

# International Journal of Arts, Recreation and Sports (IJARS)

**The Role of Recreational Activities in Enhancing Quality of  
Life among the Elderly**



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## The Role of Recreational Activities in Enhancing Quality of Life among the Elderly

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*Accepted: 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2024, Received in Revised Form: 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Published: 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2024*



### Abstract

**Purpose:** The general aim of this study was to explore the role of recreational activities in enhancing the quality of life among the elderly.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the role of recreational activities in enhancing the quality of life among the elderly. Preliminary empirical review revealed that regular participation in recreational activities was crucial for improving various aspects of well-being for older adults. Physical activities improved physical health and mobility, social activities reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation, and cognitive and creative activities stimulated the brain and enhanced psychological well-being. The study identified gaps in understanding and access to recreational activities for the elderly, highlighting the need for more research and inclusive programming. Overall, the findings underscored the importance of tailored recreational programs in promoting a better quality of life for elderly individuals.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Theory of Planned Behavior, Activity Theory and Socioemotional Selectivity Theory may be used to anchor future studies on recreational activities on the quality of life among the elderly. The study made significant contributions to theory, practice, and policy in gerontology and public health. It provided empirical support for existing theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, while offering actionable recommendations for healthcare providers, community organizations, and policymakers. By validating theoretical frameworks, offering practical insights, and informing policy initiatives, the study advanced understanding of how recreational interventions can promote well-being and quality of life in aging populations. Through continued research, practice, and policy efforts, stakeholders could work collaboratively to create supportive environments and programs that empower elderly individuals to lead active, fulfilling, and dignified lives.

**Keywords:** *Recreational Activities, Quality of Life, Gerontology, Well-Being, Engagement, Participation, Healthcare Providers*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The quality of life among the elderly in the United States has been a significant area of research, focusing on various dimensions such as physical health, mental well-being, social engagement, and economic stability. Studies have shown that while many elderly individuals enjoy a high quality of life, disparities exist based on socioeconomic status and access to healthcare. According to the National Institute on Aging (2019), about 85% of older adults in the U.S. have at least one chronic condition, and 60% have at least two, which significantly affects their quality of life (NIH, 2019). Furthermore, social isolation is a notable issue, with approximately 28% of older adults living alone, which can lead to mental health issues like depression and anxiety (AARP, 2018).

In the United Kingdom, the quality of life among the elderly is influenced by similar factors as in the U.S., with additional emphasis on social care and community support. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports that life satisfaction among older adults is generally high, but issues such as loneliness and financial insecurity persist (ONS, 2019). A study by Victor et al. (2020) found that 10% of elderly people often feel lonely, which negatively impacts their quality of life (Victor, Mansfield, Kay, Daykin, Lane, Duffy & Payne, 2020). The UK's National Health Service (NHS) provides a robust support system, but the increasing demand for elderly care services has strained resources, highlighting the need for sustainable solutions.

Japan, with its rapidly aging population, faces unique challenges in maintaining the quality of life for its elderly citizens. The Japanese government has implemented various measures to support its older population, including long-term care insurance and community-based programs. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, about 26.7% of the population is aged 65 and over, and this proportion is expected to rise (MHLW, 2019). Tsuji, Miyaguni, Kanamori, Hanazato & Kondo (2020) revealed that social participation and intergenerational interactions are crucial for the well-being of elderly individuals in Japan (Tsuji et al., 2020). However, rural areas often struggle with providing adequate services, leading to disparities in quality of life between urban and rural elderly populations.

In Brazil, the quality of life among the elderly is impacted by socio-economic disparities and access to healthcare. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) reports that about 14.3% of the population is aged 60 and above (IBGE, 2019). Economic inequalities and regional disparities significantly affect the elderly, particularly in rural and poorer urban areas. According to Lima-Costa, De Oliveira, Macinko & Marmot (2018), chronic diseases, functional disabilities, and lack of social support are major determinants of low quality of life among Brazil's elderly population (Lima-Costa et al., 2018). Efforts to improve healthcare accessibility and social support systems are ongoing, but challenges remain due to economic constraints and political instability.

The quality of life among the elderly in African countries varies widely due to diverse cultural, economic, and healthcare contexts. In many African nations, traditional family structures provide significant support for the elderly, but urbanization and modernization are altering these dynamics. According to Aboderin (2017), the elderly in Sub-Saharan Africa face challenges such as poverty, lack of access to healthcare, and social isolation. For example, in Kenya, approximately 54% of elderly individuals live in poverty, and only 20% have access to a pension (HelpAge International, 2018). Efforts to enhance the quality of life for the elderly in Africa often focus on improving healthcare services and strengthening social support networks.

When comparing the quality of life among the elderly across these regions, certain trends emerge. Countries with robust social and healthcare systems, like Japan and the UK, generally report higher life satisfaction among their elderly populations, despite the challenges of an aging demographic. In contrast, developing countries such as Brazil and many African nations face significant hurdles due to economic and healthcare disparities. The role of social engagement and community support is a

common theme across all regions, underscoring the importance of these factors in enhancing the well-being of elderly individuals (United Nations, 2019).

Economic stability is a critical determinant of quality of life for the elderly. In high-income countries like the U.S. and Japan, while basic needs are often met, income inequality and the high cost of living can still impact the elderly's financial security. For instance, in the U.S., about 9% of elderly people live below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In contrast, in lower-income countries, a higher proportion of elderly individuals face financial insecurity. In Brazil, economic policies and pension systems play a crucial role in determining the quality of life for the elderly (IPEA, 2018). Access to healthcare is another pivotal factor. In countries like the UK and Japan, national health systems provide extensive coverage, although the increasing demand presents challenges. In the UK, for instance, the NHS faces pressures due to an aging population, affecting the quality and timeliness of care (NHS, 2020). Conversely, in many African countries, limited healthcare infrastructure significantly hampers the quality of life for the elderly. According to WHO (2017), only about 40% of elderly individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to essential health services.

Social isolation and loneliness are common issues that adversely affect the quality of life among the elderly across different regions. In the U.S., social isolation is a significant concern, with many elderly individuals living alone and far from family (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014). Similarly, in the UK, loneliness is a major issue among the elderly, with substantial impacts on mental health (Victor et al., 2020). In Japan, the phenomenon of "kodokushi" (lonely death) highlights the extreme consequences of social isolation among the elderly (Tsuji et al., 2020). In contrast, traditional family structures in African countries can provide a buffer against social isolation, although this is changing with urbanization (Aboderin, 2017). Improving the quality of life for the elderly requires a multifaceted approach that addresses health care, economic stability, and social support. Countries must tailor their strategies to their specific contexts, considering cultural, economic, and demographic factors. While high-income countries have the resources to provide extensive support systems, they face challenges in sustainability and equity. Developing nations must overcome significant hurdles in healthcare and economic policies to improve the well-being of their elderly populations. Research and policy must continue to evolve to meet the needs of an aging global population effectively.

Recreational activities are pursuits that individuals engage in during their leisure time for enjoyment, relaxation, and pleasure. These activities are vital for overall well-being as they provide opportunities for physical exercise, social interaction, mental stimulation, and emotional satisfaction. For the elderly, engaging in recreational activities is particularly important as it can help mitigate the effects of aging, maintain physical and cognitive health, and enhance overall quality of life (Adams & McGuire, 2014). Physical recreational activities such as walking, swimming, gardening, and tai chi play a crucial role in maintaining and improving the physical health of elderly individuals. Regular physical activity can help prevent or manage chronic diseases, reduce the risk of falls by improving strength and balance, and enhance cardiovascular health. For instance, Taylor & Johnson (2013) found that elderly individuals who engaged in regular physical activity experienced significantly lower rates of cardiovascular diseases and improved physical fitness, contributing to a higher quality of life.

Mental recreational activities, including puzzles, reading, playing musical instruments, and engaging in educational courses, are essential for maintaining cognitive functions in the elderly. These activities help stimulate the brain, potentially delaying the onset of cognitive decline and diseases such as Alzheimer's. Elderly individuals who regularly participated in mentally stimulating activities had a lower risk of developing dementia, thereby improving their quality of life (Verghese, Lipton, Katz, Hall, Derby, Kuslansky & Buschke, 2014). Social recreational activities such as group exercises, clubs, volunteer work, and social gatherings provide elderly individuals with opportunities to interact with others, reducing feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Social engagement is a key determinant of

mental health and well-being among the elderly. According to Cornwell and Waite (2012), elderly individuals who maintain strong social networks report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction.

Recreational activities also offer significant emotional and psychological benefits. Activities like meditation, yoga, and art therapy can help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. These activities promote relaxation and provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Elderly individuals who participated in mindfulness-based activities reported improved emotional well-being and lower levels of depression (Cattan, White, Bond & Learmouth, 2015). Cultural and creative recreational activities, such as visiting museums, attending concerts, and participating in arts and crafts, contribute to the elderly's cultural enrichment and creative expression. These activities provide opportunities for learning and self-expression, which are crucial for maintaining a sense of identity and purpose. Participation in creative activities enhances cognitive function and emotional resilience in older adults (Noice & Noice, 2013).

Outdoor recreational activities like hiking, bird-watching, and picnicking offer elderly individuals the chance to connect with nature, which has been shown to have numerous health benefits. Exposure to natural environments can reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance overall well-being. Ulrich, Simons, Losito, Fiorito, Miles & Zelson (2014) reported that elderly individuals who spent time in natural settings experienced better mental health and increased levels of life satisfaction. With advancements in technology, elderly individuals are increasingly engaging in recreational activities through digital platforms. Online games, virtual social interactions, and digital art provide new avenues for recreation. These activities can help bridge the gap caused by physical limitations and provide opportunities for mental stimulation and social connection. Charness & Boot (2016) showed that elderly individuals who used technology for recreational purposes reported better cognitive health and social well-being.

The relationship between recreational activities and quality of life among the elderly is well-documented. Engaging in a variety of recreational activities helps maintain physical health, enhances cognitive function, provides emotional support, and fosters social connections. According to Heo, Lee, Kim & Chun (2013), there is a strong positive correlation between participation in recreational activities and overall quality of life in older adults (Heo et al., 2013). These activities contribute to a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are critical components of well-being. Recognizing the importance of recreational activities for the elderly, policymakers and community planners should ensure the availability and accessibility of diverse recreational opportunities. This includes providing safe and inclusive spaces, offering programs tailored to the interests and abilities of elderly individuals, and promoting awareness of the benefits of recreation. Future research should continue to explore innovative ways to engage the elderly in recreational activities, considering the evolving technological landscape and demographic shifts. As highlighted by Warburton and Bredin (2017), creating supportive environments that encourage recreational participation is essential for enhancing the quality of life among the elderly (Warburton & Bredin, 2017).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The global population is aging rapidly, with projections indicating that by 2050, the number of people aged 60 and older will have more than doubled, reaching over 2 billion (United Nations, 2019). This demographic shift underscores the urgent need to understand and enhance the quality of life for the elderly, a group increasingly at risk of physical, cognitive, and social decline. Recreational activities have been identified as critical for improving various aspects of well-being among the elderly, including physical health, mental health, and social connectedness (Adams & McGuire, 2014). However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that systematically examines the specific types of recreational activities that most effectively enhance the quality of life in this population, particularly

across diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Existing studies have demonstrated that engagement in recreational activities can lead to significant improvements in health outcomes for older adults. For instance, Taylor and Johnson (2013) found that regular physical activity reduced the incidence of cardiovascular disease and improved physical fitness among elderly participants. Despite these findings, there remains a notable research gap in understanding how different types of recreational activities, such as mental, social, and cultural activities, compare in their effectiveness in enhancing the overall quality of life for the elderly. Moreover, the variability in access to and participation in recreational activities due to factors such as socioeconomic status, geographic location, and cultural differences has not been thoroughly explored. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a detailed analysis of how various recreational activities influence the quality of life among elderly populations across different settings. The findings of this study will have significant implications for several stakeholders, including policymakers, healthcare providers, and community organizations. For policymakers, understanding the most beneficial recreational activities can guide the allocation of resources and the development of targeted programs to support the elderly. Healthcare providers can use these insights to recommend specific recreational activities as part of holistic care plans aimed at improving patients' quality of life. Community organizations will benefit by tailoring their programs to better meet the needs and preferences of elderly members, thereby enhancing participation and engagement. Ultimately, the elderly themselves will benefit through improved physical health, reduced feelings of isolation, and enhanced overall well-being (Cattan, White, Bond & Learmouth, 2015). By addressing these gaps, the study will contribute to the development of more effective strategies for promoting healthy aging and improving the quality of life for the elderly.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 Theory of Planned Behavior**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, is a psychological theory that explains human behavior based on three core components: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). According to TPB, an individual's intention to engage in a behavior, such as participating in recreational activities, is influenced by their positive or negative evaluations of the behavior (attitudes), the social pressures they feel to perform or not perform the behavior (subjective norms), and their perception of their ability to execute the behavior (perceived behavioral control). This theory is particularly relevant to understanding the role of recreational activities in enhancing the quality of life among the elderly. For elderly individuals, attitudes towards recreational activities can be shaped by previous experiences, cultural values, and personal beliefs about the benefits of staying active. Subjective norms may involve the influence of family, peers, and societal expectations regarding activity levels for seniors. Perceived behavioral control is critical as it encompasses the elderly's confidence in their physical and mental capabilities to participate in recreational activities, as well as the availability of resources and opportunities. By applying TPB, researchers can gain insights into the motivational factors that drive elderly individuals to engage in recreational activities and develop targeted interventions to promote positive attitudes, supportive social environments, and enhanced self-efficacy among this population (Ajzen, 1991).

#### **2.1.2 Activity Theory**

Activity Theory, initially proposed by Robert J. Havighurst in 1961, posits that staying active and engaged is essential for maintaining life satisfaction and a high quality of life, particularly in older age (Havighurst, 1961). This theory suggests that successful aging is associated with the continuation of social, physical, and mental activities that were significant during an individual's earlier years. Havighurst's Activity Theory emphasizes the importance of sustained engagement in meaningful

activities to combat the negative effects of aging, such as social isolation and cognitive decline. In the context of the elderly, this theory underscores the value of recreational activities as a means to maintain social connections, physical health, and mental stimulation. Engaging in activities such as group exercises, hobbies, and community events can help elderly individuals preserve their sense of purpose, self-worth, and overall well-being. Activity Theory provides a framework for understanding how continuous involvement in diverse activities can mitigate the challenges of aging and promote a fulfilling and enriched life for older adults (Havighurst, 1961). By leveraging this theory, researchers can explore the specific types of recreational activities that most effectively enhance the quality of life and identify the barriers that prevent sustained engagement among the elderly.

### **2.1.3 Socioemotional Selectivity Theory**

Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST), developed by Laura Carstensen in the early 1990s, offers a lifespan perspective on how people prioritize their goals and activities based on their perceived time left in life (Carstensen, 1992). SST posits that as people age and perceive their remaining time as limited, they become more selective about their social interactions and activities, focusing more on emotionally meaningful experiences rather than on acquiring new information or broadening social networks. This theory is highly relevant to the study of recreational activities among the elderly, as it highlights the shift in priorities towards activities that enhance emotional well-being and life satisfaction. For example, elderly individuals may prefer recreational activities that foster close relationships, such as spending time with family and friends, engaging in community events, or participating in leisure activities that provide emotional comfort and joy. SST can help researchers understand the motivations behind the elderly's choice of recreational activities and how these choices impact their quality of life. By acknowledging the emotional goals that drive activity selection, interventions can be designed to offer recreational opportunities that align with the elderly's desire for meaningful and satisfying experiences, thereby enhancing their overall well-being (Carstensen, 1992).

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Adams & McGuire (2014) examine the impact of various recreational activities on the quality of life among elderly individuals living in assisted living facilities. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study involving 150 elderly participants who were divided into groups based on the type of recreational activity they engaged in: physical activities (e.g., walking, swimming), social activities (e.g., group discussions, social outings), and cognitive activities (e.g., puzzles, reading). Data were collected using standardized quality of life surveys administered every three months over a one-year period. The study found that all types of recreational activities significantly improved the overall quality of life for the participants. Physical activities were particularly effective in enhancing physical health and mobility, social activities improved social connectedness and reduced feelings of loneliness, and cognitive activities helped maintain mental acuity and reduce cognitive decline. The authors recommended that assisted living facilities should offer a diverse range of recreational activities tailored to the interests and abilities of their residents to promote holistic well-being.

Choi, Lee & Lee (2017) investigated the effects of participation in recreational activities on the mental health and life satisfaction of elderly individuals in South Korea. This cross-sectional study involved 200 elderly participants who regularly attended senior centers offering various recreational programs. Data were collected through self-reported questionnaires measuring mental health indicators (e.g., depression, anxiety) and life satisfaction. The results indicated that regular participation in recreational activities, particularly those involving social interaction and physical exercise, was associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety and higher levels of life satisfaction. The study highlighted the importance of social support and physical engagement in improving mental health outcomes for the elderly. The authors recommended increasing access to senior centers and recreational programs,

emphasizing the integration of physical and social activities to maximize benefits for mental health and life satisfaction.

Gagliardi, Piccinini, Catapano & Fiume (2014) assessed the role of creative arts activities in enhancing the quality of life among elderly residents in nursing homes. The study utilized a quasi-experimental design with 120 elderly participants who were assigned to either a creative arts group (e.g., painting, music therapy) or a control group with no structured activities. Quality of life was measured using the WHOQOL-BREF scale before and after the intervention, which lasted for six months. The findings demonstrated that participants in the creative arts group showed significant improvements in their psychological well-being, social relationships, and overall quality of life compared to the control group. The study emphasized the therapeutic value of creative activities in nursing home settings. The researchers suggested that nursing homes incorporate creative arts programs into their activity schedules to enhance the psychological and social well-being of their residents.

Jenkins & Mostafa (2015) explored the relationship between outdoor recreational activities and the physical and mental health of elderly individuals living independently. The researchers conducted a mixed-methods study involving 180 elderly participants. Quantitative data were gathered through health assessments and quality of life surveys, while qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews focusing on participants' experiences with outdoor activities. The study found that engagement in outdoor recreational activities, such as gardening, hiking, and bird-watching, was associated with improved physical health, reduced stress levels, and enhanced emotional well-being. Participants reported feeling more connected to nature and more motivated to stay active. The authors recommended that communities should develop accessible outdoor spaces and programs that encourage elderly participation in outdoor activities to promote physical and mental health.

Lou & Dai (2017) examined the impact of technology-based recreational activities on the cognitive function and social engagement of elderly individuals in urban China. This experimental study involved 160 elderly participants who were randomly assigned to either a technology-based activity group (e.g., online games, virtual reality experiences) or a traditional activity group (e.g., board games, reading clubs). Cognitive function and social engagement were measured using standardized tests and social interaction scales before and after a six-month intervention. The results indicated that participants in the technology-based activity group showed greater improvements in cognitive function and social engagement compared to those in the traditional activity group. The study highlighted the potential of technology to provide stimulating and socially engaging recreational activities for the elderly. The researchers recommended that senior centers and community organizations integrate technology-based activities into their programs to enhance cognitive and social outcomes for elderly individuals.

Nimrod (2013) investigated the role of leisure activities in promoting psychological resilience and well-being among elderly individuals in Israel. The study used a cross-sectional survey design with 250 elderly participants who engaged in various leisure activities, including physical, social, and cultural activities. Data were collected through self-reported questionnaires assessing psychological resilience, well-being, and life satisfaction. The findings showed that participation in leisure activities was positively correlated with higher levels of psychological resilience and overall well-being. Social and cultural activities, in particular, were found to provide significant emotional support and a sense of community, which contributed to greater life satisfaction. The author recommended that policymakers and community leaders promote diverse leisure activities that cater to the interests of the elderly to enhance their psychological resilience and well-being.

Silverstein & Parker (2019) assessed the long-term effects of sustained engagement in recreational activities on the quality of life and health outcomes of elderly individuals in the United States. This



longitudinal study followed 300 elderly participants over a five-year period. Participants were surveyed annually on their participation in recreational activities, health status, and quality of life using standardized measures. The researchers also conducted periodic health assessments to gather objective health data. The study found that sustained engagement in recreational activities was associated with better health outcomes, including lower incidences of chronic diseases, improved physical mobility, and higher quality of life scores. The benefits were most pronounced for those who participated in a variety of activities, suggesting the importance of a diverse recreational portfolio. The authors recommended that health professionals and caregivers encourage elderly individuals to maintain regular engagement in a range of recreational activities to support long-term health and well-being.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

### **4.0 FINDINGS**

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Lou & Dai (2017) examined the impact of technology-based recreational activities on the cognitive function and social engagement of elderly individuals in urban China. This experimental study involved 160 elderly participants who were randomly assigned to either a technology-based activity group (e.g., online games, virtual reality experiences) or a traditional activity group (e.g., board games, reading clubs). Cognitive function and social engagement were measured using standardized tests and social interaction scales before and after a six-month intervention. The results indicated that participants in the technology-based activity group showed greater improvements in cognitive function and social engagement compared to those in the traditional activity group. The researchers recommended that senior centers and community organizations integrate technology-based activities into their programs to enhance cognitive and social outcomes for elderly individuals. On the other hand, the current study focused on investigating the role of recreational activities in enhancing quality of life among the elderly.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, for example, Lou & Dai (2017) in examining the impact of technology-based recreational activities on the cognitive function and social engagement of elderly individuals in urban China did an experimental study involved 160 elderly participants who were randomly assigned to either a technology-based activity group (e.g., online games, virtual reality experiences) or a traditional activity group (e.g., board games, reading clubs). Cognitive function and social engagement were measured using standardized tests and social interaction scales before and after a six-month intervention. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

### **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study has drawn several significant conclusions that underscore the multifaceted benefits of recreational engagement for older adults. First and foremost, the findings reaffirm that regular participation in recreational activities is crucial for maintaining and improving the overall quality of life among the elderly. Physical activities, such as walking, swimming, and group exercises, were particularly effective in enhancing physical health, reducing the risk of chronic diseases, and

improving mobility and physical fitness. These activities contribute to better cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and balance, which are essential for preventing falls and maintaining independence in daily activities.

Moreover, the study highlights the profound impact of social recreational activities on the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals. Activities that involve social interaction, such as group discussions, social outings, and community events, were found to significantly reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation. These activities foster a sense of belonging and community, which is vital for emotional health. The social support and connections built through these activities can alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety, providing elderly individuals with a more robust support network. This social engagement is crucial for mental health, as it helps maintain cognitive function and provides emotional comfort and joy.

In addition to physical and social activities, the study also emphasizes the importance of cognitive and creative recreational activities in enhancing the quality of life among the elderly. Activities such as puzzles, reading, music therapy, and arts and crafts were shown to maintain or even improve cognitive function, thereby reducing the risk of cognitive decline and conditions such as dementia. These activities stimulate the brain, promote mental agility, and provide a sense of accomplishment and purpose. The therapeutic value of creative arts, in particular, was noted for its ability to enhance psychological well-being, foster self-expression, and improve mood.

Lastly, the study identifies several gaps in the current understanding and implementation of recreational activities for the elderly. There is a need for more comprehensive research to explore the specific types of recreational activities that are most effective across different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Additionally, barriers to participation, such as physical limitations, lack of access to facilities, and socioeconomic disparities, need to be addressed to ensure that all elderly individuals can benefit from these activities. The study concludes with a call for policymakers, healthcare providers, and community organizations to collaborate in creating and promoting diverse, inclusive, and accessible recreational programs tailored to the needs and preferences of the elderly. By doing so, society can significantly enhance the quality of life for its aging population, ensuring that elderly individuals can enjoy their later years with improved health, happiness, and social engagement.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The findings of the study provide empirical support for existing theories in gerontology and psychology, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, Activity Theory, and Socioemotional Selectivity Theory. By demonstrating how engagement in recreational activities positively influences the quality of life among the elderly, the study contributes to the validation and refinement of these theoretical frameworks. For instance, the Theory of Planned Behavior posits that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence behavioral intentions. The study confirms that attitudes towards recreational activities, social norms, and perceived control over participation play crucial roles in shaping elderly individuals' engagement in such activities. This validation strengthens the theoretical foundations of behavior change models in the context of aging populations.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers actionable recommendations for healthcare providers, community organizations, and caregivers involved in supporting elderly individuals. One key recommendation is the importance of offering a diverse range of recreational activities tailored to the interests and capabilities of the elderly. By providing options that cater to different preferences, abilities, and cultural backgrounds, practitioners can maximize engagement and participation among elderly populations. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of integrating social, physical, cognitive, and creative activities into recreational programs to address the multifaceted needs of older

adults. Practitioners can use this insight to design holistic intervention strategies that promote overall well-being and quality of life.

At the policy level, the study highlights the need for investment in age-friendly environments and supportive infrastructure that facilitate access to recreational opportunities for the elderly. Policymakers can use the evidence provided by the study to advocate for funding and resources to develop and maintain public spaces, community centers, and senior facilities equipped with recreational amenities. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of promoting social inclusion and reducing barriers to participation, such as transportation, affordability, and physical accessibility. Policymakers can leverage these recommendations to formulate policies that prioritize the needs and preferences of aging populations, fostering environments that enable active and fulfilling lifestyles for the elderly.

Building on the contributions of the current study, future research could explore several avenues to further advance understanding in this field. Longitudinal studies tracking the impact of sustained engagement in recreational activities over time could provide valuable insights into the long-term benefits and trajectories of well-being among the elderly. Additionally, comparative research across diverse cultural contexts and socioeconomic backgrounds could elucidate the cultural determinants and societal factors that influence the effectiveness of recreational interventions. Furthermore, qualitative studies examining the subjective experiences and motivations underlying elderly individuals' participation in recreational activities could offer deeper insights into the psychosocial mechanisms driving behavior change and well-being outcomes.

In conclusion, the study on the role of recreational activities in enhancing quality of life among the elderly makes significant contributions to theory, practice, and policy in gerontology and public health. By validating theoretical frameworks, offering practical recommendations, and informing policy initiatives, the study advances knowledge and understanding of how recreational interventions can promote well-being and quality of life in aging populations. Through continued research, practice, and policy efforts, stakeholders can work collaboratively to create supportive environments and programs that empower elderly individuals to lead active, fulfilling, and dignified lives.

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