



## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND TRAVEL CHOICES OF THE ELDERLY

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### ABSTRACT

Recreation is a way to get consolation for the elderly. The aim of this study is to analyze recreational activities and travel choices of the elderly who live in Denpasar city, Bali, Indonesia. The study used a descriptive method. The sample consisted of 100 elderly selected by convenience sampling technique. The data was collected by questionnaire and analyzed using frequency distribution. The results show that even though Bali is a tourist destination and there is an easy access for the elderly who live in the cities, it does not guarantee they come to every tourist spot, seen from most of the elderly (64%) had never done any recreational activities after entering old age. The main obstacle that prevented the elderly from doing recreational activities was taking care of grandchildren (46%). Characteristics of destination locations for elderly travel choices especially have a calm environment (26.9%). The favorite recreation destination is places of worship (63.9%). After recreation, they felt happy and refreshed (88.8%). Recreation can be a fun entertainment for the elderly in their daily routines activities to reduce boredom, but in recreation they should be accompanied by family and pay attention to the characteristics of their favorite tourist spot.

**Keywords:** activities; elderly; journey; recreation; travel; urban

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### INTRODUCTION

As people get older, they will experience changes in their physical, cognitive, and psychosocial performances (Miller, 2004). Old age is the retirement age where the elderly have a lot of free time. Lack of preparation for retirement results in the elderly being less able to organize and adapt to the changing rhythm of their activities, so they often do monotonous household activities (Papalia et al., 2009).

This situation can often cause boredom and stress. Stress can be a psychological problem for the elderly, which can have adverse effects on their health. In fact, there are many activities that can be done by the elderly to fill their free time with activities that are beneficial. Recreation is one way to eliminate fatigue and get a relaxing break from a monotonous daily life. Recreation has a restorative effect on the elderly's wellbeing (Sjogren & Stjernberg, 2010). It is an activity that refreshes the body and mind from everyday routine. Recreational activities that are carried out during leisure time are aimed at restoring physical and mental wellbeing, as well as the freshness of the mind, which are lost due to routine daily activities. Different kinds of enjoyment, entertainment, and activities can provide satisfaction and joy, which increases human

life satisfaction (Papalia et al., 2009).

Not all elderly people realize that recreation is one of the basic needs that must be met. The reasons for the elderly not doing recreational activities include perceived constraints of living alone, the possibility of spending excessive costs, and fear of falling (Sjogren & Stjernberg, 2010). The choice of a recreational destination and its environment needs to be considered for the elderly so that after the holiday the elderly feel healthier, refreshed, and happier instead of being even more stressed and becoming ill. Participation in holidays or recreational and leisure activities implies the use of physical and cognitive activities or processes and resources, which contribute to an active and healthy lifestyle. However, not all elderly people do recreational activities. This research aimed to provide information for the elderly, families, and health workers on the importance of doing recreational activities for enjoyment during leisure time and making safe and enjoyable travel choices for the elderly to reduce boredom done through quantitative research.

## **METHOD**

Quantitative research with descriptive methods used to assess the recreational activities and travel choices preferred by the elderly in Denpasar. Denpasar is an area that has a high elderly population in the province of Bali. The easy access to tourist attractions in Denpasar, because it is an urban area, and the ease of finding modes of transportation allow the elderly to go for recreational trips. The sample used in this study amounted to 100 elderly people from four banjars (sub-villages) in four subdistricts in Denpasar City, which was collected using the convenience sampling technique.

The inclusion criteria for the elderly people were being at least 60 years of age, living in the city of Denpasar, being a Balinese, having no hearing loss, and not having physical limitations since birth or due to illness, or immobilization. The initial sample studied was 120 people, but those who met the inclusion criteria and answered the questionnaire completely were 100 people. The variables studied included the characteristics of the elderly (age, sex, level of education, employment history, marital status, and financial ability), kinds of recreational activities (a yes-and-no checklist), obstacles to recreation, reasons for recreation, financial sources for recreation, feelings experienced after recreation and factors that influence the elderly's travel choices (environment, destination, companion, modes of transportation, travel times).

The instrument used to collect the data for this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire that was compiled contained questions on characteristics and a checklist of recreational activities concisely compiled in 14 questions which is valid and reliable. Each item of the questionnaire were derived ranging between 0.594 and 0.974 and the reliability represented by Cronbach's alpha was greater than 0.8 (0.959). Research data were analyzed by frequency distribution on sociodemographic characteristics, kinds of recreational activities, obstacles to recreation, reasons for recreation, financial sources for recreation, feelings experienced after recreation and factors that influence the elderly's travel choices (environment, destination, companion, modes of transportation, travel times). With respect to the ethical aspect of this study, informed consent was obtained from all subjects. The protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Udayana University and Sanglah Hospital No: 2100/UN 14.2.2.VII.14/LP

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## RESULTS

The findings are presented socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, recreational activities, and travel choices.

Table 1.  
 Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (n= 100)

No	Characteristics	Range of possible value for characteristics	f	%
1	Age	60-75	71	71
		76-90	27	27
		>90	2	2
2	Gender	Male	42	42
		Female	58	58
3	Education	No formal education	58	58
		primary school	28	28
		junior high school	8	8
		high school	6	6
4	Marital Status	Married	77	77
		Single	1	1
		Widowed	22	22
5	Employment Histories	Private employee	41	41
		does not work	32	32
		Retired civil servants	27	27
6	Financial ability	No Income	66	66
		Salary	34	34
7	Household Financial Sources	From children	92	57.5
		From couple	17	10.6
		Pension fund	27	16.9
		Work	24	15

Table 2.  
 Portrait of the elderly recreational activities (n= 100)

Variable Name	Range of possible value for variables	f	%
Recreation during old age	No	64	64
	Yes	36	36
Recreation <1 last month	No	77	77
	Yes	33	33
The obstacles that cause the elderly not recreation	Taking care of grandchildren	46	46
	Religious social activities	27	27
	Spend money	15	15
	Working	8	8
	Unaccompanied	4	4

Table 3.  
 Recreational activities of the elderly who did recreational activities during their old age  
 (n= 36)

Variable Name	Range of possible value for variables	f	%
Age	60-75	25	69.4
	76-90	10	27.8
	>90	1	2.8
Gender	Female	21	58.3
	Male	15	41.7
Reasons for recreation	Invited by Children and families	26	72.2
	Refreshing	10	27.8
Financial source for recreation	Children	27	75
	Own money	9	25
Feelings after recreation	Happy	20	55.5
	Refresh	12	33.3
	Ordinary	2	5.6
	Tired	2	5.6
Recreation companion	Families	19	52.8
	Couple	10	27.8
	Self reliant	4	11.1
	With Group	3	8.3

Table 1, the most participants was female (58%), aged from 60–75 years old (71%), with no formal education (58%), and married (77%). Most employment histories of the elderly was private employee (41%) and their current income status is no income (66%). Most of the elderly's household financial resources was from their children (57.5%). Tabel 2, most of the elderly do not do recreation in their old age (64%) and the biggest obstacle is due to taking care of grandchildren (46%).

Table 3, for the elderly who did recreational activities, the most cited reason for recreation was that they were invited to go by their children and families (72.2%). The elderly who did recreational activities most frequently were aged 60–75 years (69.4%), and the elderly women did recreational activities more often than the elderly men (58.3%). Most of the elderly's financial source for recreation was their children (75%). After recreation, the elderly felt happy (55.5%) and refreshed (33,3%).

Table 4, the factors affecting the elderly's travel choices with respect to the destination and location were calm environment (26.9%), free admission (23%), and cool weather (20%). Favorite recreation areas included places of worship (63.9%), mountains (16.7%), and beaches (11.1%). Many elderly do recreation every 3/months.

Table 4.  
 Travel choices of the elderly (n= 36)

Variable Name	Range of possible value for variables	f	%
Environment criteria of the destination locations	Calm environment	35	26.9
	Free admission	30	23
	Cool weather	26	20
	Safe	22	17
	Closed	11	8.5
	Many visitors	6	4.6
Favorite recreation destinations	Places of worship	23	63.9
	The mountains	6	16.7
	Beach	4	11.1
	Hometown	2	5.5
	City park	1	2.8
Modes of transportation	Private car	19	52.8
	Motorcycle	7	19.4
	Public transportation	5	14
	Bicycle	3	8.3
	Walking	2	5.5
Departure time	Morning	32	88.9
	Nighttime	2	5.5
	Evening	1	2.8
	Daytime	1	2.8
Travel time	30 - 120 min	30	83.4
	>120 min	4	11.1
	< 30 min	2	5.5
Frequency of doing recreation	3/month	14	38.9
	1/year	11	30.6
	1/month	8	22.2
	1/week	2	5.5
	1/day	1	2.8

## DISCUSSION

The elderly are vulnerable to a monotonous life caused by changes due to aging, retirement, and decreased intensity of socialization. Old age causes the elderly to have a lot of free time and often there are no meaningful activities that can be carried out, causing them fatigue and reducing their quality of life. Recreation is one of the basic human needs and can be a solution to eliminate boredom because it provides a relaxing effect. Most of the elderly (77%) had not done any recreational activities in the last one month and 64% of them had never done any recreational activities after entering old age. Not all of the elderly were aware that recreation is one of the basic needs that must be met. Participation in vacation or recreation and leisure time activities implies the use of physical and cognitive activities or processes and resources, which contribute to an active and healthy lifestyle. However, not all of the elderly did recreational activities. The main obstacle that prevented the elderly from doing recreational activities was

taking care of grandchildren (46%). Having grandchildren is an invaluable treasure for most of the elderly in Bali because grandchildren are a lineage connector according to the Balinese kinship which embraces the patrilineal kinship system. Therefore, often the elderly voluntarily accept the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren when their children and in-laws have to work. But what needs to be realized by the community, especially children and in-laws who entrust their children to be cared for by their parents or the elderly, is that in their old age their physical condition is certainly not as strong as when they were young, especially for taking the responsibility of caring for small grandchildren who are physically very active. This situation can cause the elderly to suffer from injuries from carrying their grandchildren or risk falling while chasing them. Falls are very easy to experience due to multifactorial causes. The chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increase with age due to both physiologic and pathologic changes (Ambrose et al., 2013). Therefore, the responsibility of caring for grandchildren should not be given in full to the elderly, and they need to be given time to entertain themselves and reduce their fatigue in their old age. However, surpassing the happiness that they feel for having grandchildren, many elderly people prefer to be with their grandchildren instead of going on recreation trips. Another obstacle that prevents the elderly from going on recreation trips is the religious social activities which keep them busy (27%). Bali is still heavily practicing traditions and customs. Even though a person has entered old age and their duties and obligations can be customarily continued by their offspring, by continuing to engage in religious social activities the elderly can maintain the social relations with other community groups that they have built since youth. Social support mediates loneliness in elderly people (Liu et al., 2014). These social relations can be an emotional support for the elderly and add to their happiness.

For the elderly who did recreational activities, the most cited reason for recreation was that they were invited to go by their children and families (72.2%). Recreation with family as the desire of the elderly to socialize, be more intimate, and spend time together with family members (M. Kim & Kim, 2018). The elderly who did recreational activities most frequently were aged 60–75 years (69.4%) and the elderly women did recreation more often than the elderly men (58.3%). Increased desire to travel is shown by women. Nowadays many women achieve success with have more training and economic independence, as a result of their greater participation in the labor market (Losada et al., 2016). Most of the elderly's financial source for recreation was their children (75%). After recreation, 88.8% of the elderly felt happy and refreshed. Recreation has a relation to quality of life as seen from the factors of involvement, perceived value, satisfaction with travel experiences, leisure time satisfaction, overall quality of life, and intention to go on a recreation trip again (H. Kim et al., 2015). Recreational activities aim to restore physical and mental freshness lost due to daily routine activities. They can be done by having different kinds of enjoyment, entertainment, and busyness, and can provide satisfaction and joy in living life. When doing recreational activities, the elderly need to pay attention to the situation around them and access to the tourist spots.

The results show that the factors affecting the elderly's travel choices with respect to the destination and its location were calm environment (26.9%), free admission (23%), and cool weather (20%). Favorite recreation areas included places of worship (63.9%),

mountains (16.7%), and beaches (11.1%). Recreation is an activity of refreshing the body and mind from daily life (Fraga et al., 2011). Recreational activities that are carried out during leisure time are aimed at restoring physical and mental freshness lost due to daily routine activities. This can be done by looking for different kinds of enjoyment, entertainment, and busyness, which can provide satisfaction and joy aimed at the satisfaction of human life (Onishi et al., 2006).

The primary choice of mode of transportation for the elderly to travel is private car. A private car makes them feel comfortable to travel anywhere. However, if the distance to the tourist attraction is close, the elderly choose to walk to the destination to be healthier and to exercise physical abilities. To go to tourist areas, most of the elderly (88.9%) prefer to leave in the morning because the weather is still cool and there is longer time to enjoy the trip. An examination of the characteristics of their trip is very important as implications for transportation planning (Ipingbemi, 2010). At the destination, most of the elderly stated that they needed 30–120 minutes (83.4%) to enjoy the tourist attractions. Sufficient time is needed to enjoy the recreational activities carried out so that they can feel the excitement (Zander et al., 2013).

Most frequently, the elderly traveled once in 3 months (38.9%). Intense recreation can improve the mood of the elderly. They would be better off to actively take part in a series of traveling activities (Wei & Milman, 2002). Traveling has the potential to have positive impact on the health of the elderly (Utami, 2018) and has an indirect effect on families and the government because it reduces the burden of health care. Healthy aging can be done by staying active in old age. Older people who travel have better health (Woo et al., 2014), and this can affect the use of fewer health facilities because of the reduced number of the elderly who are sick. Traveling makes all the body systems work (Matsuo et al., 2003). Physically, when the body moves, for example when walking at the tourist spot, the muscles are flexed, while the mind is refreshed from seeing a new scene. The government and the ministry of health need to consider various options to promote an active and independent lifestyle in old age and alternatives to reduce health problems caused by stress from living a monotonous life. One such option is to travel, as this activity also promotes active and healthy aging.

## **CONCLUSION**

The elderly still rarely do recreation, even though recreation can improve physical and mental freshness by seeking pleasure, entertainment, different environment and activities. Recreation can be a fun entertainment for the elderly in between their daily routines activities to reduce boredom, but in recreation they should be accompanied by family and pay attention to the characteristics of the elderly favorite tourist spot to get refresh and feel happy.

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