

## **Managing leisure time and its relation to positive mental health of elderly in Dakahlia Governorate**

<sup>1</sup>**Ass.Prof/ Mohamed El Sayed El Sayed Matar**

<sup>2</sup>**Ass.Prof/ Hazem Mohammed Yousef Mansour**

### **Research Summary**

The researchers conducted this study to identify relationship between leisure time management and positive mental health for elderly in Dakahlia Governorate. The researchers used descriptive approach, with applying a scale for measuring leisure time management and a scale for measuring positive mental health, prepared by researchers to collect data. The study was applied on a sample included (289) of elderly in Dakahlia Governorate for basic study, and (50) for exploratory experience. The most important results were: elderly awareness of leisure time importance, elderly preference to exercise recreational activities which are predominantly motivated by social sense when occupying their leisure time, there is a correlation between leisure

time management and mental health of elderly.

### **Research Introduction and problem:**

Modern scientific development has become a feature of this age because of its speed development and new trends and modern ideas that affect its style and system. Therefore, importance of time and need to use in an optimal and effective way became a priority of contemporary life. So, controlling time and well management and good usage give humans the ability to develop themselves and their future and to achieve their personal ambitions and targets. Hamahmy and Ayda, citing Bertrand, point out that choosing ways to invest leisure time reflect individuals' or groups' ability of to express themselves ( Hamahmy , Ayda :2006).

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor at Sports Recreation Department, Physical Education Faculty, Mansoura University.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant professor at Sports Recreation Department, Physical Education Faculty, Mansoura University.

The elderly generation is a stage in need of special attention and care, because their view of life is different from others around them, where their view of life is influenced by support they receive from others in family or community. This stage worth meditation and research about what occurs in it from different actions and situations (Sana, Thoraya 2008).

Mental health is one of the important variables that may affect personality of elderly and their social adjustment, and thus their ability to perform their roles and responsibilities as well as their relations in social environment which they live in.

Elderly face some problems, which are: personal problems such as physical, health condition and its biological and physiological changes, and social and psychological problems related to changing circumstances as an active member of family or community, recreational problems where elderly suffer from great leisure time, especially after age of retirement, where elderly feels

by end of their role in life, and the resulting anxiety and loss of self-confidence beside feeling some disorders and psychological problems as a result of personal and social and emotional life vacuum leading to mental health collapse, especially if they felt as unwanted and useless persons (Mayada 2017).

This explains importance of knowing problems facing elderly in general and recreational problems in particular, and trying to resist them in order to provide a quiet and happy life, through managing leisure time and using it in practicing recreational activities. Where recreational activities for elderly contribute in discharging repressed emotions, alleviating anxiety and psychological stress, and increasing their ability to harmonize with their families and society, also give them a sense of positive mental health. Results of (Moneim 2005), (Bruna, 2018), showed that practicing leisure activities performed by elderly either individually or collectively may help to reduce impact of stress on health Mental.

Leisure time is a source of satisfaction with life, where activities are carried out with internal motives and without coercion. If, leisure time, if well used, organized, managed, and invested in constructive activities, may change lifestyle of elderly and may help them to achieve balanced social performance and associated roles and responsibilities beside social relations. This reflected positively on their mental health, balance and cohesion. Thus feeling the meaning of life and its value, this contributes to achieving personal happiness. While wasting leisure time or miss use and lack of planning may create many problems and difficulties for elderly, their way of living and their nature in family or society may affect which may convert gains of this time to loss and may lead to despair and frustration, besides low sense of life meaning and value. Therefore it is important to study this problem and face it, and that led the researchers to study leisure time management and its relation to positive mental health of elderly in Dakahlia governorate.

### **The importance of research and the need for it:**

#### **Research importance is highlighted in the following points:**

1. Despite the importance of leisure time management in life and in elderly personality development through participation in recreational activities, but within researchers' knowledge, thus there is no study identifies the relationship between leisure time management and elderly positive mental health.
2. This study benefits interested researchers in recreational activities and leisure time management areas and its impact in modifying attitudes and behaviors of elderly, and changing them for the better.
3. Assisting in elderly preparation to participate in community building.
4. Contributing in enriching Arab studies and researches in social and educational sciences.

#### **Research Purpose:**

This Research aims to identify the relationship between leisure time management and positive mental health for elderly in

Dakahlia Governorate by answering the following questions:

1. How important to spend leisure time for elderly and how to spend it?
2. What is the level of leisure time management and what are leisure time wastes for elderly?
3. What is family consensus and social consensus for elderly?
4. What is self-confidence and emotional balance for elderly?
5. What is the relationship between leisure time management and positive mental health for elderly in Dakahlia governorate?
6. Are there any significant differences in leisure time management and mental health for elderly due to gender, level of education?

#### **Research procedures:**

The researchers used descriptive approach- survey method due to its relevance to research nature.

#### **Research Community and Sample:**

Research community is elderly in Dakahlia Governorate. The researchers randomly selected research

sample, which included (289) of elderly in Dakahlia Governorate for basic sample and 50 for exploratory sample outside basic sample.

Data collection tool:

Leisure time management scale consists of (64) phrase distributed over (4) dimensions prepared by researchers. Positive mental health scale for elderly consists of (57) phrase distributed over (4) dimensions, prepared by researchers, to identify the relationship between leisure time management and positive mental health for elderly in Dakahlia Governorate.

#### **Field study:**

After reassurance of honesty and persistence, researchers applied leisure time management scale and positive mental health scale for elderly in Dakahlia governorate on basic study sample (289) elderly in Dakahlia governorate during (1/8/2017 to 15/10/2017), and after finishing scales' implementation, data was emptied to conduct appropriate statistical treatments.

Steps to design leisure time management scale and

positive mental health scale for elderly in Dakahlia governorate. Through theoretical readings and reference studies and surveying views of (11) experts in recreation, psychology and management (attachment A), researchers prepared a scale for leisure time management and a scale for positive mental health of elderly in Dakahlia governorate. Leisure time management scale included (4) dimensions, namely: importance of leisure time, methods of spending leisure time, leisure time management, leisure time wastes. Positive mental health Scale of elderly included (4) dimensions: family consensus, social consensus, self-confidence, emotional balance.

The initial image of two proposed scales has been presented to experts to ensure dimensions' suitability to identify relationship between leisure time management and positive mental health for elderly in Dakahlia governorate, and reached (4) dimensions for each scale, attachments (B) and (C).

Within the light of experts' agreement on leisure time management scale's

dimensions that included (71) phrases, after excluding (1) phrase in second dimension, (3) phrases in third dimension, cause they didn't gain (75%) of experts' agreement. Consequently, scale is composed of (67) items. The validity of internal consistency has been recognized, (3) phrases has been removed. The final scale included (64) phrase divided into (4) dimensions, namely: importance of leisure time (12 phrase), methods of spending leisure time (16 phrase), leisure time management (29 phrase), leisure time wastes (7 phrase), attachment (D).

Within the light of experts' agreement on positive mental health scale's dimensions that included (64) phrase, after excluding (1) phrase in first dimension, (1) phrase in third dimension, (1) phrase in fourth dimension, cause they didn't gain (75%) of experts' agreement. Consequently, scale is composed of (61) items. The validity of internal consistency has been recognized, (4) phrases has been removed. The final scale included (57) phrase divided into 4 dimensions,

namely: family consensus (13 phrase), social consensus (16 phrase), self-confidence (16 phrase), emotional balance (12 phrase), attachment (H).

The degree of each dimension is determined and total score is determined by a triangular balance (yes = 3 degrees, to some extent = 2 degrees, no = 1 degree) and then total score of the scale is calculated.

The scientific parameters of leisure time management scale and positive mental health scale for elderly in Dakahlia governorate were determined.

### **Results' Presentation and Discussion:**

1. Weighting degree and percentage of phrases at leisure time importance according to elderly opinions'

It is clear from Table (7) that elderly are aware of leisure time importance and their appreciation of it. The most important phrase is "I realize that leisure hours is a great blessing should be exploited" by (83.50%), this may go back to elderly awareness of leisure time value, and being as a mean to get rid of boredom and routines of daily life,

especially after retirement age, as well as its contribution in improving mental and spiritual state and thus achieve psychological balance. This is consistent with (Zhang 2015) that elderly interest in leisure time and its importance in personal and collective recreational practices.

2. Weighting degree and percentage of phrases at ways of spending leisure time according to elderly opinions'

Table (8) shows that most important way of spending leisure time according to elderly opinions is "walking exercise" by (84.54%). This may be due to considering it a favorite activity for elderly, which suits their health and physical condition, as well as can be practiced in different places. Also, it is characterized by not requiring great possibilities or expensive tools to exercise. This is consistent with (Elzahbi, Mansour, Gouda 2013), that walking is a favorite activity for elderly in leisure time, which improve their physical and health status.

3. Frequency and weighting degree of phrases at appreciating level of leisure

time management according to elderly opinions'

Table (9) shows elderly's interest in leisure time in their lives beside their keenness to exploit it with well management. This may be due to their need to use leisure time as an outlet to get rid of pressures to have a healthy life and enjoy life. Positive mental health is achieved through practicing recreational activities and hobbies, which contribute to improving level of health, physical, psychological, social and satisfy psychological needs. Beside modifying negative view of life at elderly, and transform it to life full of joy, satisfaction and pleasure that leads many elderly to employ and invest leisure time with achieving maximum possible benefit. This is consistent with (Geigle, Rowinski, Dabrowski 2017) that positive attitudes towards leisure time management and organization, beside agreement among individuals on organizing and planning recreation activities and their role in improving practitioners' mental health.

4. Weighting degree, percentage and ranking of

phrases at leisure time wastes according to elderly opinions'

Table (10) shows ranking of leisure time wastes according to elderly opinions. The most important Phrase is "plenty of telephone calls and its length" by (81.16%). This may be due to prevailing social habits in using modern communication methods by many individuals, such as mobile phones as a quick and alternative way to visit family, especially with work pressures and heavy burdens of life, which greatly affects time management and organization at elderly. This is consistent with (Taha 2004) that assures the need to raise awareness of leisure time management importance and the need to distinguish between times.

5. Weighting degree, percentage and ranking of phrases at Family Consensus according to elderly opinions'

Table (11) shows arrangement of family consensus phrases according to elderly opinions. The most important is "I feel happy at family gatherings" by (80.05%). This is due to elderly need to spend their leisure time with their families, and finding many interaction opportunities between family members, and

desire to participate in their common recreational activities, besides enhancing closer relationships between them in fun and pleasure atmosphere away from formalities. Consequently, improving psychological and health status of elderly as a result of personal happiness among family members. This is consistent with (Geigle, Rowinski, Dabrowski 2017) that social participation contributes in improving quality of life for elderly. also, there is correlation between practicing recreational activities in improving psychological state of elderly and their sense of happiness, family and personal consensus.

6. Weighting degree, percentage and ranking of phrases at Social Consensus according to elderly opinions'

Table (12) shows arrangement of social consensus phrases according to elderly opinions. The most important is "I have a good ability to socialize with others" by (81.66%). This was due to elderly awareness with importance of social values, human originality and elderly interdependence through ensuring on their health state and follow-up their news in cases of illness or injury, which

raises elderly morale and strengthens their spiritual side and thus improves mental health satisfaction. This is consistent with (Bruna 2018) that social participation contributes in improving quality of life for elderly, beside recreational activities practice contributes in improving social consensus among elderly and thus feeling with happiness and satisfaction in life.

7. Weighting degree, percentage and ranking of phrases at Self Confidence according to elderly opinions' Table (13) shows arrangement of phrases according to elderly opinions. The most important is "I make sure to practice my hobbies at leisure time" by (80.74%). This due to increase in leisure time among elderly, as well as their awareness and desire to invest leisure time in practicing recreational activities, that contribute to desires satisfaction, and contribute to improvement of health, physical, psychological, social level and thus enjoy a personal balanced life. This is consistent with (Carmen 2015) that elderly over 80 years showed little interest in some activities because of their health status, beside necessity of paying attention to strategies



and programs that contribute to increasing leisure activities among elderly to maintain mental and physical health.

8. Weighting degree, percentage and ranking of phrases at emotional balance according to elderly opinions' Table (14) shows arrangement of phrases according to elderly opinions. The most important is "I feel optimistic and happy in my life" with (80.74%). This may be due to recreational practices practiced by elderly in leisure time, which give them a positive meaning of life, and makes them happy and satisfied within

circumstances they go through, as well as satisfying desires and psychological needs. This is consistent with (Zhang 2015), which refer to activities' effectiveness in improving some aspects of mental health, including satisfaction with life, achieving psychological consensus and emotional balance, as well as improving quality of life for elderly and improving their mental health.

9. Correlation coefficients for sample members scores between dimensions of leisure time management and positive mental health for elderly

dimensions		Mental health					
		Family Consensus	Social Consensus	Self-Confidence	Emotional Balance	Overall score	
Leisure time management	Importance of leisure time	.121*	.182*	.177*	.76	.235*	
	Methods of spending leisure time	.246*	.91	.188*	.236*	.292	
	Leisure time management	leisure time planning	.161*	.201*	.49	.196*	.225*
		Implementation of leisure activities	.439*	.153*	.207*	.199*	.419*
		Evaluation of leisure activities	.70	.193*	.115*	.151*	.139*
		Leisure time management as a whole	.339*	.328*	.225*	.227*	.481*
	Leisure time wastes	.89	.132*	.187*	.141*	.175*	
	Overall grade	.401*	.358*	.316*	.350*	.577*	

The value of "r" is significant at 0.05 = 0.113

Table (15) shows there is a statistically significant correlation between dimensions of leisure time

management and positive mental health for elderly, all values are significant at level (0.05). This result means that

the more leisure time management, the more positive mental health of elderly in their various dimensions (family consensus- social consensus- emotional balance). This may be due to fact that leisure time is a source to get rid of healthy and psychological life pressures, and enjoy life, where elderly exercise leisure activities motivated by internal motives without coercion or external pressures, seeking for pleasure and happiness. So, exploiting leisure time and using it in practicing recreational hobbies help elderly to change their life to life full of joy and pleasure, this reflected on mental health improvement in its different dimensions. This is consistent with (Zhang 2015), that activities' effectiveness and self-management, beside participation in festivals activities, help in improving some aspects of mental health (personal consensus- social consensus- physical health- satisfaction about life).

10. Significance of differences between research sample in leisure time management, which is

attributed to gender (male - female)

Table (16) shows statistically significant differences between leisure time management dimensions and total score of scale according to gender variable. Calculated value (T) is greater than its tabular value at a significant level (0.05) for males, and there are no significant differences in dimensions (leisure time importance – methods of spending leisure time - implementation of leisure activities), where value of calculated (t) is less than its tabular value at a significant level (0.05). This may be due to fact that recreational practice of many elderly has become a way of life, to achieve psychological balance, sense of satisfaction and acceptance of life.

11. Significance of differences between research sample in positive mental health, which is attributed to educational level

Table (20) shows statistically significant differences in positive mental health dimensions for elderly (family consensus - social

consensus - emotional balance) and scale's overall score in favor of larger arithmetic mean, between research sample opinions according to educational level variable; where value of calculated (F) is greater than its tabular value at a significant level (0.05).

Research conclusion:

- Preference of most elderly to engage in leisure activities that are predominantly motivated by social sense when occupying their leisure time.
- There is correlation between leisure time management and mental health of elderly.
- There are statistically significant differences between leisure time management dimensions of elderly according to gender variable in favor of males.
- There are statistically significant differences between leisure time management dimensions and mental health of elderly according to education level variable in favor of university education.

Research Recommendations

- The need for media attention to spread recreational culture and encouraging elderly

to exercise various recreational activities, and its positive impact on mental health.

- Allocation of a (national - recreational) day at state and provinces level for elderly and mobilizing all efforts to address elderly problems in leisure time.
- The State should pay attention to establishment of recreational centers for elderly and provide them with support and recreational care to achieve a better level of life for their health and psychological well-being.
- Recreational institutions should pay attention to provide recreational programs for elderly in innovative manner, with taking into consideration their suitability to their health and physical condition.

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