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The Golden Age Boarding School Program at *Pondok Pesantren Daarut Tauhid Bandung* (PMK-DT) as a Spiritual Training Model for the Older Adults

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Abstract

This article outlined a conceptual framework for understanding the social psychology phase of the older adults in fulfilling their activity needs later in life towards a meaningful life. This study used a phenomenological approach by conducting in-depth telephone interviews with PMK-DT Bandung Program alumni from batches 25 and 32. This study also aimed to reveal the "Golden Age Boarding School" program at *Pondok Pesantren Daarut Tauhid* Bandung (PMK-DT) in meeting the needs spiritual. Gerontotranscendence theory was fundamental for the elderly who participated in the training to adjust to the next phase of life. This training used a habituation approach and strengthening of religious values for participants to keep practicing after returning to their homes and the humanism approach by ustadz in the training process and program evaluation. After participating in the training program, the results showed that the older adults felt calmer in their lives, full of spirituality, and could even invite other family members to practice suitable living arrangements; for example, they did the five salats (obligatory prayers) on time, increased their charity and other good deeds. Several alumni were interested in joining the PMK follow-up program offered by DT Bandung.

Keywords

The older adults, training program, spirituality

1 Introduction

The global population dynamics show that there has been a structural change in the aging population. This phenomenon affects the health sector's progress, which results in an increase in the population's life expectancy and a decrease in mortality. Similarly, demographic changes have occurred in Indonesia; The Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2013; 2020) released data that the proportion of the elderly population (60+) is estimated to be 23.66 million in 2017 (9.03%), 25.64 million in 2019 (9.60%), 2020 (27.08 million), 2025 (33.69 million), 2030 (40.95 million), and 2035 (48.19 million) as quoted in (S. Suryadi & Priajana, 2020).

The increasing number of elderlies has broad implications. As stated by Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner in Rosana (2015) three social structures must prepare themselves to welcome changes in population phenomena, namely 1) the family, with the potential challenges of intergenerational conflict. 2) educational institutions because they allow elderly students, and 3) the health system, where there has been a shift in disease patterns and exceptional health services for the elderly.

Our country has responded to the population situation of the millennium century with the issuance of Law Number 13 of 1998 concerning the Welfare of the Elderly, in Chapter III concerning Rights and Obligations, Article 5 paragraph (1) Elderly have the same rights in the life of society, nation, and state. (2) In respect for the elderly, the right to improve social welfare includes: (a) spiritual-religious and spiritual services; (b) health services; (c) employment opportunities services; (d) education and training services; (e) convenience in using public facilities and infrastructure; (f) convenience in legal services and assistance; (g) social protection; (h) social assistance.

The state's efforts to pay attention to the welfare of the elderly population, including the right to education and training, are also strengthened through Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 43 of 2004 concerning Improvement of Efforts to Implement Social Welfare for the

Elderly. This condition also illustrates that the Government provides space for family and community participation in making it happen (A. Suryadi, 2014)

Developed countries have prepared the challenge of increasing the life expectancy of an increasingly aging population. Although this is not as easy as we imagine, Tam (2013) states that the Government of Hong Kong provides education for groups of the elderly population at several universities, schools organized by non-governmental institutions, and even in particular institutions that provide education and training for the older adults. This condition can be implemented because academics have done many studies about the importance of the elderly to remain active and productive.

Cumming in Rosana (2015) revealed that three theories of social psychology indicate the best path for individuals after entering retirement, namely: 1) Disengagement Theory, they reveal that old age is the time for the individual to withdraw from the activity. 2) Activity Theory by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin in Indati, Adiyanti, and Ramdhani (2019), revealed that the elderly must continue to do activities and work so they will remain happy. 3) Continuity Theory, initiated by Atchley (1989) that the elderly are expected to continue their previous activities before entering retirement.

Erikson and Frankl in Rosana (2015), reveal that old age is a final phase in human life in which awareness of religion and spiritual life is increasing. It is reinforced by Santrock's in Ramdani (2016) argument that there is a tendency that individuals will be closer to religious life and spirituality at the stage of entering the elderly. Furthermore, Shaw and Stevens (2019), reinforces how vital religion and spirituality are because they give meaning to one's life and help overcome adverse situations in the final phase of human life. The community's religious life and social support of spiritual life help individuals in a transcendent inner atmosphere. God the Almighty will govern and guide a life filled with love, mercy, and blessings.

The *Daarut Tauhiid* Islamic Boarding School (PMK-DT) Bandung program is a religious institution managed by the community with various educational programs affiliated with well-known religious education. Abdullah Gymnastiar is a central figure and also a role model for most Muslims in Indonesia. Pesantren DT Bandung was founded in the 1980s (<https://daaruttauhiid.sch.id/sejarah/>) and is overgrowing because it can win people's hearts need a spiritual touch amid the hustle and bustle of urban life. Aa Gym, the familiar greeting of the central figure of DT-BS, captures the phenomenon of religious-themed learning needs for the elderly who want to remain happy and optimistic in living a meaningful life and having religious values Muslims.

The PMK-DT Bandung program is a community education training model oriented towards individuals entering the elderly phase. DT Bandung's decision to initiate the PMK program is a strategic step to meet the religious learning needs of the elderly at a 40-day Islamic boarding school in DT Bandung. The phenomenon of PMK DT Bandung raises many questions because theoretically, conceptually, and practically, it has met the criteria that experts have formulated. It is undoubtedly a study for academics. Besides being grateful for the presence of the PMK-DT Bandung program, it is like an oasis in the middle of a barren desert. Based on the previous explanation, researchers were interested in researching "The Golden Age Boarding School"- *Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid* - (PMK-DT) Bandung as a Training Model for Older Adults Population Groups."

Maryam, Firdaus, and Komariah (2014) research on the Islamic education model in *Daarut Tauhiid* Bandung found that during the process of Islamic education in PMK, the following were: 1) fostering motivation to continually draw closer to Allah as an effort to achieve *husnul khotimah*, 2) foster motivation and enthusiasm to always add knowledge, especially religious knowledge, 3) build good character (good and strong) in PMK *santri* (students), both namely respecting each other, helping each other, being humble, while strong, namely: discipline, self-reliance, etc., 4) the establishment of relationships among students and or the surrounding environment.

Belani, Ishak, and Hasanah (2017), examined how the influence of *musyriif's* performance on the learning motivation of elderly participants, using a survey method with a quantitative approach. This study indicated that the performance of *musyriif's* in the golden age of Islamic boarding schools is in the "Very Good" category. It showed that the *musyriif's* performance in discipline, work quality, and work skills is in the top category. Likewise, the learning motivation of elderly participants in the golden age boarding school is in the "Very High" category. It indicated that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of the participants were in good condition and were ready to take part in training activities. At the same time, the data processing results regarding the effect of *musyriif's* performance on learning motivation of elderly participants had 51.5% results. Its value meant that the *musyriif's* performance contributes 51.5% to the motivation of the elderly participants in the PMK program. What needs to be improved in this program is the addition of *musyriif* to maximize the activities carried out.

Kartini (2019), examines Self-Strengthening Achieving *Husnul khotimah* through the PMK Program at *Pondok Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid* (Case Study on Elderly Students at *Pondok Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid*).

The study results were as follows: 1) Planning the PMK program is packaged in training with an Andragogy approach. It consisted of identifying needs, potentials, and problems, formulating goals, a curriculum that was not rigid and designed by the institution. 2) The implementation of the PMK program consisted of three stages, namely the first stage of re-registration, interviews, pre-tests, and health tests. The second stage was orientation. The third stage was the implementation of teaching and learning activities until evaluation and graduation. Every stage of the implementation program was always conditioned in a family atmosphere. 3) Evaluation of the PMK program used two types of evaluation: learning evaluation with pre-test, post-test, and daily evaluation and program evaluation using a questionnaire instrument.

Based on three previous studies, few academics are interested in the phenomenon of the learning elderly and the education system available in the PMK-DT Bandung program. However, a comprehensive approach to educational gerontology to a learning system in a community education program has not been so profound. Maryam et al (2014) with a background in Islamic Religious Education, discussed the learning system with the requirements met in the PMK-DT program. Then, the religious curriculum that characterizes the organizers have fulfilled religious learning. Likewise, two studies from community education backgrounds have been carried out well. Kartini (2019) investigated the learning motivation of the elderly program participants and the implementation of learning activities in PMK-DT. Furthermore, with a quantitative approach, Belani et al (2017) examined the role of *musyrif* on participants' motivation in the PMK-DT program. The results showed that the role of *musyrif* was crucial and affected the motivation of the elderly in participating in the learning process in the program.

Based on the theory, concepts, and results of previous research at the locus program of the PMK-DT Bandung, research on learning systems and community development from educational gerontology still needs to be done. This study sought to see how the PMK-DT Bandung program as a model of community education programs meets the learning needs of the older adults population group observed according to social gerontology studies.

Activity theory proposed by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin in Indati (2019) that the elderly must continue to do activities and work to remain happy. Elderly activities have broad and varied meanings and contexts, not limited to activities with an economic dimension, but various activities, such as social activities (including learning activities), voluntary activities, leisure activities, and hobbies. They will be happy with meaning. Then, it will be a good orientation for them internally because they can be active and have positive values to provide help and meaning to others; family, co-workers, and society (Rosana, 2015).

Lars Tornstam positively proposed Gerotranscendence theory, a developmental theory of aging, in 1989. It was based on empirical research he carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the work of other theorists. Tornstam began to explore aging with a phenomenological qualitative approach. Fifty participants aged between 52 to 97 years were interviewed after his lecture on early concepts related to Gerotranscendence. The theory of Gerotranscendence was also based on previous theories by Jung and Erikson. This perspective shift occurred in three dimensions, cosmic dimensions, dimensions of self, and dimensions of social and personal relationships. Themes such as the redefinition of time, the relationship with previous generations, the decline in fear of death, the mystery of life, and the transcendental source of happiness in Gerotranscendence belonged to the cosmic dimension (Tornstam, 1994)

Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2015) proposed Elements of Learning Process Design for Adults; 1). Learning participants' preparation. The learning process is preceded by information about the content and style of the learning experience to be carried out, prepares them for participation, and assists in the development of building realistic expectations before the participants' learning experiences are completed. 2). Climate/ atmosphere setting. This setting consists of building trust, mutual respect, informal, cooperative, and a supportive learning climate. 3). Joint planning. Applying a collaborative approach in planning learning experiences involves adult learning participants planning based on their learning experiences. 4). Diagnosing learning needs. Learning needs are detected through a joint assessment process. 5). List of learning objectives. Learning objectives are determined through a discussion process between the teacher/ facilitator and adult learning participants. 6). Learning experience design. Lesson plans are most effective when the orientation is well prepared; study contracts, schedule, sequence of learning projects, etc. 7). Learning Activities. Learning activities are most effective when using research measures, self-study, and techniques using the experiences of all adult participants. 8). Learning evaluation. Learning evaluation is most effective when it is carried out by the participants themselves based on the evidence gathered and determined based on criteria by peers or experts.

2 Methods

Qualitative research is a research method to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups come from social or human problems. Based on the phenomenological perspective used in this study, the inductive style focused on personal meaning and translated the complexity of a problem into its characteristics. Qualitative research began in the field based on the natural environment, not theory. The data and information obtained from the field were taken for meaning and concepts, presented in an analytical descriptive manner and generally without using numbers because they prioritize the processes in the field (Creswell, 2013). The researcher identified the nature of the experience of PMK-DT alumni aged 60+ (60 years and over) in batches 25 and 32 in interpreting the spiritual training. Understanding the experience in the PMK-DT program made the philosophy of phenomenology a research method whose procedures required researchers to study many documents, both from the DT website and reference sources for previous research. After that, researchers immediately develop patterns and meaning relationships that can be analyzed.

3 Results and Discussion

Elderly learning is a form of implementation of lifelong learning, as stated by Hatimah (2017), that the lifelong learning process is the steps that a person, a group, or society encounters in the process of seeking, discovering, and developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awards that continue throughout his life to be able to adapt to the development of that era. It is in line with the concept of active elderly, along with their need for religious education. Religion and spirituality have an essential role in guiding the lives of the elderly and helping to build meaning in life and cope with adverse situations and conditions. The process of maturity in the elderly has a relationship between the concept of individual existentialism and the transcendence relationship with God who created beings as Gerontranscendence theory was initiated by Tornstam, which includes the dimensions of "cosmic," "self," and "social and personal relationships" (Tornstam, 1994).

The *Daarut Tauhiid* Islamic Boarding School in Bandung has provided answers to the needs of the elderly population who wanted to study religion and increase spiritual awareness by opening the "Golden Age Boarding School" Program (PMK). This program was a 40-day *mukim* (staying in) boarding school for participants aged 45 years and over. This program aimed to foster elderly Muslims and Muslim women to have a straight faith, authentic worship, and noble character. Then, it also aimed to facilitate Muslims and Muslim women in the golden age to prepare themselves in achieving *husnul khotimah* with knowledge of faith, sharia, and habituation of daily worship, also formed the golden age of Muslims and Muslim women to become individuals with BAKU (Good and Strong) character.

PMK-DT program is one of the non-formal learning program models in the out-of-school education development system that aims to improve and advance a non-formal education. The model consists of some components, namely, first; an instrumental input, second; a raw input, third; an environmental input, fourth; a process related to an interaction between an instrumental input and raw input, especially the educators, the fifth; an output, sixth; other inputs, seventh; an impact related to the obtained results by students and graduates.

4 Conclusions

The conclusions of this research are: (a) PMK-DT program is a form of community education model held to meet the learning needs of the elderly in religion and its application. The elderly's needs in religion increase as the aging process on the individual who realize the existing relationship between transcendent human and Almighty God; (b) Generally, the components of the PMK-DT program have worked well and synergistically to build a system of the learning and training programs, which has achieved results, namely the output performance is according to goals. It is proved by working on other inputs and the impacts shown by alumni of the program; (c) A dynamic and vibrant learning process is the description of taking and giving in the balance between participants and facilitators (Ustadz and Ustadzah). The characters of urban elderly participants, with a relatively high educational background, economic is categorized as stable, rational, and has a high motivation on learning, also never staying at

Islamic Boarding School increase the passion for learning. The synergy with professional speakers/facilitators/ *ustads/ ustadzah* or two role models such as Aa Gym and Teh Ninih make value-laden learning more meaningful and has a good experience for participants; and (d) Humanistic learning evaluation is based on the principles and the andragogy approach makes participants comfortable and enthusiastic in learning. Similarly, learning evaluation is directed to evaluate the program, especially in evaluating the program as the guarantee for the PMK-DT program that still exists in the future.

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