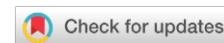# Analysis of Elderly Anxiety on The Level of Independence at The Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung

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A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T
	Background: The elderly are prone to experiencing anxiety due to physical, psychological, social, and economic changes that can affect the level of independence in daily activities. This research is important to understand the relationship between anxiety and independence of the elderly in the social care environment. **Methods:** This study uses a quantitative design with a cross sectional approach. The research population was all elderly at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung, with a sample of 36 respondents using the total sampling technique. The research instruments included the GAD-7 questionnaire to measure anxiety and the Barthel ADL Index to assess the level of independence. Data analysis was carried out using the Spearman's rho test. **Results:** The results showed that the majority of the elderly had a minimum level of anxiety as many as 17 respondents (47%), mild anxiety 14 respondents (39%), and moderate anxiety 5 respondents (14%). The level of independence of the elderly is mostly in the category of mild dependency as many as 22 respondents (61%). The Spearman's rho test showed a significant relationship between anxiety levels and independence levels with a value of $p = 0.032$ ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** These findings indicate that the lower the level of anxiety, the higher the independence of the elderly. Psychological, physical, and social anxiety management interventions need to be optimized to increase the independence of the elderly in social institutions.

I.   Introduction

Anxiety in the elderly is one of the mental health problems that occur quite often as we age. The elderly face various challenges, both in terms of physical and psychological health, that can affect their quality of life. Anxiety problems in the elderly are often considered a natural part of the aging process, even though this condition can interfere with daily activities and reduce their independence.

In various countries, including Indonesia, the phenomenon of anxiety in the elderly continues to increase as the number of elderly population increases. Elderly people living in institutions such as the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung face greater risks due to limited social interaction and loss of a life partner. This condition can worsen feelings of loneliness, lower self-confidence, and trigger heavier anxiety.

According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) data, about 15% of the world's elderly population suffers from mental disorders, with anxiety ranking second only to depression. In Indonesia itself, the results of Riskesdas 2018 show that the prevalence of psychological problems in the elderly reaches 11.6%. This figure is quite high and shows that attention to the mental health of the elderly needs to be increased, including in the aspect of anxiety that is closely related to their level of independence.

Anxiety in the elderly not only impacts psychological conditions, but also affects physical health. Anxious elderly people tend to experience sleep disorders, get tired easily, and are reluctant to do

activities. This condition leads to a decrease in independence, so the elderly are more dependent on others to meet their daily needs. Decreased independence can reduce the quality of life and create an additional burden on families and the social institutions that care for them.

In psychological studies, there are theories that can explain the relationship between anxiety and elderly behavior. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizes that social interaction and the surrounding environment have a great influence on the formation of behavior. Ivan Pavlov's theory through classical learning explains that anxiety can be formed as a result of repeated negative experiences, while B.F. Skinner's operant theory emphasizes that independent behavior can be strengthened through positive reinforcement.

Previous research results showed a relationship between anxiety and independence of the elderly. For example, research by Patria Asda and Jusandri Wawo (2024) found that the elderly with high levels of anxiety tend to have a low level of independence in carrying out daily activities. Meanwhile, research by Linda Tri Utami et al. (2021) also shows a significant relationship between the anxiety of the elderly and their ability to carry out independent activities at the posyandu.

However, a similar study conducted by Hanaz Rona et al. (2021) focused on anxiety factors in other orphanages, not on the direct relationship with independence. Thus, research on anxiety analysis on the independence of the elderly at UPT Tresna Werdha Blitar in Tulungagung is still rarely carried out, so it is important to study further.

Based on a preliminary study conducted by researchers at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung, it was found that some elderly people showed signs of anxiety, such as restlessness, easy to worry, and dependence on staff in daily activities. This condition shows a possible relationship between the level of anxiety and the level of independence of the elderly in the institution.

Efforts to prevent and handle anxiety in the elderly can be done in various ways, such as increasing social support, providing group activities, and conducting mental health education. The presence of professionals such as psychologists or counselors at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung is also very important to support the welfare of the elderly and maintain their independence.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled Analysis of Anxiety of the Elderly on the Level of Independence at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung. This research is expected to provide a clearer picture of the relationship between anxiety and independence of the elderly, as well as a consideration in efforts to improve the quality of services at UPT.

METHODS

This study uses an Observational Analytics design with a cross sectional approach. The research sample was determined by purposive sampling technique so that 36 respondents were obtained. The independent variable is the anxiety of the elderly which is measured using a questionnaire, while the dependent variable is the level of independence of the elderly which is also measured through a questionnaire.

Data analysis was carried out by statistical test of Spearman Rank at a significance level of 0.05. The results of the statistical test showed a value of $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05) with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.652$. This means that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and the level of independence of the elderly at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung. Negative correlations show that the higher the level of anxiety, the lower the level of independence of the elderly.

The study commenced with preliminary field observations and collaboration with local community leaders. Prior to the primary data collection, the questionnaire underwent validation and reliability assessment. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews using the validated instrument, and all completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness before data entry. Subsequently, the data were coded, entered, and analyzed in line with the study objectives. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the study's aims, procedures, potential benefits, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly ensured, and the data were used exclusively for research purposes.

RESULTS

Cross-tabulation Based on Anxiety with the level of independence of respondents at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung.

			Anxiety			Total
			Minimal anxiety	Mild anxiety	moderate anxiety	
Independence Level	Self-Sufficient	F	3	1	0	4
		%	8.3%	2.8%	0.0%	11.1%
	Mild Dependence	F	12	8	2	22
		%	33.3%	22.2%	5.6%	61.1%
	Moderate Dependence	F	0	2	1	3
		%	0.0%	5.6%	2.8%	8.3%
	Heavy Dependence	F	0	1	1	2
		%	0.0%	2.8%	2.8%	5.6%
	Total Dependency	F	2	2	1	5
		%	5.6%	5.6%	2.8%	13.9%
Total		F	17	14	5	36
		%	47.2%	38.9%	13.9%	100.0%

Based on the table above, it is known that the respondents who have the most anxiety with mild dependency are 12 respondents (33.3%), indicating that mild dependency is the most common condition among participants experiencing anxiety and suggesting a notable prevalence of this level of dependency within the study population.

Results of the analysis using Spearman's rho The Effect of Elderly Anxiety on the Level of Independence of Respondents at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung.

Correlations

			Anxiety	Independence Level
Spearman's rho	Anxiety	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.359[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.032
		N	36	36
	Independence Level	Correlation Coefficient	.359[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.
		N	36	36

[*]. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the Spearman's rho statistical test table above, it is known that the significance value is smaller than 0.032 (0.032 < 0.05), indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected and confirming a statistically significant relationship between anxiety among the elderly and the level of independence of respondents at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung, where higher levels of anxiety are associated with changes in the respondents' degree of independence, suggesting that psychological factors

play an important role in influencing the functional abilities of the elderly and highlighting the need for appropriate interventions to reduce anxiety in order to support and maintain their independence

DISCUSSION

The results of data analysis showed that there was a significant influence between the level of anxiety and the level of independence in the elderly at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung. The significance value found was 0.032 which means it is smaller than 0.05, thus proving the existence of a significant relationship between the two variables. Cross-tabulation showed that respondents with minimal anxiety had the most mild dependency levels, namely 12 respondents (33.3%). This corroborates the results of statistical tests showing that lower levels of anxiety are associated with better levels of independence. This relationship is in line with the theory that increased anxiety can create a negative cycle.

Excessive anxiety can lead to decreased interest in daily activities and an inability to socialize, which ultimately decreases the decline in independent abilities in daily activities..

Significant Relationship between Anxiety and Independence Level The results of the analysis showed a significant influence between the level of anxiety and the level of independence in the elderly in UPT. These findings are reinforced by previous studies that consistently show a negative relationship between the two variables. According to Wahyuni (2023), increased anxiety can create a negative cycle in which anxiety increases and independent behavior decreases.

This relationship is also evidenced by studies that have found that excessive anxiety can lead to avoidant behaviors and lack of motivation, which ultimately increases dependence.

Independence Reduces Anxiety Conversely, the ability to act independently can be a protective factor against anxiety. When seniors feel able to take care of themselves, their self- confidence increases, which can reduce feelings of helplessness and anxiety. Practical Applications and Research Implications The findings of this study have important implications for practice in UPT. Given the significant influence between anxiety and the level of independence, interventions in UPT need to be carried out in an integrated manner.

Programs that aim to reduce anxiety, such as social support, counseling, and group activity therapy, should be combined with programs that encourage the independence of the elderly. This approach is expected not only to reduce anxiety levels, but also to improve the quality of life and overall independence of the elderly (Dewi, 2023).

This study is in line with several previous studies that have examined anxiety and independence in the elderly, but also offers a unique perspective. A study by AQN, Ernawati, and Anggoro (2021) at the Hargodedali Nursing Home in Surabaya, which shows the distribution of anxiety levels in the elderly, corroborates that anxiety is a common problem among the elderly living in facilities. Similarly, the research of Utami and Silvitasari (2021) which found a relationship between anxiety and independence of the elderly due to loneliness, provides an important context that psychosocial factors play a major role in influencing these two variables.

Although Asada and Wawo (2024) did not find a significant association between anxiety and independence in their study, it does highlight the complexity of the relationship and the importance of mediating or moderator variables that may need to be considered. However, this study, with its findings of direct significance between anxiety and independence levels, provides further empirical evidence that in the context of nursing homes, anxiety directly affects the elderly's ability to be independent.

In addition, these findings are supported by research on self-efficacy affecting anxiety symptoms in the elderly with chronic diseases (Sovianti et al., 2025), as well as the success of positive self-talk therapy in reducing anxiety in elderly hypertension (Nisa and Pranungsari, 2022).

This study enriched the literature with a specific focus on the elderly population in nursing homes and the direct relationship between anxiety and independence levels, confirming the need for interventions that target both aspects.

Anxiety in the elderly is a multifactorial condition that can be explained through several theories.

The concept of aging itself implies a progressive decline in cognitive, physical, and social functioning, all of which can contribute to anxiety (Atiqah & Lumadi, 2020).

Feelings of worry and fear of degenerative changes are at the core of anxiety for the elderly (Ratnawati et al., 2021). The context of the social environment is also highly relevant to the Social Cognitive Theory

of Albert Bandura which emphasizes how social interaction and environmental observation shape behavior. In this context, limited social interaction can weaken anxiety and increase the risk of depression, as the elderly may feel protected and less able to observe or interact adaptively. Psychosocial problems such as loneliness and depression are often triggered by irrational thoughts and negative past experiences (AQN, Ernawati, and Anggoro, 2021), which exacerbate the anxiety cycle.

To understand the degree of independence, the theories of learning from B.F. Skinner and Ivan Pavlov are particularly relevant. Skinner with his operant conditioning theory explains that independent behavior can be strengthened through positive reinforcement, so that the elderly who receive rewards or support when doing independent activities tend to maintain and increase their independence.

On the other hand, if independent behavior does not get reinforcement or even negative consequences, it can decrease. Ivan Pavlov with his classical conditioning theory explained how stimulus-response associations can form a habit. For example, the elderly who are used to receiving continuous assistance can associate certain activities with dependence, so that the independent response is reduced due to the formation of dependency habits that are automatically associated.

In addition, the concepts of self-image, self-esteem, and ideal self play a role in the level of independence of the elderly. Self-image is an individual's perception of himself, self-esteem is an emotional evaluation of that self-image, and the self-ideal is an image of how an individual wants to be.

The mismatch between self-image and self-ideal can cause dissatisfaction and decrease motivation to be independent. Seniors who have a positive self-image and high self-esteem tend to be more motivated to maintain their independence, despite experiencing physical limitations. On the other hand, older people with negative self-image and low self-esteem may feel incapable and lose motivation to be independent, thereby increasing independence.

Researchers are of the opinion that there is a reciprocal and significant relationship between anxiety and the level of independence. Researchers are of the opinion that this is a negative cycle that reinforces each other; Increased anxiety will lower the motivation and ability of the elderly to act independently, while lowering the level of independence will weaken feelings of helplessness and increase anxiety. Research findings showing that minimal anxiety is most commonly found in the elderly with mild independence reinforce this opinion. This suggests that controlled anxiety allows the elderly to maintain a higher level of independence.

Researchers are of the opinion that interventions that successfully manage anxiety will have a positive effect on independence levels, and vice versa. Interventions that help older people reduce anxiety, such as cognitive therapy or social support, are thought to free up mental energy previously drained by anxiety, which can then be diverted to teach independent behaviour.

In contrast, programs designed to increase levels of independence, such as occupational therapy or hobby activities, are thought to foster a sense of competence, positive self-image, self-esteem, and self-efficiency, which will directly reduce feelings of helplessness and anxiety. Researchers are of the opinion that an in-depth understanding of these relationships is essential for the development of a holistic treatment program. Rather than treating anxiety and independence separately, the researchers assumed that an integrated approach would be more effective. Programs that include psychosocial support to reduce anxiety with activities that promote physical and cognitive independence, as well as strengthen the self-image and self-esteem of the elderly, are expected to provide better results in improving the quality of life of the elderly.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study that has been conducted on 36 elderly people at the Tresna Werdha Blitar Social Service Unit in Tulungagung, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the anxiety of the elderly and the level of independence in living daily life. In accordance with the general research objective, namely to find out the relationship between anxiety and independence of the elderly, the results of the analysis with the Spearman's rho test showed that there was a significant relationship with the value of $p = 0.032$ ($p < 0.05$). This means that the lower the level of anxiety of the elderly, the higher the level of independence, and conversely, the higher the anxiety, the lower the independence. The results showed that the majority of the elderly were in the category of at least 17 people (47%), then mild anxiety 14 people (39%), and moderate anxiety 5 people (14%). In the respondents in the light dependence category, namely 22 people (61%). Meanwhile, there were 4 people

(11%) who were independent, 3 people (8%) with moderate dependence, 2 people (6%) with severe dependence, and 5 people (14%) with total dependence. This means that most elderly people can still carry out their daily activities with a little help. The results of the analysis of the relationship between anxiety and independence show that anxiety has a real influence on the level of independence of the elderly. Seniors with minimal anxiety tend to be more independent than those with mild to moderate anxiety, the more manageable anxiety in the elderly, the greater their chances of remaining independent.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
No conflict of interest was found during the research.

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