

Religious Development for the Elderly in the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the influence of religious activities on the spiritual well-being of elderly people living in social care institutions. Spiritual well-being is an important aspect of the lives of elderly people, especially in dealing with the various physical, psychological, and social changes that accompany the aging process. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of informants consisting of elderly people, caretakers of the institution, and religious leaders. The results showed that religious activities, such as religious study, collective dhikr, and regular spiritual guidance have a positive impact on inner peace, enthusiasm for life, and a sense of meaning in life for the elderly. These activities also strengthen social relationships among residents of the institution and strengthen the spiritual dimension of the elderly in their old age. Supporting factors for religious activities include the availability of adequate worship facilities and infrastructure, a supportive social environment, and the active role of religious leaders as spiritual guides and motivators. Conversely, inhibiting factors include the elderly's weak physical condition, limited access to activities, and a lack of specialized assistance. Thus, the implementation of structured and sustainable religious activities is essential as part of a holistic approach to improving the quality of life of elderly people in social care institutions.

Keywords : Islamic Education, Religious Development, Spiritual Well-Being.

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Introduction

Islamic education plays an important role in helping humans increase faith in Allah SWT. The deeper one's understanding of the basic principles of Islamic education, the greater the opportunity to become an obedient and faithful person. Conversely, without knowledge of the basics of Islamic education, a person will have difficulty in getting closer to Allah SWT., let alone to truly become a believing servant ([Hidayah, 2023](#)) . The task of a servant from childhood to old age is only to do His commands and ask for His pleasure in carrying out all His commands. By carrying out Allah's commands through worship and staying away from all

His prohibitions, the elderly will feel inner peace and surrender completely to Allah SWT while waiting for the end of their lives ([Zunaida & Sahrandi, 2021](#)).

Along with the aging process, which is a natural part of human development, individuals will enter the elderly stage. In this phase, older people often face various psychosocial challenges, especially those related to the experience of loss. These can include loss of routine roles and activities after retirement, loss of peers or life partners due to death, and reduced interaction with children who have their own families and busy lives. This can actually be minimized by worship activities such as prayer, dhikr, getting closer to Allah SWT. ([Setyowati et al., 2021](#)). The accumulation of this loss experience has the potential to cause feelings of deep loneliness. The absence of rapid and effective interventions can result in deterioration that can have a negative impact on health in general, and more specifically on the mental health of the elderly ([Pradina et al., 2022](#)).

Nursing homes are social institutions that provide services for the elderly to fulfill basic needs such as food, clothing, physical and mental care, as well as social and spiritual support ([Qorib et al., 2024](#)). One important form of service is religious guidance, which aims to improve the spiritual well-being and quality of life of the elderly. These activities include recitation, recitation of the Qur'an and prayers, Islamic studies, worship training such as congregational prayer, as well as Islamic art and sports activities. All programs are tailored to the physical and psychological conditions of the elderly, so that they can be carried out comfortably and meaningfully ([Pertiwi & Yuliyana, 2021](#)).

Some elderly people live in nursing homes due to lack of family and social support, difficulties in building relationships with family members, and family economic limitations in meeting their basic needs ([Iskandar et al., 2022](#)). In addition, aspects that influence the elderly to stay in elderly care institutions include limited social relationships to feeling lonely. Loneliness is an unpleasant emotional experience due to the lack of social relationships, and its impact is felt by the elderly ([Satria & Wibowo, 2022](#)). Therefore, attention to the elderly is not only the obligation of families and communities, but also includes the government, for example through religious guidance as a means of positive activity and spiritual strengthening ([Setyowati et al., 2021](#)). Research shows that psychological changes in the elderly are often influenced by past memories, family conflicts, and lack of attention, which can trigger emotional instability such as irritability and irritability ([Putri & Suciati, 2023](#)).

In the Qur'an it is explained that:

وَاخْفِضْ لِمَوْلَاكَ جَنَاحَ الدَّلِيلِ مِنَ الْهَرَجَةِ ۚ وَقُلْ وَفَضَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَهْلًا تَعْبُدُونَا ۚ God willing ۚ يَبْلُغُنَّ عَلَيْكَ الْكِبَرَ أَخَذَاهُ ۚ God willing ۚ تَنْهَاهُمَا ۚ وَقُلْ هَلُمُّوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمَا
God willing

Meaning: "Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you should be kind to your parents. If either of them or both of them reach an advanced age in your care, then do not say to them the word "ah" and do not yell at them, and speak to them noble words. And humble yourself before them both with great affection and say: O my Lord, have mercy on them both as they nurtured me in my childhood" (QS Al-Isra' 17:23-24).

In QS Al-Isra' Verses 23-24, there is a meaning to always be filial to parents called *birrul guardian* Birr al- Walidayn Education is a learning process regarding the obligation of children to behave respectfully and be filial to parents as mandated in Islamic teachings ([Auliyah & Muhajirin, 2024](#)). This includes obedience as long as it is not against the Shari'ah, praying for, and continuing to do good, even after the parents have passed away. Honoring parents is a shar'i obligation that comes second only to the commandment to God. The Qur'an in Surah al-Isra' verses 23-24 emphasizes the importance of respect and humility of children to parents, both physically and mentally ([Komaru, 2022](#)). Also in the book that has been cited by ([Adawiah, 2022](#)) ([Masripah et al., 2024](#)) in *Islamic Psychology*, Djameluddin Ancok states that achieving learning objectives requires teachers to have special competencies, so researchers conclude that a goal that provides learning starts from a teacher who is an expert

in his field, in this case it means that it is closely related to who teaches the elderly.

In research ([Tamara, 2022](#)) shows that religious guidance at the Tresna Werdha Social Home in Natar District, South Lampung, is carried out through habituation of fardhu prayers to increase the motivation and awareness of faith of the elderly. Meanwhile, ([Dewini, Pratiwi, 2020](#)) emphasizes the importance of spiritual development through dhikr worship, such as reading Al-Fatihah and thayyibah sentences, as applied at the Tresna Werdha Budi Mulia 1 Social Home, East Jakarta. In line with that, ([Qurohman, 2023](#)) revealed that weekly routine coaching is also applied at UPTD Tresna Werdha Lampung, as a response to the condition of the elderly who are prone to physical decline, senility, and stress, in order to foster their enthusiasm for worship. One of the nursing homes or social institutions for the elderly in West Java Province is the Griya Garut Elderly Service Unit. One of the activities provided to the elderly there is religious guidance activities which are always given to the elderly every week to fill the activities of the elderly with more useful things, and can help the elderly to *heal* for a moment from their thoughts or problems that they are still pondering.

Based on the results of initial observations at the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit, the majority of elderly people who are called "emak" and "abah" become residents of the institution due to economic problems and neglect by their families, especially their children, as well as some who are senile and do not know the direction of the way home then become neglected. To deal with this, the process of admitting the elderly is carried out in coordination with the West Java provincial Social Service, which is tasked with assessing the condition and ensuring that the elderly are truly homeless before being referred to the service unit. Observations also show that some elderly people experience psychological disorders such as depression, characterized by behaviors such as hunger strikes, refusal to worship, and dependence on intensive assistance. In response, the institution organizes various religious guidance programs with the aim of increasing motivation and enthusiasm for life through strengthening spiritual values.

This study aims to examine the implementation, impact, supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of religious development programs at the Griya Elderly Garut Service Unit, along with solutions and handling strategies. The novelty of this research lies in the interdisciplinary approach that has not been widely applied in the context of religious guidance for the elderly in social institutions. In addition, the focus on elderly people who have experienced neglect and are referred through the formal social service system provides a new contribution to understanding the integrated and empathy-based spiritual service model in the institutional context.

By referring to the context that has been described, this research is deemed relevant to be carried out on religious guidance for elderly individuals residing in these social service institutions, with the hope that the elderly can have more positive activities, as well as being a provision of charity for the elderly in the hereafter, so that researchers are motivated to conduct research entitled "Religious Development for the Elderly in the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit".

Method

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach with a phenomenological paradigm, which is focused on exploring the meaning of individuals' subjective experiences, as they experience and live in a socio-cultural context ([Nasir et al., 2023](#)). According to John W. Creswell in *Qualitative Research & Research Design: Choosing Between Five Approaches* (3rd Edition) ([Creswell. John. W. nd](#)) ([Creswell, 2020](#)), the phenomenological approach focuses on finding the essence of the meaning of a phenomenon based on the subjective experiences of several individuals. This research was conducted at the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit, and made social workers, elderly people at the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit, and members of the Extension Association and the Ministry of Religion who served at the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit as research subjects. Data collection techniques used triangulation techniques through participatory observation (taking part in activities), in-

depth interviews (including additional information), and documentation (including pictures). This technique is specifically intended to collect data from communities with specific or hard-to-reach characteristics ([Lenaini, 2021](#)). After the data is collected, the researcher analyzes it by categorizing and describing the findings based on the informant's perspective, then formulating the meaning of the phenomenon raised by the researcher. The informants in this study include the following characteristics: (1) Directly involved in the welfare program for the elderly both administratively and in the implementation of activities; (2) Having an understanding of the psychosocial dynamics and needs of the elderly; (3) In a physical and mental condition that makes it possible to be interviewed, and willing to share their experiences, especially related to religious guidance activities; (4) Is an official or staff in a field directly related to the implementation of the guidance program; (5) Has insight into religious programs targeting the elderly, so this study involved 6 participants including social workers, the elderly, and members of the Extension Association and Dharma Wanita under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion.

Result

Activities and Categories of Elderly

There is a relationship between the elderly's independence in activities of daily living (ADLs) and their quality of life in nursing homes. The results show that most of the elderly are independent and have a good quality of life. There is a significant relationship between independence and quality of life, supported by activity theory which states that older people who are physically and socially active tend to have higher life satisfaction, and social theory which emphasizes the importance of physical and social involvement for the well-being of the elderly ([Nurlianawati, 2021](#)).

In the article ([Khuzaimah et al., 2021](#)) states that there is a significant positive relationship between perceptions of social support, both from caregivers and fellow residents, with the level of happiness felt by the elderly. Happiness is measured based on the dimensions of the past (gratitude and forgiveness), present (gratification), and future (hope and optimism) according to Seligman's theory. The results of the analysis showed that social support contributed 26.5% to happiness, while the rest was influenced by other factors such as gratitude, spirituality, and personal background. The study confirms the importance of a supportive social environment and religious activities in improving the psychological well-being of elderly people in social institutions.

In the book ([Maghfuroh et al., 2023](#)) entitled "Care of the Elderly" discusses theories and practices that support the holistic fulfillment of the needs of the elderly, including physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. In the context of elderly activity theory, this book emphasizes that elderly people who remain physically and socially active have better levels of life satisfaction and mental health. Activities that are appropriate to the abilities of the elderly are believed to slow down the degenerative process, increase self-esteem, and maintain their social role in the community or nursing home environment. This theory underpins the importance of interventions that encourage older people to remain engaged in meaningful activities, whether in the form of skills, hobbies, spiritual activities or interpersonal relationships, as part of efforts to improve the quality of life in old age.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, the activities at the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit that needs to be carried out by the elderly are quite dense, including every Monday the activities begin with healthy gymnastics in the morning, social guidance, and skills guidance. Then on Tuesday, there are relaxation gymnastics activities and majlis taklim activities, the afternoon is closed with art activities. On Wednesday, the activities are healthy heart exercises, skills guidance, and vocal exercise guidance. On Thursday, there are health counseling activities and majlis taklim, as well as playing qosidah. On Friday, there is a leisurely walk and spiritual guidance. These activities are not mandatory for the Bed Rest category, but are required for the Independent and Semi Bed Rest categories out of a total of 86 residents.



In the Service Unit, the elderly are classified into three categories, namely Independent, Semi Bed Rest, and Bed Rest. Independent category elderly are individuals who are able to carry out daily activities as if they are still fresh and fit, such as the need to bathe, eat, pray at the mosque without special assistance, and can usually walk without assistive devices. Elderly in the Semi Bed Rest category requires a cane or wheelchair due to declining health conditions, such as low back pain, leg weakness, or visual impairment. Although not always accompanied intensively, seniors in this category still require supervision to prevent the risk of falls and ensure assistance when needed. Meanwhile, the Bed Rest category includes seniors whose activities are limited to eating, drinking, and lying down in a special care room, with intensive 24-hour supervision by a supervisor or caregiver for ongoing health monitoring.

The activities that are the focus of research here are majlis taklim activities, which are a form of synergy from the Ministry of Religion, the Association of Islamic Religious Counselors in the Tarogong Kidul region, and the Dharma Wanita Community. This proves that religious leaders need to actively collaborate to actively provide motivation, both through formal events such as majlis taklim and more relaxed non-formal ones, in order to reach various layers of society from teenagers to the elderly ([Farihin & Fitria, 2024](#)).

Implementation of Majlis Taklim Activities

The majlis taklim activity is a form of religious guidance that is carried out regularly at the Garut Griya Elderly Service Unit. This activity is a forum for spiritual strengthening for the elderly through structured Islamic teaching, including learning fiqh, tawhid, morals, reading the Qur'an, and memorizing daily prayers.

From the perspective of *social workers*, majlis taklim activities are implemented as part of a holistic approach to elderly welfare. Social workers explained that these activities are systematically organized based on the identification of the spiritual needs and psycho-physical conditions of the elderly. They emphasize the importance of a gentle personal approach, given the character of the elderly who are strongly influenced by their individual moods and life backgrounds. This activity is also used as a means to build positive social interactions and increase the motivation of the elderly through symbolic awards to active participants.

From the perspective of *the elderly*, majlis taklim activities have a significant impact on inner peace and spiritual motivation. The emotions and experiences that arise during the activities show deep emotional involvement. One elderly person stated that participating in this activity was a form of carrying out the mandate from her late husband not to leave worship, while another elderly person mentioned that memorization activity gave a sense of pride and made leisure time more meaningful. However, there are also internal social dynamics such as interference from other participants that can affect comfort in worship.

Then according to a member of the Tarogong Kidul Region Islamic Religious Counselor Association and part of the Dharma Wanita Community under the auspices and permission of the Garut Ministry of Religion, the implementation of majlis taklim is a form of real synergy between the Ministry of Religion, Dharma Wanita, and the manager of Griya Elderly . This activity began as a personal initiative which then developed into a structured program called *Majlis Ta'lim Shifausudhur* . The main objective is to provide a spiritual touch for the elderly who feel neglected, and facilitate a slow but sustainable spiritual transformation. The counselors judge the success of the program by the increasing number of elderly who are able to recite the Qur'an and the decreasing need for individual spiritual consultations, indicating increased independence in the management of one's spirituality.



Impact of Implementation of Majlis Taklim Activities

The paper explains that religious activities have a positive impact on the psychological condition of the elderly, especially in reducing loneliness, anxiety, and increasing inner calm. The theory underlying this is that spiritual and religious activities are able to strengthen the psychological dimensions of the elderly, provide a sense of meaning in life, and build hope and optimism in the midst of their physical and social limitations. Participation in activities such as recitation, dhikr, or prayer together also serves as a means of social interaction that increases the sense of belonging and emotional support among fellow elderly. This shows that religious activities not only have an impact on spiritual aspects, but also contribute to improving the overall quality of life ([Salamun et al., 2021](#)) .

The theory underlying the influence of religious activities on elderly well-being emphasizes that involvement in religious activities can provide a sense of serenity, meaning in life, and hope in old age. Activities such as regular worship, recitation, dhikr, and other spiritual activities can be a medium for coping with stress, loneliness, and anxiety that are often experienced by the elderly. In addition, participation in religious activities also strengthens social relationships among the elderly and with spiritual coaches, which directly increases emotional support and a sense of being valued. Thus, religious activities contribute positively to the well-being of the elderly, both psychologically, socially, and spiritually ([Farihin & Fitria, 2024](#)) .

The impact of implementing religious activities, especially in the form of religious education in social institutions such as nursing homes, has a very positive impact on the welfare of the elderly, both psychologically, emotionally and spiritually. Elderly people who participate in religious activities regularly feel an increase in the meaning of life, inner peace, and enthusiasm to live older ages more optimistically and hopefully. These activities also serve as a means to overcome feelings of loneliness, isolation, and helplessness that often arise due to decreased physical function and social limitations. Through religious education, the elderly not only gain spiritual understanding, but also character building, strengthening life values, and developing social aspects through interactions with others. Thus, religious activities contribute to the overall quality of life of the elderly and make them still feel valuable and

meaningful in living old age ([Noor, Triana & Inayati, Isna, 2021](#)) . Based on observations, the implementation of majlis taklim activities has an impact on the elderly, including:

1. Social worker perspective

- a) The elderly becomes easier to direct and adhere to the activity schedule.
- b) There is a decrease in conflict between the elderly because the religious atmosphere fosters calmness and self-control.
- c) The elderly show enthusiasm in participating in activities, such as actively asking questions and memorizing short letters.
- d) Responses to activities varied; some refused due to psychological factors or mood swings.
- e) Social workers continue to provide assistance and understanding so that the elderly do not feel forced and are still valued.

2. Elderly Perspective (Majlis Taklim Participants)

- a) The elderly feel inner calm and spiritual strengthening after participating in Quran recitation and lecture activities.
- b) Majlis Taklim activities help the elderly accept the realities of life, especially the loss of a spouse or physical limitations.
- c) The elderly feel happier and less lonely, especially because of the interaction with ustadz / ustadzah who are warm and empathetic.
- d) Improving social relations among the elderly, such as sharing tajweed knowledge, memorization, and spiritual experiences.
- e) This activity is a positive means to distract the mind from sadness and increase the spirit of life.

3. Perspective of Members of the Islamic Extension Association

- a) Increased ability of the elderly in Qur'an recitation activities and understanding of the basics of Islam (BTQ, fiqh , tawhid).
- b) The elderly who were initially passive and pessimistic became more active in spiritual activities and more accepting of their condition.
- c) Regular evaluation is carried out through a learning book and coordination with social workers to monitor the progress of the elderly.
- d) The counselors faced psychological challenges from the elderly, such as non-substantive requests or laziness, which were overcome with a counseling approach.
- e) The success of the activities is seen from the reduction in requests for personal consultation, as the elderly become more spiritually independent.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of Majlis Taklim and their Solutions

Elderly participation in religious activities is influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors that come from internal and external conditions. Supporting factors include adequate physical health, religious enthusiasm, support from caregivers or family, and the availability of worship facilities and a religious environment. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include physical limitations, lack of assistance, lack of access to religious facilities, and psychological barriers such as embarrassment or loss of interest. This theory emphasizes the importance of environmental and spiritual support so that religious activities can run effectively and have a positive impact on the elderly ([Arianti, Tryana, 2023](#)) .

Religious leaders have an important role in overcoming the various obstacles faced by the elderly in participating in religious activities. They act as spiritual motivators who provide moral encouragement, arouse the spirit of worship, and strengthen the beliefs of the elderly to continue practicing religious teachings despite physical or psychological limitations. In addition, religious leaders also act as spiritual companions, providing direct guidance through approaches that are in accordance with the conditions and abilities of the elderly. They help

create a religious and comfortable environment, and adjust the method of delivering religious material to make it simpler and easier to understand. The presence of religious leaders also bridges communication between the elderly, their families and the orphanage, so that the elderly still have access to worship facilities and regular religious activities. With this contribution, religious leaders are able to help the elderly overcome obstacles such as inferiority, loneliness, or limited mobility, while maintaining their spiritual well-being in old age ([Mahbengi, 2021](#)). Based on observations, there are several supporting factors for majlis taklim activities, including:

- a) Active involvement of the elderly and assistants: The diligent participation of the elderly as well as the support of social workers and religious instructors are the main foundations in maintaining the sustainability of the activities.
- b) Adequate facilities and infrastructure: The availability of a mosque, small tables for reciting the Qur'an, Mushaf Al-Qur'an, Iqro', Juz 'Amma, and a sound system supports the religious learning process comfortably and properly.
- c) Support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and religious organizations: The presence of Islamic religious instructors from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Dharma Wanita provides consistent spiritual guidance, as well as snack distribution as a form of social concern.
- d) The smooth running of majlis taklim is inseparable from the synergy between the elderly, officers and extension workers. Complete facilities and institutional support strengthen the sustainability of religious activities in the elderly griya environment.

The inhibiting factors for majlis taklim activities found include:

- a) The psychological and physical condition of the elderly: Some elderly people refuse to participate in activities because they are lazy, quarrel with others, feel uncomfortable, or experience physical problems such as fatigue and senility.
- b) Diverse backgrounds of the elderly: Differences in character and life experiences lead to gaps in acceptance of religious activities.
- c) Limited quotas and human resources: The number of residents is limited by the capacity of the place and the number of assistants, which causes limitations in personalized religious activities.
- d) Barriers in the implementation of majlis taklim mostly come from internal factors of the elderly, both emotional and physical. However, these barriers are not permanent and can be minimized with an empathic approach.

Solutions and coping strategies

- a) Persuasive and patient approach: Social workers give time and space to the elderly who refuse to participate in activities, then take a personal approach to provide understanding in a way that suits their individual characteristics.
- b) Individualized spiritual counseling: Elderly who shows extreme resistance are given private spiritual guidance to realize the importance of worship.
- c) Collaboration and program strengthening: Suggestions to improve the quality of the program through collaboration with educational institutions such as PAI University of Garut (Uniga) to develop more contextual and interesting religious learning methods for the elderly.

A patience and gentleness-based approach is a key solution in dealing with barriers to elderly participation. Strengthening the program through external collaboration is also a strategic step in improving the quality of religious guidance in the future. Improving the quality of these coaching activities also requires a sustainable commitment, as stated by (Nazib et al., 2023) that improving the quality of an education is an effort that requires commitment, planning, and continuous implementation.

Conclusion

This study shows that religious guidance activities have a significant influence on improving the spiritual well-being of the elderly in social institutions. The activities carried out include routine recitation, congregational prayer, memorization of short letters and daily prayers, provision of material (lectures). Participation in these activities has a positive effect in the form of inner calm, enthusiasm for life, strengthening the meaning of life, and improving social relations between the elderly. The successful implementation of these activities is supported by the availability of worship facilities, a supportive religious environment, and the active role of religious leaders as spiritual mentors.

However, there are several obstacles such as physical limitations of the elderly, lack of motivation of the elderly, and other things that can reduce the ability of the elderly to participate in these religious activities. For this reason, appropriate strategies and solutions are needed, including: persuasive and patient approaches from social workers to the elderly, conducting individual counseling, and improving program quality. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen coordination between the orphanage, religious leaders, and the elderly family to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the religious program. With this strategy, religious activities can run optimally and continue to contribute to improving the quality of spiritual life of the elderly in social institutions.

Suggestions

More intensive cooperation is needed between orphanage managers, religious leaders, and families in providing elderly-friendly religious facilities and forming a supportive spiritual environment. Religious leaders are expected to continue to actively assist and motivate the elderly to remain enthusiastic about living a religious life. In addition, it is necessary to develop a religious guidance program that is flexible and tailored to the physical and psychological conditions of the elderly, so that all residents of the orphanage, both independent and physically limited, can be meaningfully involved. The government and social institutions are also expected to pay more attention to the fulfillment of the spiritual needs of the elderly as part of improving their overall quality of life.

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