

A Study of the Relationship among Association Participation Types, Participation Degree and Life Satisfaction of the Elderly

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Abstract

Due to the rapid aging of population and the prolongation of life expectancy, people pay more and more attention on elders' retirement life. According to the characteristics of modern society, such as elders' health, increase of economic resources and the obsolescence family support system, encouraging elders to have social participation becomes an important issue of elderly welfare. How is elders' social participations in Taiwan? What are the key factors of elders' social participations? Could social participation increase their life satisfactions? Which of the social participation is the main factor that influences life satisfactions? Above are the targets of this study. At first, we probe into life satisfactions, social participation meanings, related factors, and research from bibliography, and we take social gerontology as the theoretical base of this study.

This study conducted a secondary data analysis based on the data from 1999 Survey of Health and Living Status of the Middle Aged and the Elderly in Taiwan, provided by the Bureau of Health Promotion, Department of Health, R.O.C. (Taiwan). The study subjects were elders over 65 years old, and the number of valid samples was 2890. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, Chi-square test(X^2), Independent-Samples t-test, point biserial correlation, the Pearson product-moment correlation, logistic regression analysis, multiple regression analysis and hierarchical regression analysis. Based on the main findings of this study, we have the following conclusions:

1. Elders have needs of social participation.
2. "The elderly group" is elders' favorite social participation target.
3. Intention obstacle is the main reason hindering elders' social participation.
4. Elders' social participation is related to life satisfaction.
5. The most critical factor in social participation which influences life satisfaction is "participation degree".
6. The factors influencing elders' social participation are gender, age, educational level, economic status, health status and residential locations.
7. The factors affecting elders' life satisfaction are educational level, economic

status, health status, marital status, residential arrangement and social participation.

8. The factors affecting the life satisfaction of the elderly who has social participation are educational level, economic status, health status, residential arrangement and participation degree.

According to the above conclusions, this study proposes the following suggestions for the governments, institutions dealing with elders' social participation and elders:

1. Suggestions for the governments:

- (1) Complete elderly economic and healthy welfare services.
- (2) Promoting the advantage of social participation on aging accommodation to elders by social education.
- (3) Constructing elderly community centers, encouraging and helping elders to establish the associations.
- (4) Constructing the barrier-free environment for elders' social participation.

2. Suggestions for the institutions dealing with elders' social participation:

- (1) Eliminating the obstacles of the institutions to increase probability of elders' social participation.
- (2) Providing diverse types of social participation and focusing more on the quality of the activities.

3. Suggestions for elders:

- (1) Overcoming the intention obstacles to have more social participation.
- (2) Being prepared for the retirement to have healthy and satisfying elderly life.

Keywords: elder, social participation, association, social gerontology, life satisfaction