quality of life.
- Bivariate Analysis: Using the Spearman Rank correlation test ($\alpha = 0.05$) because the data was ordinal and not normally distributed.

RESULT

1. Respondent Characteristics

Based on research data from 96 elderly respondents, the following is the distribution of characteristics based on age and disease history:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics Based on Age (n = 96)

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Pre-Elderly(45-59)	12	12.5
Elderly(60-69)	51	53.1
Hight-Risk Ederly(70-79)	30	31.3
Late-Stage Elderly (>80years)	3	3.1
Total	96	100.0

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were in the elderly age range of 60–69 years, accounting for 51 respondents (53.1%).

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics Based on Disease History

Disease History	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
None / Others		
Hypertension		

Diabetes Mellitus		
Cholesterol		
Gastritis		
Osteoarthritis / Asthma / Others		
total		

The majority of respondents (81.3%) did not have a history of severe chronic diseases that impaired their physical mobility.

2. Participation and Quality of Life Analysis

Table 3. Distribution of Elderly Participation and Quality of Life

Variable / Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Elderly Participation (X)		
High Participation	90	93.8
Low Participation	6	6.3
Elderly Quality of Life (Y)		
Good Quality of Life	96	100.0
Poor Quality of Life	0	0.0

The results show that the majority of older adults had a high level of participation in Anggrek Elderly School activities (93.8%), and all respondents (100%) had a good quality of life.

3. Bivariate Analysis (Spearman Rank Correlation Test)

Table 4. Spearman Rank Correlation Test Results

Variabel	Correlation Coefficient ®	p-value	N	Description
Elderly Participation →	0.542	0.000	96	Significant, Moderate

Qualitas of life				Correlation (Positive)
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Based on the Spearman Rank test results in Table 4, a $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) was obtained, meaning H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. The correlation coefficient (r) of 0.542 indicates that the relationship between elderly participation in the Elderly School Program and their quality of life has a positive direction with a moderate correlation strength.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study prove that there is a positive and significant influence of elderly participation in the Elderly School Program on the quality of life of older adults in West Pekalongan District. This aligns with WHO's Active Ageing Theory (2002), which emphasizes that healthy and prosperous aging is achieved through the optimization of three main pillars: health, participation, and security.

Elderly participation in structured Anggrek Elderly School activities—such as nutritional education, elderly gymnastics, periodic health check-ups, cognitive stimulation, and spiritual activities—directly strengthens the physical and psychological domains of older adults. In addition, social interaction among fellow elderly participants reduces feelings of loneliness, increases self-confidence, and expands social support, which has a tangible impact on improving quality of life.

The results of this study are in line with the study by Astuti (2025) at the Budi Luhur Hebat Elderly School in Cimahi, which found a significant increase in elderly quality of life scores after attending the elderly school ($p = 0.000$). This is also supported by research from Ardi (2024), which states that active participation and lifelong learning are consistently positively associated with the quality of life of older adults.

CONCLUSION

- The majority of participants at the Anggrek Elderly School in West Pekalongan District were in the 60–69 age group (53.1%), and the majority had no history of severe chronic diseases (81.3%).
- Elderly participation in the Elderly School Program was in the high category (93.8%), and all respondents (100%) possessed a good quality of life.

- There is a significant and positive effect of elderly participation in the Elderly School Program on the quality of life of older adults in West Pekalongan District ($p = 0.000$; $r = 0.542$), where higher participation levels correspond to a better perceived quality of life.

2. Recommendations

- **For Program Managers & P2KB Social Services:** It is necessary to maintain program activity and add a wider variety of interactive activities, such as elderly entrepreneurial skills and group recreational activities.
- **For Elderly Families:** Families are expected to continue providing emotional motivation and facilitating transportation for the elderly so they can attend activities consistently.
- **For Future Researchers:** It is recommended to test other variables such as family support and economic status, as well as to utilize experimental methods with control groups.

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