



## LEISURE ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION AMONG THE RETIRED ELDERLY IN TAIWAN

<sup>1</sup>Hsu, Pi-Shan, <sup>2</sup>Chang, Te-Jeng

<sup>1</sup>Department of Senior Citizen Service Management, Ching Kuo Institute of Management & Health, Keelung 203, Taiwan ROC

<sup>2</sup>Department of Industrial Education, National Taiwan Normal University, Keelung 200, Taiwan ROC

\*Corresponding Authors Email: tjmax950@yahoo.com.tw

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the retired elderly involving on leisure activities in Taiwan. The research has taken references from previous studies and based the questionnaire upon existing literatures, together with method of interviewing the focus group, this research has gathered great amount of information, and proposed several valuable recommendations for relative departments to take as the references for elderlies and future researches according to the research findings.

**Keywords:** Leisure Participation Preference, Leisure behavior, Elderly

### INTRODUCTION

The transition of social role for senior people is caused by retirement. Leisure becomes the core of senior life mostly. Hence, the participation of leisure activities creates meaning and value for senior life. Therefore, the study of leisure activity on senior people is necessary in order to take required action for the impact of ageing structure in near future.

The senior people after retirement have more time for leisure activities; therefore, they put lot of attention and focus on the quality requirement of leisure activities. The arrangement of leisure life becomes the critical satisfaction factor of senior life based upon the requirement of physical and mental health. The most wanted activity for senior people is leisure activity according to the investigation conducted by Ministry of Science and Technology which took senior people living in Taipei as the samples. The findings show 70.6% of senior people demand leisure activity as their first choice, and 17.9% of senior people choose medical services. The well planning of leisure activity is the most wanted retired life not only for senior people but also for pre-senior people and it can realize plentiful spiritual life. The average age for Taiwanese is 83.03 for female and 76.16 for male according to the statistic data of The Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics of Taiwan in 2013, which represents 12 to 15 years life in average after retirement. Therefore, the way to satisfy senior people taking preferable leisure activity can reduce the health deterioration caused by the physical and mental illness. In the meantime, the health care cost and family economical loading can be alleviated through satisfied leisure life.

Providing preferable leisure environment to fulfill the motivation and requirement of senior people facilitates the opportunity and participation of leisure activities, which

results in decreasing social problems, less health insurance loss, and better prevention effect. Consequently government expense on health insurance can be reduced significantly through better leisure activities (Chang & Hsu, 2012).

The factors influences the satisfactions of senior life are induced as health, residence, economy, social adaptation, and leisure, and they are strong correlated (Lee, 2007). Friendly interaction of social interpersonal network is the critical element influencing the satisfaction of senior life. This study mainly inquires duration, frequency, place, specific time, and companion of leisure activities participated by senior people in order to explore the type and preference of leisure activities. The findings can be the reference for senior people in participating leisure activities and planning for leisure environment.

### RESEARCH LIMITATION

1. The differences of subjects in geographic location, population structure, and economical gap between different villages in Keelung city will influence the answers of questionnaire. Therefore, authors randomly pick the subjects from different communities all over around the whole Keelung city equally in order to avoid the bias caused by picking the subjects from certain communities where the population structure and economic condition are similar.
2. Some senior people are not able to fully understand and successfully accomplish questionnaire because of disable visual and hearing capability and educational level, which results in measurement error. For the senior people from low economical families and celibate, they may not able to accomplish the questionnaire because that there is

no proper assistance to be provided for filling up the questionnaire, which results in lower questionnaire return rate.

3. Even the willingness, physical and mental condition, occupation, social expectation of subjects will influence the answers of questionnaire. The authors assume the answers are in line with real situation.

In order to overcome the limitations reviewed above, authors conduct following arrangements to reduce the measurement error and increase the questionnaire return rate:

1. The subjects are limited for the senior people living in Keelung city.
2. More volunteers are recruited to assist subjects in understanding questionnaire according to standard operation process in order to enhance correct understanding meanwhile no side effect on influencing answer.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The raise of leisure activity is good for the prosperity of leisure industry, which provides more job opportunities and results in prosperous economy and increasing government taxation. According to the research findings of leisure activity, leisure life possesses positive and constructive function to individuals and society. For individual, leisure life possesses the function of relaxation, entertainment, and personal development. For society, leisure life possesses the function of socialization and consolidation. Leisure activities release physiological and psychological pressure, initiate innovation, and recharge energy for re-launch. Senior people can free themselves from leisure activities, which results in spiritual relaxation, healthy physiology. Furthermore, leisure activities enhance family relationship and cultivate temperament for senior people. Senior people can represent life value and even achieve the function of social intercourse through collective leisure activities.

Relatively the habitual medical treatment is reduced which results in less medical expense. In addition, collective leisure activity is good for maintaining social order, establishing social ethics, and amending social practice. Therefore, providing the leisure environment that can satisfy the needs of senior people and encouraging them to conduct proper leisure activities and keep such interesting is very important and beneficial for the execution of senior benefit policy.

The decay of physiology condition is represented as a declining curve; therefore, age becomes the important factor of the choice of leisure activity (Loland, 2004). Occupation, education level, and economic condition are taken as the influence factors of the participation of leisure activities (Chang & Hsu, 2012; Cheng & Lia, 2006; Iso-Ahola, 1980). The variances which influence senior life include leisure time, health, benefit policy, variety of work, attention level of work, entertainment facility, occupation, age, education level, income, living area, marriage, and whether living with children (Chen, 2001; Shogan, 2002).

## METHOD

### Leisure Participation Preference

The leisure participation preference is categorized as average daily hours, frequent time zone, weekly schedule arrangement, average weekly hours, and habitual partner in this study.

### Subjects

63 senior people, aged over 65<sup>th</sup> and live in Gancheng village that is a suburban community of Keelung city in Taiwan, are picked randomly as the subjects of this study.

### Method

Literature review and questionnaire are applied for the subjects in this study. The expert team was constructed and responsible for modifying the questionnaire according to the result reviews of pilot runs.

### Expert Team

The expert team was organized by 5 scholars who had plentiful experience and knowledge in the area of Statistics, Senior Nursing Management, and Senior Life Research.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The investigation questionnaire of the participation of leisure activities for senior people was designed as the tool for this study. The questionnaire was designed into two parts:

### Personal Data

Includes eight questions in terms of gender, age, marriage, living condition, education level, occupation before retirement, expense resource for leisure activities, and health condition.

### Participation Preference of Leisure Activities

Includes five questions in terms of average daily hours, frequent time zone, weekly schedule arrangement, average weekly hours, and habitual partner. The selection items for the question are listed as followings:

- For average daily hours: below 1 hour, 1 ~ 3 hours, 3 ~ 5 hours, 5 ~ 7 hours, above 7 hours.
- For frequent time zone: morning, afternoon, night.
- For weekly schedule arrangement: weekday, weekend, everyday.
- For average weekly hours: below 1 hour, 1 ~ 10 hours, 10 ~ 20 hours, 20 ~ 30 hours, 30 ~ 40 hours, above 40 hours.
- For habitual partner: alone, spouse, children, friends, neighbors.

The questionnaire was developed as following process:

1. The draft was developed according to the conclusions induced from literature review. The in-depth discussion and review on the items, content, answering manner, and wording of the questionnaire was conducted to come out the 1<sup>st</sup> version of questionnaire.
2. The results of the 1<sup>st</sup> pilot run, applied to four senior people, were reviewed by the expert team and the conclusions were taken to modify the 1<sup>st</sup> version of questionnaire. The sequence of several questions was rearranged to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> version of questionnaire.

**THE 2<sup>nd</sup> PILOT RUN**

1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> version of questionnaire was applied to 10 subjects whom were picked randomly from the qualified senior people live in Keelung city.
2. The data of returned questionnaire were analyzed by using SPSS 17.0. The reliability analysis results represented Cronbach's Alpha 0.683.
3. The results were reviewed by the expert team in order to come out the conclusions for modifying the questionnaire.

**DATA**

The agreements of 63 qualified subjects were received and the questionnaire was applied to each of them by the authors personally in order to secure the return rate. The data of each returned questionnaire was coded and the related statistics analysis was applied by using SPSS 17.0.

**RESULTS****The Results of Part 1 of Questionnaire**

The results of the Part 1 (personal data) of questionnaire are represented in Table 1:

- For 63 subjects in this study, male covers 65.1% and female covers 34.9%.

- The age of the subjects is evenly distributed from 65 to 92.
- The highest coverage of education level is "below junior high school" which covers 46%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place covers 4.3% for "high school".
- The highest coverage of marriage is "lose spouse" which covers 34.9%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place covers 31.7% for "couple".
- The highest coverage of living condition is "lives with children" and "lives in senior care center" which both covers 31.7%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place covers 17.5% for "lives with spouse".
- The highest coverage of the occupant before retirement is "farmer / fisher / herdsman" which covers 46%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place covers 44.4% for "commerce / industry / service".
- The highest coverage of the expense resource is "personal saving" which covers 47.6%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place covers 22.2% for "government allowance".
- The highest coverage of health condition is "fair" which covers 66.7%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place covers 27% for "bad"

**Table 1 Personal data**

N=63		
Personal Status	Samples	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Males	41	65.1%
Females	22	34.9%
<b>Education Level</b>		
Below Junior High School	29	46.0%
Senior High School	26	41.3%
Undergraduate School	6	9.5%
Graduate School	2	3.2%
<b>Marriage</b>		
Not Married	17	27.0%
Married	20	31.8%
Lose Spouse	22	34.9%
Devoice	4	6.3%
<b>Living Condition</b>		
Alone	4	6.4%
Lives with Spouse	11	17.5%
Lives with Children	20	31.7%
Lives Close to Children	8	12.7%
Lives in Senior Care Center	20	31.7%
<b>Occupant before Retirement</b>		
Farmer/Fisher/Herdsman	29	46.0%
Military/Public Servant/Teacher	2	3.2%
Housekeeper	4	6.4%
Industry/Commerce/Services	28	44.4%
<b>Expense Resources</b>		
Pension Fund	6	9.5%
Personal Saving	30	47.6%
Offer by Children	13	20.7%
Government Allowance	14	22.2%

<b>Health Condition</b>		
Well	3	4.7%
Fair	42	66.7%
Bad	17	27.0%
Severe	1	1.6%

### The Results of Part 2 of Questionnaire

The results of Part 2 of questionnaire (participation preference of leisure activities) are represented as followings:

1. For the average daily hours, “7 hours” covers 28.6% which is the most popular daily participation hours.
2. For the frequent time zone, “afternoon” covers 73% which is the most popular time zone.
3. For the weekly schedule arrangement, “everyday” covers 71.4% which is the most popular weekly schedule arrangement.
4. For the average weekly hours, “20 ~ 30 hours” covers 60.3% which is the most popular weekly participation hours.
5. For the habitual partner, “friends” covers 58.7% which is the most popular habitual partner.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the findings of this study, authors raise following conclusions and suggestions for government:

- Government shall consider the actual needs and participation status of leisure activities which senior people participate in order to construct a plentiful supporting system and safety environment in terms of legislation, senior benefit policy, community attention, and in-home nursing services.
- Government shall reward universities to set up leisure activities or learning courses by community colleges for senior people, and reward private associations to set up

community attention activities for senior people.

- Government shall propagate and encourage senior people to participate in dynamic leisure activities instead of static leisure activities.

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