

Personal Growth Initiative in Young Old's Successful Life

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Abstract: Entering elderly, individuals will experience many changes in their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social abilities. These changes include decreased strength and function of the body, decreased memory, feelings of loneliness, and reduced social interaction. On the other hand, there are still elderly people who have economic responsibilities to their families, or are just at home without as much activity as they used to have at work. This makes them experience extraordinary feelings. In a psychosocial perspective, there are elderly people who are wise because they have succeeded in interpreting their lives so that they feel happy and satisfied with their lives, but there are also elderly people who feel hopeless, regret, angry, and hurt. The purpose of this study is to describe Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) of the young-old age group who are successful in their lives. The subjects of this study range aged 65 to 74 years, total of 3 person (2 male and 1 female). This study used a qualitative method, data collected by using open-ended questions. Data analysis is conducted by using text analysis. This study shows that successful young-old people have high PGI scores. It means that they have good skills and efforts in developing themselves into better individuals. In addition, it is revealed that their happiness is not only in terms of career but also family. The reasons that make the young-old people have good PGI are tenacity in learning, persistence in struggling even though it is difficult, self-esteem, and belief in God. Support from family, partner, and environment also help them to have good PGI. They start trying to be good people since they have new responsibilities in their lives and since they have lost something meaningful in their lives.


1 INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the number of elderly is predicted to increase every year. Information from electronic media states that the number of elderly people in Indonesia over the age of 65 is around 16 million people (Mufarida, 2021). The details are 64.59% young old, 27.23% old old and 8.49% oldest old with an age above 80 years (Riana, 2020). This increase is predicted to continue to occur until there are 48.2 million elderly people or approximately 15.7% in 2035 (Kemkes, 2019). Data obtained from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) of the Republic of Indonesia states that the risk of the elderly living dependent on a productive population has increased by approximately 15.54%.

BPS also recorded an average of 62.28% of elderly status as head of household, which means that the elderly still have a responsibility to meet the needs of the family economy (Riana, 2020). In addition,

56.96% of the elderly who are the head of the household experience physical limitations, namely disability (Riana, 2020). Other data obtained from BPS related to the level of education of the elderly. The largest percentage of the elderly in Indonesia did not graduate from elementary school (32.48%), the elderly with the last education in elementary school (31.78%), never attended school (13.96%), high school (8.67%), junior high school (8.01%) and higher education (5.10%) (Riana, 2020). From these data illustrated that status as head of household makes the elderly still have to meet the economic needs of the family members, plus a low level of education, so that elderly people need a great struggle to work with physical function began to decline.

In Indonesia, the elderly are still a lot of active work. Seen from the percentage, the elderly who work as much as 51.05%; the elderly who take care of the household are 31.23%; 0.88% of the elderly are unemployed, the rest are doing other activities (Riana,

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2020). The majority of the type of work is unpaid labor (32.29%); as many as 28.87% of the elderly work with their own business; Another status is unpaid family workers (14.01%); 10.66% of the elderly work as freelancers; 9.66% work as employees/laborers and 4.51% work as paid workers (Riana, 2020). The average income of the elderly who have worked approximately 1.72 million (urban areas) and 1:11 million (for rural areas) per month (Riana, 2020)

In terms of health, disease that affects many elderly are diabetes, hypertension, oral and dental problems, stroke, joint disease, and heart disease. These diseases are usually coupled with dementia conditions (Kemkes, 2019). Based on these conditions, the government needs to prepare social and health service programs for the elderly (Mufarida, 2021). With the improvement of statistics, accompanied by the problems that followed, the government felt necessary to develop health care programs to optimize physical function, mental, cognitive and spiritual in the elderly to improve health conditions and optimize the quality of life of the elderly (Kemkes, 2019).

According to (Papalia et al., 2010) individuals with the elderly are divided into three parts, namely young old, old old, and oldest old. The age range of the young old is 65 to 74 years, the old old is between 75 to 84 years and the oldest old is over the age of 85 years. The age division of the elderly is based on the ability and strength of the elderly in carrying out daily activities. Physical changes that appear, namely: wrinkles on the skin; a decrease in the speed of body mobility and the quality of sensory functions such as hearing, vision; and decreased organ function resulting in the emergence of various diseases.

Another change that occurs is in cognitive abilities. The elderly experience a decline in intelligence related to changes in biological function (fluid intelligence), while intelligence related to experience, expertise and cultural values (crystallized intelligence) will be relatively stable (Papalia et al., 2010). However, according to Oberlin et al. (2021) and Muhammad (2021) elderly who experience depression will experience a decline in cognitive function which has an impact on dementia. Depression experienced by the elderly will worsen health conditions (Padayachey et al., 2017; Casey, 2017)

Depression in the elderly is caused by psychosocial problems experienced such as loneliness, poverty, divorce, limited health services, and experienced criminality (Alexopoulos, 2019). In the study of Padayachey et al. (2017) stated that

several things that can cause depression in the elderly are loneliness, marital status, perceived stress, personality attributes or characteristics, and limited social interaction. According to Erikson, depressed are elderly who are in the stage of despair (Bornstein, 2018).

According to Erikson, despair occurs when the elderly are unable to find a purpose in life. Elderly who are unable to find the meaning of the life they have lived, feel guilty and do not interpret their past experiences, fail to achieve their goals in life so they feel dissatisfied. Elderly with these conditions will be susceptible to depression, despair, and fear of his life (Bornstein, 2018). On the other hand, the elderly who succeeded in reaching the wisdom stage in their lives were the elderly who managed to interpret experiences, reflect on life, and accept their limitations (Bornstein, 2018), these elderly have a positive attitude towards death (van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2020).

To be a successful elderly and achieve psychological well-being requires effort. In the research of Wink & Staudinger (2016) the wisdom of the elderly is related to personal growth. In psychological terms this is called the personal growth initiative (PGI). The Personal Growth initiative (PGI) is an active, continuous effort to become a better person. Active and conscious individual desire and effort to become a better person. PGI is a process to change towards a better self-growth (Weigold et al., 2020). Van Woerkom & Meyers (2019) explains that PGI is a skill to improve and develop oneself for the better. PGI starts from the individual's readiness to change, the individual's ability to plan, and manage various sources of self-development and intentional behavior to achieve realized goals (Robitschek et al., 2012; Chang & Yang, 2016).

PGI is a thing that comes from within (Weigold et al., 2018). PGI contains intellectual and behavioral characteristics such as knowledge, intelligence, goals, plans and beliefs (Beri & Jain, 2016). The most important and fundamental thing in PGI, the first is done consciously and on the willingness of individuals, without coercion of things outside himself (Weigold et al., 2018). If there is something outside ourselves that force individuals to change for the better, but people do not want it then the individual is said to have not had a good PGI. Is because individuals do not have the desire to change for the better. Likewise, if the individual changes himself for the better but is done unconsciously, then his PGI cannot be said to be good (Weigold et al., 2018).

Second, PGI can be transferred (Weigold et al., 2018), meaning that when an individual has good PGI skills in academic settings, then that individual actually has PGI that is just as good in other settings, for example: work, relationships and others. The transferable nature of PGI also means that PGI does not stop at one phase of human development. Individuals who have a good PGI as a teenager will also have a good PGI as an adult (Weigold et al., 2018). A good PGI will have an impact on good psychological well-being, meanwhile, a lack of PGI will cause prolonged stress (Weigold et al., 2018). A good PGI also has an impact on self-efficacy (Weigold et al., 2018), emotional self-efficacy (Beri & Jain, 2016). In addition, personal growth is also related to skills to adapt in solving problems (Van Woerkom & Meyers, 2019), resilience abilities, satisfaction in life, self-actualization, independence, having good relationships with others and self-acceptance (Toyama et al., 2020).

In the elderly, maturity in life is obtained through personal growth initiatives. PGI will help the elderly to better complete Erikson's psychosocial stages. Elderly with a good PGI will be easier to reach the stage of generativity and integrity (Toyama et al., 2020). This is due to the PGI is good then people will more easily give a positive meaning in life that eventually led to life satisfaction. This is in line with the results of research by Borowa et al. (2018) about the relationship between PGI and life satisfaction which are interconnected through the meaning of life. Personal growth in the elderly is characterized by a balance between the needs of self and others, which is beneficial in life (Wink & Staudinger, 2016).

This study aims to 1) determine the level of PGI in the elderly who have achievements in life; 2) knowing what makes the elderly continue to strive to be a good person and why; 3) knowing parties who support the elderly to continue to be good individuals; 4) knowing when they started trying to be a better person; and 5) knowing how to be a better person.

This research is expected to be useful in deepening the understanding of psychology, especially in the development of PGI theory in Indonesia. Through various researches on PGI, it will help bring up programs that can help the government to optimize the lives of the elderly who are successful and happy.

2 METHOD

This study uses two methods, namely quantitative and qualitative or commonly known as the mix method.

The mix method is a combination of quantitative research that uses numerical data for analysis and qualitative research that uses textual data for analysis (Leppink, 2017). PGI criteria in the elderly were obtained using the *Personal Growth Initiative Scale – II (PGIS-II)* (Robitschek et al., 2012). This scale has a reliability of 0.84 to 0.91. PGIS-II has 16 statement items, which consist of four PGI dimensions, namely readiness for change (Readiness for change), planfulness, using resources, and intentional behavior. An example of a readiness for change dimension statement is "I know when I need to make a specific change in myself"; the planfulness dimension "I know steps I can take to make intentional changes in myself"; dimension using resources "I use resources when I try to grow"; and an example of an intentional behavior dimension statement, namely "I am constantly trying to grow as a person" (Robitschek et al., 2012). These statements are accompanied by five answer choices from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Qualitative data obtained by using open-ended questions. In this study, 8 questions were asked, including 1) the proudest achievement you have ever had in your life? 2) What things make you try to be a good person? 3) Who supports you to keep trying to be a good person? 4) When did you decide to keep trying to be a good person? 5) Why are you trying and trying to be a better person? 6) How do you keep trying to be a better person? 7) The toughest problem you've ever had in your life? 8) Have you ever hurt yourself (such as hitting, banging your head, cutting your hand, etc)?

Characteristics of the subjects in this study were young elderly (young-old) in the age range of 65 to 74 years, totaling 3 elderly (2 male and 1 female), Javanese, living in Java, and the last education was at least a bachelor's degree. Data were collected during the pandemic covid-19 over the internet. The data obtained were processed and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques for the PGI scale and used text analysis for qualitative data. The research procedure began with literature study, research proposal writing, data collection, data analysis and publication of research results.

3 RESULT

The subjects of this study consisted of 2 men and 1 woman. Overall subject 68 years. The results of quantitative data obtained that the average PGI score was 4.8, male subjects had a PGI average of 4.9 and female subjects had a score of 4.6. The average score

of each PGI dimension on the subject is also quite good, namely 4.8; 4.9; 4.4 and 4.9 for the dimensions of readiness for change, planning, use of resources and intentional behavior. These scores mean that the PGI possessed by the subjects of this study is in a good category when viewed from the total PGI score and the scores of each dimension. In other words, there is no difference in PGI when viewed from the gender of the subject.

Qualitative data with the first question about *the proudest achievement in your life?*, obtained data that achievement is related to position and rank in career for male subjects. Meanwhile, for female subjects, the proudest achievement in life is getting grandchildren of a certain gender. The next data, related to the question of *what makes the subject continue to strive to become a better person?* The answers are religion, self-respect, and a desire to keep learning. The answer to the third question about *supportive people to continue to change to be a better person?* The answers are self, family, partner and environment.

The answer to the fourth question is *when did you decide to change into a good person?* is since not working (retirement), since adulthood and since marriage. The answer to the fifth question, (*why are you trying to become a better person?*) is a must, seeking God's will and the demands of moral values. The answer to the sixth question (*how do you become a good person?*) is to force yourself to accept criticism, force yourself to obey God's commands, and always correct mistakes. Questions related to *the toughest problems ever experienced in life* are the betrayal of friends, always being patient and sincere, getting physical illness. Of all the research subjects answered that they had never hurt themselves during their life.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 The PGI Level of the Old People Who Have Life Achievements

Based on the data obtained, it is revealed that these young-old people have good PGI with an average score of 4.8. A good PGI means that they have a strong effort in developing themselves to become a better person. In addition, they also have both cognitive and behavioral skills to keep getting better. They have good cognitive skills in considering and realizing what things are needed to change for the better and good behavioral skills to take the steps or methods needed to change for the better (Robitschek et al., 2012; Weigold et al., 2020). A good PGI can be

obtained when individuals are able to carry out the eighth stage of Erickson's psychosocial theory, namely integrity vs despair. In this case, successful and happy individuals are old people aged 65 years and over who are able to integrate and reflect on their past experiences and achievements (Bornstein, 2018).

In this study, it is revealed that the subjects feel they have achieved achievements in their lives, they are able to interpret what they have and experience. Giving meaning to life or having a meaningful life can be interpreted as living in harmony so that life is directed at clear goals (Ivtzan et al., 2013). The life goals that individuals have will become reasons for them to live (Csabonyi & Phillips, 2020). The achieved life goal will be an achievement in an individual's life. This achievement is not only in the form of a career but also a family. A good PGI will help these old people to achieve their goals in life, because PGI is a deliberate and active effort to develop themselves in achieving goals (Robitschek et al., 2012; Chang & Yang, 2016).

These old people are also able to value their lives by never hurting themselves. Individuals with good PGI will be able to resist painful and traumatic events in their lives (Shigemoto & Robitschek, 2018; Shigemoto et al., 2015; Borowa et al., 2016). This is because a good PGI in an individual will make him continue to try and look for reasons to become a better person, even though he has experienced failure. A good PGI makes individuals have a better ability to withstand stressful conditions. These individuals have resilience and are better in coping with stress (Toyama et al., 2020). PGI is also a factor that can protect individuals from stress and is able to reduce perceived stress through efforts to develop for the better (Ayub & Iqbal, 2012).

4.2 The Reasons That Make the Old People Continue to Strive to Be Good People

Based on the results of this study, it is revealed that the causes or reasons for these young-old people to continue trying to be better individuals are their desire to continue to learn, their belief in religion, their belief and appreciation for themselves, the demands of morals and norms, seeking sincerity and God's blessing, and the belief that self-change for the better is a must.

According to Toyama et al. (2020) psychosocial factors are related to PGI possessed by old people. These psychosocial factors include work, good relationships with other people, and relationships with God. This is in line with the results of this study

that old people have good PGI because of the support from their families, partners and the surrounding environment. In addition, they also have obedience and desire to always achieve sincerity and willingness from God by obeying God's commands. The level of individual involvement in religion and carrying out God's commands is positively related to individual psychological well-being, including PGI (Ivtzan et al., 2013). With his religiosity, an individual will have positive feelings and relationships with his life experiences (Mcbane, 2019).

Religiosity itself is an individual's belief in religion and his involvement in activities related to belief in that religion (Ivtzan et al., 2013; Mcbane, 2019). Meanwhile, spirituality is a belief in an individual regarding internal experiences to understand transcendental life, with or without religion. Compassion, gratitude, awareness of things beyond human power, and respect for life to achieve the life goals are parts of spirituality (Mcbane, 2019). In other words, the old people who have good spirituality and religiosity will have good PGI abilities because they believe that life has a positive meaning. They also believe that there are forces that control individuals outside of themselves which ultimately make them have better coping strategies than the old people who do not have good religiosity or spirituality.

4.3 Parties Who Support the Old People to Continue to Be Good People

They themselves, their family, their partner and the environment around them are the parties that support the young-old people to develop their skills to be better people. Even though PGI is personal that comes from within, the support from others is able to improve one's PGI skills to be more optimal. This is in line with the research of (Pol & Chandani, 2018) that social support and PGI are related, meaning that the better social support an individual receives, the better the PGI he has. This social support can be obtained from family, friends, neighbors, and others. In Kwon & Yang (2020) research, it is also found that support from caregivers is also associated with an increase in individual PGI.

Social support is given from one party to another. Social support can take various forms such as emotional support, information support, tangible support in the form of physical assistance, and intangible support, such as personal advice/input and companionship support (Pol & Chandani, 2018). PGI has a relationship with social support in old people.

In line with the research of Cahya et al. (2019), good social support from family is related to the quality of life of the old people in Integrated Healthcare Center (Posyandu). However, the research does not explain in detail what forms of social support provided to the old people.

Social support for old people can help them to be more enthusiastic in living their lives and affect their psychological well-being (Desiningrum, 2015). This is because they feel that they are cared for, loved and appreciated so that they have the desire and effort to develop themselves and accept the experiences that are not in line with their expectations. All forms of social support can be provided to the old people. The support helps them to overcome their problems.

5 THE TIME WHEN THE OLD PEOPLE START TRYING TO BE BETTER

The young-old people in this study decided to develop themselves into better people when they were adults, since they had new developmental tasks and new responsibilities. Furthermore, there are also those who decided to increase their PGI when they lost something that was considered valuable or meaningful in themselves. This is in line with the second principle in PGI, which is transferability (Weigold et al., 2018) (Kwon & Yang, 2020), where a good PGI remains exist even though it is in the next phase of life.

6 THE WAYS TAKEN TO BE BETTER PEOPLE

When reviewed from the PGI principle, which is an active and deliberate effort to become a better person (Weigold et al., 2018), the old people who have succeeded in interpreting their life experiences and achievements are seen to continue to try and force themselves to change for the better by accepting criticism from others, obeying God's commands, and always improving themselves. The old people in this study have intentional activity and behavior to change into better people. Their answers with the words "must be willing to accept criticism"; or "forcing myself to continue to do what is right according to religious orders" imply a conscious effort with a strong desire even though it feels heavy. The answers also provide reinforcement for previous studies that

individuals with good PGI will be able to survive in stressful conditions so that they are able to adapt to the conditions and show hardiness (Weigold et al., 2013).

In addition, the subjects' answers about forcing themselves to change, accepting criticism, obeying God's commands and always improving themselves can be viewed from the dimension of intentional behavior, that individuals will try to be better even though it is difficult and hard for them (Robitschek et al., 2012; Shigemoto & Robitschek, 2018). Individuals with good PGI will have problem solving skills, especially the ability to reflect on their good coping style (Pol & Chandani, 2018).

The limitation of this study is the limited number of subjects. This is because the data retrieval was done online during the covid-19 pandemic. In addition, based on BPS data, the number of old people who use the internet is still limited (Riana, 2020). In addition, variations in gender, ethnicity-culture, level of education, religion of the research subjects are also still very limited.

7 CONCLUSION

This study can describe the Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) in young old people who have achievements in their lives. The results show that the PGI of the elderly is in the high or good category, meaning that the young elderly have good readiness for change, planfulness, using resources and intentional behaviors. This is because they are able to interpret their life experiences and achieve their life goals. The purpose of life, which the young elderly consider as an achievement, not only in the field of work but also in the family. The elderly continue to strive to be better, namely the desire to continue learning, high self-image and belief in God.

Efforts to always be a good person are conditioned within themselves because of moral values, religiosity that is believed. The elderly seem to keep trying to be a better person even though it feels difficult and heavy. In addition, the elderly have people who always support them to develop into a good person, namely: family, partner and the surrounding environment.

The elderly are trying to become a better person since the age of entering adulthood and have new responsibilities in their lives. However, there are also seniors who are just learning to be better people after losing something important in their lives. The way they do to become a better person is to be hard on themselves. The elderly continue to try to be better

even though it is unpleasant, such as accepting criticism, being patient and sincere with the conditions that occur to them.

Based on the results of this study and its limitations, the researcher suggests that further researchers who are interested in the same research construct, namely PGI or interested in the same research subject, namely the elderly, pay more attention to the diversity of characteristics of the elderly who are used as a population, including the number of subjects who become research participants, so that the study can be generalized to a wider population. In addition, if researchers use qualitative methods, they should further enrich the literature review and deepen the answers from research participants in order to obtain more detailed data.

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