

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SPACE COMFORT IN THE ELDERLY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The aging process is characterized by a decline in living abilities that can affect the physical and mental well-being of the elderly. The various problems experienced by the elderly require facilities that provide comfort and interior design that supports their physical and mental health. This study aims to analyze the relationship between physical health, psychological health, and space comfort in improving the quality of life of the elderly at the Elderly School of Happy Culture House (SLRBB) in Depok City. The research method used is a qualitative method with data collection techniques through interviews and observations. Data was also obtained through a review of literature relevant to the research topic. Analysis was conducted using triangulation techniques, where data from various sources were compared and put together to obtain more comprehensive results. The results showed that there is a mutually influential relationship between physical health, psychological health, and spatial comfort in the elderly. Good physical health allows the elderly to carry out activities independently, while positive psychological health supports mental well-being. Spatial comfort, including elderly-friendly interior design, increases safety and comfort, and creates a more supportive environment that improves the overall quality of life of the elderly. The implications of this study show the importance of creating a holistic environment for older adults, which not only focuses on physical health, but also psychological well-being and spatial comfort. This can be applied to various programs or facilities that aim to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

Keywords: Elderly, Physical Health, Psychology, Comfort, Interior.

INTRODUCTION

The increase in older adults is an ongoing phenomenon in many countries. As a developing country, Indonesia will also face a surge in the elderly population. At the same time, the age groups 0-14 years and 15-49 years are projected to decline from 2010 to 2035 (Nurhidayah et al., 2022). On the other hand, the elderly age group (50-64 years and 65 and above) is predicted to continue to increase. This increase in the number of elderly requires the government to formulate policies and programs aimed at this group so that they can contribute to development and not become a burden on society. Law No. 13 of 1998 concerning the

Welfare of the Elderly stipulates that the elderly in Indonesia are individuals aged 60 years and over (Chandra & Makatika, 2022).

The high number of older adults in society raises various problems, including increased health service needs, both physical and mental. Older adults often experience chronic health conditions that require ongoing care, while the health system may not be prepared to deal with the surge in demand. In addition, social challenges, such as isolation and stigma, can affect the psychological well-being of the elderly (Raihana et al., 2021). Dependence on family members or care institutions also increases, increasing economic and emotional burdens. These problems require attention from the government and society to create policies and programs that support the health and well-being of the elderly holistically (Rihmayana & Mochamad, 2022).

To support the physical and psychological health of the elderly, adequate and elderly-friendly facilities are needed. These facilities include safe and accessible infrastructure, such as barrier-free areas, handrails, and good lighting to prevent physical accidents (Sacharissa & Teh, 2021). In addition, health centres that provide routine medical services and appropriate exercise programs for the elderly can help maintain their physical health. On the other hand, comfortable social spaces and psychological support programs, such as counseling and community activities, are essential to prevent social isolation and maintain mental well-being. These supportive facilities create a safer and more comfortable environment for the elderly and improve their quality of life (Dimala, 2023).

Previous research (Mashar, 2021) stated that psychological functions are crucial in creating environmental comfort. Good psychological conditions can improve individual well-being and encourage productivity. A physically and socially comfortable environment can reduce stress, increase a sense of security, and encourage positive social interactions. When individuals feel comfortable, they are more likely to be actively involved, both in social and work contexts, strengthening relationships between individuals and creating a harmonious community.

Research on the relationship between physical health, psychological health, and spatial comfort in the elderly offers significant novelty because it focuses on the complex interactions between these three variables related to the daily experiences of the elderly. Although many previous studies have examined each variable individually, this study focuses on the comfort of the physical environment that can affect the psychological and physical health of the elderly simultaneously, as well as its impact on their quality of life. With a qualitative approach, this study allows for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of the elderly in the spaces they inhabit, making these findings unique and relevant to designing more holistic interventions to improve the well-being of the elderly. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between physical health, psychological health, and spatial comfort in the elderly and to identify the factors that influence it. Thus, the benefits of this research are to provide deeper insight into the importance of paying attention to aspects of physical health,

psychological health, and spatial comfort in supporting the quality of life of the elderly. This research is expected to help practitioners, environmental designers, and policy makers in designing facilities or programs that are more holistic and elderly-friendly. In addition, the findings of this research can also contribute to the development of more effective interventions in creating environments that support the well-being of the elderly, both physically and mentally.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is the method used in this research. This research method focuses on an in-depth exploration of social phenomena, behaviour, or individual experiences in a particular context. In this method, researchers emphasize understanding, meaning, and subjective interpretation from the participant's point of view rather than quantitative or statistical measurements (Firmansyah & Masrun, 2021). Data collection techniques include observation and interview techniques conducted at the Happy Cultural House Elderly School (SLRBB) in Depok City and various documentation supporting the research. The data collection technique with a literature review is a method carried out by collecting and analyzing previously published information, either in the form of books, journals, articles, theses, dissertations, or other documents relevant to the research topic (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). After being obtained, the data was analyzed using the triangulation method, which is a technique used in data analysis to increase the validity and reliability of research results by combining several sources, techniques, or perspectives. In qualitative research, triangulation is often used to ensure accurate and unbiased data. The main principle is to compare data from various perspectives to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Susanto & Jailani, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13 of 1998 concerning the Welfare of the Elderly regulates the protection and welfare of individuals aged 60 years and over, emphasizing their rights to receive respect, protection, and fulfilment of fundamental physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs. This law encourages the empowerment of the elderly to continue to participate in social and development activities. It ensures their access to quality health services (Agnesia et al., 2024).

Older adults experience various physical, psychological, and social changes that contribute to physical dysfunction. Physically, older adults tend to experience decreased organ function, such as weakened muscles (sarcopenia), decreased joint mobility, and chronic health problems, such as hypertension or diabetes, which affect their ability to carry out daily activities (Kardi et al., 2020). From a psychological perspective, cognitive decline and mood swings such as depression or anxiety can reduce the motivation and ability of older adults to care for

themselves. Socially, isolation or loss of loved ones can affect the mental and physical well-being of older adults, exacerbating the risk of physical dysfunction. These changes make older adults more vulnerable to limitations in carrying out daily activities (Cahyadi et al., 2022). Therefore, it is essential to provide specialized facilities that can support the needs of the elderly. These facilities should be designed with mobility, comfort and safety in mind so that older people can move around more freely without the risk of injury. Thus, attention to the design and provision of elderly-friendly facilities will improve their comfort and contribute to their overall well-being.

With the increasing number of older adults, special facilities or facilities to support their needs and welfare are still limited. These limitations include access to health services, social activity centre, and empowerment programs that can help the elderly remain productive and participate in society (Tampodung et al., 2023). Various factors, including the physical, social and psychological environment, often influence the quality of life of the elderly. A comfortable and safe environment is essential for the elderly, as it can help them feel more independent and confident in carrying out their daily activities. For example, the accessibility of public facilities, community support, and green open spaces can provide opportunities for the elderly to interact and do activities. Furthermore, a supportive environment can also reduce stress and anxiety, positively impacting their mental health. Thus, creating a welcoming environment for older adults is essential in improving their overall quality of life (Herman et al., 2023).

Maintaining physical health for the elderly is very important because it can improve their overall quality of life. As we age, the risk of various chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, increases. Regular physical activity helps strengthen the immune system, improve balance, and maintain mobility, all of which contribute to preventing falls and injuries (Tuwu & Tarifu, 2023). In addition, exercise can stimulate the production of hormones that are good for mood, thereby reducing the risk of depression and anxiety. By maintaining physical health, the elderly can not only carry out daily activities better. However, it can also maintain independence and positive social interactions, prolonging life expectancy and increasing happiness (SITEPU et al., 2023).

In addition to physical health, psychological health in the elderly is essential because it is directly related to their quality of life and well-being. The elderly often face various challenges, such as the loss of a partner, social isolation, and decreased physical abilities, which can cause stress, depression, and anxiety (Kio & Priastana, 2021). Psychological health helps the elderly maintain independence, improve social relationships, and reduce the risk of mental health problems. Good psychological support can help the elderly cope with life changes, increase resilience, and encourage them to engage in valuable activities, improving their overall quality of life (Masruroh & Rahma, 2023).

Spatial comfort, including facilities and interiors, significantly impacts the physical and psychological health of the elderly. A well-designed environment can facilitate better mobility,

reduce the risk of falls, and provide easy access to necessary facilities (Chee, 2023). For example, good lighting and soft colours can improve mood and reduce stress. At the same time, ergonomic furniture helps the elderly carry out daily activities without causing physical strain. In addition, comfortable social areas can encourage interaction and physical activity, which is essential for maintaining overall health (Azharani et al., 2024). Therefore, space planning that pays attention to comfort not only improves the quality of life of the elderly but also sustainably supports their physical health.

A comfortable and welcoming environment can increase feelings of safety and calm, which is essential for their mental well-being. Good interior design, such as adequate lighting, calming colours, and functional layouts, can help seniors feel more independent and reduce stress. In addition, facilities that support mobility, such as handrails and ergonomic chairs, can reduce the risk of injury so that seniors feel more confident in daily activities. Thus, creating a comfortable and functional space improves seniors' quality of life and psychological health (Amalia et al., 2023).

The facilities used also contribute to the quality of life of the elderly. Adequate facilities, such as easily accessible health care, recreation centres, and social gathering places, support mental and physical health. These facilities can help the elderly stay socially active, reduce feelings of loneliness, and increase interactions with others (Candra et al., 2024). By accessing valuable services and activities, the elderly can feel increased mental health and happiness. Creating a comfortable environment and providing good facilities not only improves the quality of life of the elderly but also strengthens social bonds that are important for their emotional health.

Spatial comfort in the elderly significantly impacts their physical, psychological, and social health. In addition, a comfortable space can create a calming atmosphere, which positively impacts psychological health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression levels. On the social side, spatial comfort encourages social interaction and engagement, which are very important for the emotional well-being of the elderly. Thus, creating a comfortable and supportive environment improves physical health and strengthens the mental health and social connections of the elderly, all of which contribute to a better quality of life.

One place that needs to provide comfort for the elderly is a school for elderly students. Schools for elderly students are one of the practical places to overcome the problems faced by the elderly by providing an environment that supports learning, social interaction, and skills development (Widyaningsih et al., 2022). The goal is to support the elderly in improving their skills and knowledge in various areas of life, such as health, social skills, financial management, and technology. Government agencies, private organizations, or social institutions generally organize schools for elderly students. The subject matter offered is usually tailored to the needs and interests of the elderly to provide maximum benefits for them. In addition, schools for

elderly students also function as a place to interact with peers and improve the quality of their social life (Daryanto et al., 2023).

One senior school that significantly impacts the physical and psychological health of the elderly is the Sekolah Lansia Rumah Budaya Bahagia (SLRBB), located in Depok City. SLRBB provides various programs designed to support physical health improvement, such as sports activities and skills training, as well as activities that stimulate mental health, such as group discussions and art activities. With this holistic approach, SLRBB helps the elderly maintain their physical health and improve their overall quality of life through social interaction and continuous learning.

Thus, the space in the Sekolah Lansia Rumah Budaya Bahagia (SLRBB) in Depok City significantly influences the physical and psychological health of the elderly because a well-designed environment can improve their mobility, safety, and comfort. Adequate space, with good lighting and sufficient ventilation, can reduce the risk of falls and improve physical health through more accessible physical activities. In addition, a comfortable and pleasant environment can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression and improve sleep quality and mental well-being. Creating spaces that support social interaction and provide a sense of security can help the elderly feel more connected and empowered, contributing to their holistic health.

CONCLUSION

To build on these findings, it is important to recognize that the results provide clear evidence of the significant relationship between physical health, psychological health, and spatial comfort in enhancing the overall well-being of the elderly. However, future research could further explore how these factors interact over time and in various cultural settings. Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific environment (SLRBB in Depok), and therefore, future studies could examine the applicability of these findings in different elderly care facilities across diverse geographic locations. For practitioners working with elderly populations, it is advisable to focus on creating environments that balance physical, psychological, and spatial needs. This can be achieved through regular health assessments, programs aimed at improving both mental and physical health, and maintaining a conducive environment that supports elderly mobility and psychological comfort. Policy-makers might consider incorporating these findings into the design and development of elderly care programs to ensure a holistic approach to elder care. Lastly, for future researchers, investigating the long-term impacts of this integrated approach on elderly well-being, or exploring other potential factors such as family involvement, could provide additional insights. A comparative study between urban and rural settings could also offer a broader understanding of how spatial comfort affects elderly health in different contexts.

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