

The Dynamics of Elderly Family Interaction in Krajan, Glawan Village, Pabelan Subdistrict, Central Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

Krajan subvillage is one of the areas within Glawan Village, Pabelan Subdistrict, Semarang Regency. It has a population of elderly individuals aged over 75, totaling more than 5 people. Some of these elderly individuals live alone, while others reside with their children or grandchildren. The elderly engage in various forms of interaction, such as walking to their children or grandchildren's homes. Some have their offspring visit and assist with tasks like washing clothes and sweeping the floor, occurring at least twice a week for those living alone. In this digital age, the elderly also use phones for communication and interaction with their children and grandchildren. The dynamics of social interaction take place both offline and online through phone calls, not just via messaging apps. The elderly have developed habits of interacting with their families and continue to engage with the community in various activities like communal work, traditional rituals, mourning ceremonies, weddings, births, and more.

Keywords: Dynamics, Interaction, Family, Elderly.

A. INTRODUCTION

Human beings will experience the aging process, and it is an inevitable part of life. Old age, commonly referred to as the elderly stage (abbreviated as the elderly), is the final stage in human development. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the elderly are individuals who have reached the age of 60 and beyond. Based on statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (2022), Susenas March 2022 data shows that 10.48 percent of the population are elderly, with a dependency ratio of the elderly at 16.09. This means that for every one elderly person, there is support from approximately 6 individuals in the productive age group (15-59 years old). There are more elderly women than men (51.81 percent compared to 48.19 percent), and the elderly population is higher in urban areas than in rural areas (56.05 percent compared to 43.95 percent). A total of 65.56 percent of the elderly are classified as young elderly (60-69 years), 26.76 percent as middle-aged elderly (70-79 years), and 7.69 percent as old elderly (80 years and above). The increase in the elderly population can have both positive and negative impacts. Positive impacts include a healthy, active, and productive elderly population, while negative impacts may arise if the elderly face health problems leading to increased healthcare costs, reduced income, lack of social support, and an unfriendly environment for the elderly population.

There are seven stages of development in human life, namely infancy, early childhood, middle and late childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood (old age). Numerous changes and issues occur in the elderly as part of the aging process, such as a decline in biological, psychological, and

social functions. All these changes experienced by the elderly can act as stressors, influencing their overall well-being. The decline in physical and cognitive functions can impact an individual's later years. Successful and happy old age is the goal of the elderly development stage, as success in life is a key factor in supporting the well-being and sustainability of an individual's life during old age. (Medawati, dkk. 2020).

Elderly individuals in Krajan Hamlet, Glawan Village, Semarang Regency, generally live in their own homes. Some elderly live alone while their children are not in the same hamlet or village, meaning they reside outside the area. There are also elderly individuals who live in their own homes, while their children live outside the hamlet but still in the same village. Additionally, some elderly individuals reside in the same house as their grandchildren. According to Mr. Tugiman (86 years old), during the interview, he mentioned that originally, he lived in the front part of the house, but the house was given to his second child, so he moved to the back. Another elderly individual, Mrs. Gini (82 years old), chose to live in her own home after her husband passed away last year. Her children visit every two days to provide food or help with laundry by the river. Mrs. Timah (90 years old) shares a room with her son's family, as her house will be inherited by her son. Mr. R.Y. Sumarsono (83 years old) lives with his wife, as their children reside both in Salatiga and outside Salatiga. (Interview, November 11, 2023). Based on the interviews with these elderly individuals, the varied living arrangements suggest that research on the dynamics of elderly family interaction in Krajan Hamlet, Glawan Village, Semarang Regency, using social interaction theory, is warranted.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, "interaksi" is defined as reciprocal actions. On the other hand, "sosial" is related to society and involves the need for communication. An expert in the field of sociology, Soerjono Soekanto, also provides a definition of social interaction, stating that social interaction is a social process concerning ways of relating that can be observed when individuals and social groups meet, determining social systems and relationships (Soekanto, 2017). Etymologically, "interaksi" comes from the English word "interaction," which means mutual influence or the process of influencing each other. Interaction represents the dynamics of human life, both at an individual and group level within society. In other words, interaction implies a series of behaviors that occur between two or more individuals who mutually respond to each other. Therefore, interaction can also be interpreted as influencing each other's behavior, occurring between individuals and groups, or between different groups (Nusirwan, 1989).

Walgito (2007) states that social interaction is the relationship between one individual and another, where one individual can influence the other, and vice versa, resulting in a mutual relationship. This relationship can occur between individuals, individuals and groups, or groups with other groups. Meanwhile, according to Basrowi (2015), social interaction is a dynamic relationship that brings together individuals with individuals, groups with groups, and individuals with groups of

people. It takes various forms, not only in the form of cooperation but also in actions, competition, conflicts, and the like.

Partowisastro (2003) found that social interaction is a social relationship that serves to establish various dynamic social relations, whether these relations take the form of interactions between individuals, groups with groups, or individuals with groups. Soekanto (2002) states that social interaction is dynamic social relationships, which include relationships between individuals, between groups of people, and between individuals and groups of people. According to Sarwono and Meinarno (2009), social interaction is a mutual and reciprocal relationship that influences each other between individuals, individuals and groups, and groups with other groups. Gerungan (2006) delves deeper into stating that social interaction is a process where one individual can adjust oneself autoplastically to another individual, where one is influenced by the other. One individual can also adjust oneself alloplastically to another individual, where the other individual is influenced by the first. According to Soerjono Soekanto (1988: 50), "Social interaction is the key to all social life; therefore, without social interaction, there can be no communal life." In other words, human needs cannot be fulfilled without social interaction.

C. METHOD

This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive research design. Moleong (2002) states that descriptive research seeks in-depth meaning in social phenomena in reality. The method of data collection for qualitative descriptive research involves deep observation and interviews. The data collection techniques in this study include interviews, observations, and documentation. Esterberg (2002) defines interviews as a meeting between two individuals exchanging important information through question-and-answer sessions, aiming to derive meaning related to a specific topic. The observation method involves collecting data through observation and perception. According to Sugiyono (2015), documentation is a method of obtaining information and data in the form of books, archives, documents, and images used to support research.

The observation units for this research are individuals aged 80 years and above. This choice is based on the fact that this age group is considered advanced, and individuals in this age bracket typically require assistance from others due to physical limitations. The unit of analysis for this study is the dynamics of elderly family interaction in Krajan Hamlet, Glawan Village, Pabelan Subdistrict, Semarang Regency. Data analysis techniques involve data collection, data reduction, and data classification. Subsequently, the data is analyzed using social interaction theories proposed by several sociology experts. The conclusions drawn from the analysis serve as answers to the research objectives.

D. RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

From the results of interviews and observations, the following can be outlined. The elderly individuals in Krajan Hamlet, Glawan Village, generally

reside in their own homes. There are three criteria for the living arrangements of the elderly in Krajan Hamlet:

1. The elderly live in their own homes without children, grandchildren, or siblings.
2. The elderly live in their own homes, with the homes of their children and grandchildren nearby.
3. The elderly live in their own homes and share the residence with their children and grandchildren.

Based on these criteria for the living arrangements of the elderly, it shows the dynamics of social interaction that also exhibit different variations. Elderly individuals living alone without children, grandchildren, and siblings experience a more intensive dynamic of social interaction with their nearest neighbors. Meanwhile, interactions with children and grandchildren usually occur when they come to visit the elderly person's home. In an interview with Mr R.Y Sumarsono/ Mr No (83 years old), he stated:

I am only with my granddaughter because my children live in Salatiga and Yogyakarta. I do everything with my granddaughter, such as eating, chatting, and so on. We have a helper who comes in the morning and leaves in the evening. Sometimes, my children or grandchildren take turns coming to the house, bringing food, taking me to the doctor, or accompanying my granddaughter when she goes shopping. Occasionally, they call if they cannot come in person. Since we can no longer ride motorcycles or drive ourselves, we rely on a driver or ask for assistance from our children. (Interview, November 9, 2023).

Another elderly individual is Mrs. Gini (82 years old), who also lives alone because her husband has passed away. According to the interview with Mrs. Gini:

I participate in activities in the middle of the hamlet to meet other people. The children of Mr Gini live outside the hamlet and come to help with laundry or bring food. (Interview, 11 November 2023)

From the observations and interviews mentioned above, Mr Gini engages in interactions with others, enabling her to gain knowledge and contribute, aligning with the findings of Desvitasari's research. Desvitasari discovered a correlation between social interaction and the quality of life among the elderly in the Bayam Palembang Integrated Health Service Post, with a p-value of 0.001. It is hoped that the health post can be more active in collecting data on the elderly. Additionally, there is a need for family synergy to support the elderly in being more active and productive in participating in the monthly routine activities organized by the Bayam health post (Desvitasari, 2022).

From the two participants mentioned above, interactions occur between individuals, especially with neighbors. This aligns with Walgito's statement (2007) that in interaction, there is a reciprocal relationship between individuals. Interactions with neighbors at the individual level are done because the elderly feel the need for others. Mr. No mentioned that if help is needed, it's the neighbors they turn to, as their

children are far away. Assistance may include sweeping the yard, picking coconuts from the garden, or fixing the TV if there's an issue. Mr. No pays the neighbors according to common wage calculations, but some refuse payment for simple tasks like adjusting the TV settings. Mutual assistance among neighbors is evident because it is the elderly who seek help. Although Mr. No also mentioned that there are 1 or 2 neighbors who are sometimes less sensitive to the needs of the elderly.



Figure 1. Mr. No (83 Years old) Figure 2. Mr. Tugiman (84 years old)

Mr. Tugiman lives in his own house, but next to it is the house of his children and grandchildren. The dynamics of interaction observed from Mr Tugiman indicate that there is interaction between grandchildren and children because they often meet, but not everything is pleasant. Mr Tugiman mentioned that he never asks his children for meals, and it's entirely up to the children to provide. Economic conditions, affected by poverty, limit interactions because the children work in the fields and factories. Mr Tugiman believes that a long life is possible due to patience and emotional control. He emphasized facing oneself and not demanding from others. This aligns with research findings from Maria and Fitts. The social interaction process of an individual, in its various forms, is significantly influenced by the extent of that individual's self-concept. A positive self-concept can contribute to enhancing one's self-esteem (Fitts, 1972). Meanwhile, Maria (2007) asserts that aspects of self-concept include: (1) Physical Aspect, depicting how individuals perceive their health condition, bodies, and physical appearance. (2) Psychological Aspect, covering thoughts, feelings, and attitudes toward oneself. (3) Social Aspect, reflecting the extent to which an individual feels capable and valuable in the scope of social interaction with others. Mr Tugiman emphasized that one's self-esteem depends on how we interact with others.

Yes, I respect others when interacting with them. With my children, I accept them as they are. As a parent, one must have great patience and a small ego. (Interview, October 13, 2023).



Figure 3. Mr. Tugiman House Near His Son's House and His Daughter's House

The elderly individual living alone but residing together with their children and grandchildren is Mrs Timah (90 years old). According to the interview with Mrs Timah:

Nggeh urip niku kedah remen lan nampi mawon keadaan, supados ati tansah remen mboten neko-neko. Yes, life should be made joyful and accepting of circumstances so that the heart feels calm and undisturbed. (Interview, November 11, 2023)

Mrs. Timah is always seen laughing and appears independent. Despite the messy house due to living with children and grandchildren, she finds comfort in it. She seems to laugh whenever she speaks. In the past, Mrs. Timah used to sell at the market, and when her physical condition no longer allowed it, she started making fish baskets at home. Living together with children, in-laws, and grandchildren who already have children is indeed not easy. According to Mrs. Timah, it requires patience and maintaining joy because it allows her to always be close to her family. She emphasizes the importance of being a role model as a parent and avoiding conflicts. This aligns with Soekanto's (1990) idea of the process of interaction involving associative patterns such as cooperation and accommodation, as well as dissociative patterns like competition. In the context of societal order interpreted by the absence of conflict, the author acknowledges both associative and dissociative patterns in interaction. Mrs Timah always strives to make her family part of an association, as they have to interact with three generations children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren all in one house.



Figure 4. Mrs. Timah (90 Years Old)

Social interactions among the elderly not only occur in face-to-face encounters but are also facilitated through the use of phones, as demonstrated by Mr. No and his wife, who engage with their children and grandchildren. According to Mr. No, during the earlier stages of the pandemic, their children and grandchildren seldom visited in person due to concerns about virus transmission, particularly as some were still attending school and university. Mr. No mentioned that they even virtually visited their grandchild's home via a mobile phone while the grandchild was attending classes. This aligns with the findings of Rahmawati's study (2023) on university students, particularly those with part-time jobs, who felt that online learning benefited them. These students found it easier to manage their time, as they could work while attending classes via platforms like Zoom without having to turn on the camera. Conversely, there was a group of students who perceived online learning as unfavorable. They struggled to grasp the material effectively and felt socially constrained, limiting their ability to express themselves.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews and observations of elderly people in Krajan hamlet, Glawan village, it can be concluded that the elderly prefer to live with their family, even though they live alone and only with their partner who is an elderly person. The elderly do not choose to live in children's or other family homes, let alone nursing homes. For this reason, they communicate and interact with children, grandchildren and families to help with their living needs in terms of health, food and shopping for necessities. Health interactions such as asking for a scrape, massage, going to the doctor, needling, etc. Food such as shopping for food, groceries, soap, etc. Meanwhile, for the knowledge of the elderly, they watch TV to know about politics, economics, social affairs, culture, etc. Communication is mostly done offline, telephones for elderly people who are not close to their families are used routinely and as if on a schedule. In this way, the dynamics of interaction between elderly

families runs harmoniously, although there are still shortcomings because elderly people feel lonely and do not dare to ask their family if there are deficiencies, such as food, which is somewhat unhealthy. The elderly try to cope with the values of not bothering the family.

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