

Participation Of The Elderly In Social And Physical Activities, Case Of Istanbul

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Abstract:

The rapid increase in the rate of the elderly population has especially become clear during the last 20 years. Within the overall population, the rate of the elderly population is 11.4% on average in developed countries, and 3.9% in developing countries. According to the population projections, it seems that Turkey's demographic structure will resemble that of the developed countries' in ten years' time between 2015 and 2025.

Participation of the elderly in social and physical activities can help to improve their life expectations and happiness. Facilities should be built to accommodate the needs of the elderly enabling them to spend a good time so that they can have a healthy and positive relationship with themselves, their close environment and society. If elderly people are happy, they can be of great benefit to their families and communities.

This study aims to investigate elderly people's contributions to different activities according to different age groups in Istanbul. These age groups are defined as the "young old" between 65 and 74, the "old" between 75 and 84, and the "oldest old" aged 85+. Kadikoy, Bakirkoy, and Besiktas districts have been selected as study fields, and a total of 410 surveys have been conducted. The reason why these districts were selected is the rate of the elderly population in the related areas, which is twice as much as the average of Istanbul. At the end of the research, the social and physical requirements and expectations of the elderly will be determined.

Key Words: Elderly, social activity, physical activity, participation, Istanbul

1. INTRODUCTION

As an individual transformation, getting old involves deterioration in one's physical and mental conditions. Old age also differs from one society to another according to the period one lives in. For every human being, social and cultural factors play an important role in the struggle that begins with old age and ends with death. Although getting old is an individual process, social values and other factors determine the merit and place, society ascribes to the elderly and old age. For this reason, old age is not only a biological process, but also a social and cultural one (SPO, 2007).

Because of demographic, economic, and socio-cultural reasons, the problem of old age in Turkey falls behind the industrialized Western societies. Considering the still strong family bonds in Turkish society, the preferences of the

elderly in determining their living space is radically different compared to developed countries.

In general, the elderly in Turkey prefer to live together with or close to their children. This preference is a significant factor in helping the elderly cope with loneliness, economic and physical problems.

There are various factors that affect life satisfaction of the elderly. Participation in physical and social activities and the continuity of this participation are the most important ones among these factors (Matsuo et.al, 2003; Glass, 1999; Agahi et.al, 2008, Klumb et.al, 2007).

This study aims to create a space that can integrate the elderly into society, so that the rapidly growing elderly population can become happier, physically more active and more productive. In this way, it is expected that feelings of loneliness will be prevented among the elderly population, and they will unite with the young population by means of

these activities. To achieve this purpose, a survey study will be conducted, which will investigate the degrees of physical and social activity among the elderly and what kinds of activities they wish to see in their daily lives.

According to the scientific classification as acknowledged by WHO and various other scientists, old age starts at the end of age 64 and beginning of age 65. There are 3 stages in old age: early old age from age 65 to 75; mid old age from 75 to 85; and late old age at 95 and above (Tümerdem, 2006). For this reason, these age groups are defined as the “young old” (65-74), the “old” (75-84), and the “oldest old” (85+).

2. STUDIES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

Two issues need to be carefully investigated in improving life quality of the elderly: old people’s participation in social and physical activities, and the continuity of participation. There are numerous studies conducted in this field throughout the world.

In one study by Matsuo et. al. (2003), life quality and personality characteristics were investigated among 321 elderly people aged 65 and above, who did and did not participate in activities. The participation of the elderly group in the following activities were evaluated: courses commenced by public centers, learning and conferencing, club activities, service activities that old people are capable of and other activities. Life satisfaction among the group members who participated in such activities were found to be higher and their personality measures more positive. For this reason, encouraging activity participation among the elderly and sustainability of their participation are factors that improve life quality.

In a study conducted in the USA by Glass, Leon, Marottoli, Berkman (1999), it is stated that social activities organized for the elderly do indeed enhance life quality and increase life expectancy.

Agahi and Parker (2008), and Klumb and Maier (2007) examined the relationship between participation in activities and death rate among the elderly. These studies are particularly important to see if our study can contribute to the literature from this respect.

A study by Cheng and Chan (2006), which investigates the contribution of social relationships to life satisfaction, will

help our study from this point of view. In another study by Silverstein and Parker, (2002), conducted on Swedish elderly people, social activities were also found out to increase life quality. Jenkins, Pienta, Horgas, (2002) inquired about this issue by means of survey studies. Gleit et. al. (2005) also looked at the effects of social activities on the elderly. Cattani et. al. (2005) are currently conducting studies on the necessity to prevent social isolation.

Malmberg et. al conducted a survey on a group of middle aged and old men and women to find out that leisure activities prevented various illnesses (2005). In a study by Crombie et. al. (2004) in Scotland, regular physical activity was found to have many health benefits. However, many older people are physically inactive.

In another study conducted in England and in the book that followed the research, Allen et al. (1992) highlighted that care and service for the elderly should have both social and institutional aspects. Therefore, it is of great importance that the social service center proposed by this research should be supported both socially and institutionally.

3. FIELD STUDY FOR THE ELDERLY IN ISTANBUL

Data were gathered using a questionnaire survey selected through a stratified random sampling in Istanbul. In the scope of this study 410 questionnaires have been carried out by means of face to face interviews with elderly people in residential areas in the districts of Bakırkoy, Kadıkoy and Besiktas (Berkoz, Yirmibesoglu, 2013).

Kadıkoy (9%), Besiktas (10.03%), and Bakırkoy (12.18%) district centers have been selected as study fields because the rate of the elderly population is highest in these three areas (TUIK, 2010).

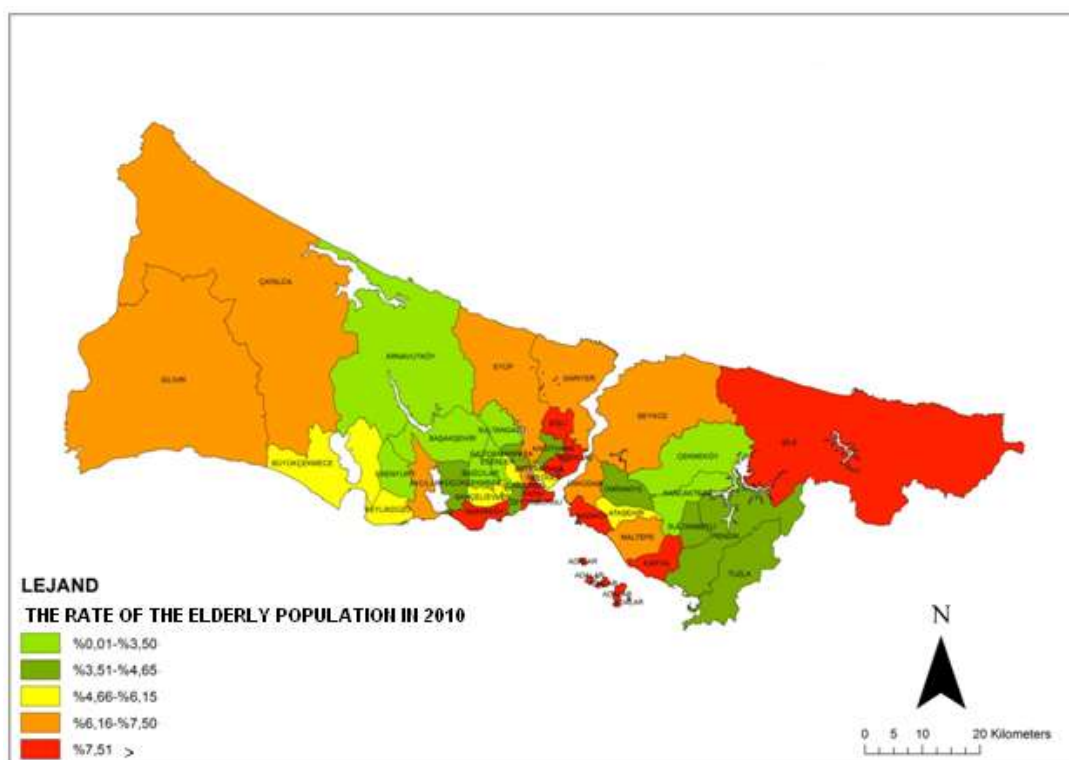
According to TUIK findings in 2010, the distribution of the elderly population aged 65 and above in these districts is as follows (table 1 and map 1):

Table 1. The Distribution of the Elderly Population in Bakırkoy, Besiktas, Kadıkoy

District	Total	Male	Female	65+	Elderly
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Name					Rate %
Bakirkoy	219,145	103,881	115,264	26,696	12.18%
Besiktas	184,390	86,786	97,604	45,196	10.03%
Kadikoy	663,299	315,242	348,057	63,252	9%
Bakirkoy	219,145	103,881	115,264	26,696	12.18%

These districts represent all three regions of Istanbul as they are old residential areas located on three sides of the city. A total number of 410 people aged 65 and above have participated in the survey.



Map 1. Elderly Population Distribution in Istanbul Districts

48.3% of the participants are females and 51.7% are males. When it comes to their age, the highest rate consists of the “young old” aged 65-74 (44.9%), followed by the “old” aged 75-84 (47.3%) (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1. Birth Year of Participants

Age Group	Number of Participants	%	
65-74	184	44.9	
75-85	194	47.3	
85+	32	7.8	
Total	410	100.0	

The appendix 2 shows the distribution of age groups according to the gender of the sample population. 44.9% of the old people who have responded to the questionnaire are aged 65-74, 47.3% are aged 75-84, and 7.8% 85 and above. 48.3% of the respondents are females and 51.7% males (Appendix 2).

Appendix 2. Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	Female	Male	Total	male
65-74	83	101	184	
75-85	93	101	194	
85+	22	10	32	
Total	198	212	410	

Educational Qualifications

The appendix 3 shows the distribution of the academic institutions the sample population graduated from according to their age groups. Elementary (34.1%) and High School (26.8%) graduates have been found out to dominate the sample population (Appendix 3).

Appendix 3. Educational Qualifications

Age Group	Illiterate	Literate	Elementary school	Secondary School	Vocational School	High school	Associate Degree	University Degree	Master's Degree	Total
65-74	1	7	65	14	0	61	0	35	1	184
75-84	2	6	67	24	7	42	16	29	1	194
85+	1	1	8	4	0	7	6	5	0	32
Total	4	14	140	42	7	110	22	69	2	410

Employment Status

The appendix 4 indicates the employment status of the sample population according to their age groups. 8.5% of the sample population still work, while 91.5% do not work. The table also reveals that the rate of the employed elderly is highest among the young old aged 65-74 (Appendix 4).

Appendix 4. Employment Status

Age Group	Employed	Not employed	Total	Not employed
65-74	25	159	184	
75-84	10	184	194	
85+	0	32	32	
Total	198	212	410	

Social Security

The rate of the elderly who have social security is quite high at 96.8%. The rate of social security is highest for the age group 75-84 (Appendix 5).

Appendix 5. Social Security

Age Group	Yes	None	total	Yes
65-74	176	8	184	
75-85	191	3	194	
85+	30	2	32	
Total	397	13	410	

Health Condition and Characteristics of Participation in Physical and Social Activities

The percentage of the elderly with an illness that affects their daily lives is 59%. The most common illnesses are hypertension, joint diseases, diabetes, and coronary failure (Appendix 6).

Appendix 6. Health Condition

Age Group	Yes	No	total	Yes
65-74	117	67	184	
75-85	97	97	194	
85+	28	4	32	
Total	242	168	410	

When the distribution of chronic illnesses according to age groups is examined, the rate of chronic illnesses among the group aged 85 and above is observed to be 87.5% followed by the group aged 65-74 at 63.6%, ranking second (table 2).

Table 2. The Distribution of Chronic Illnesses

Disease	Number of People	%	
1 Coronary Failure	43	10.7	
2 Diabetes	72	17.9	
3 Urinary Diseases	25	6.2	
4 Intestinal Diseases	5	1.2	
5 Joint Diseases	71	17.7	
6 Hypertension	123	30.6	
7 Parkinson's Disease	3	0.7	
8 Dementia	3	0.7	
9 Other	35	8.7	
No Diseases	22	5.5	
Total	402	100	

Participation in Physical Activity According to Age Groups

The rates of participation in physical activity are high for all age groups (table 3).

Table 3. Participation in Physical Activity According to Age Groups

Physical Activity	Yes	No	Total	Yes
65-74	175	9	184	
75-84	187	7	194	
85+	30	2	32	

Total	392	18	410	
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When the type of physical activity to stay healthy is inquired, it is seen that shopping and regular walks are on top of the list with high rates.

One of the questions asks how many days per week respondents participate in physical activity. The rate of the ones who have replied “every day” is 28.8%, while those who have replied “never” or “rarely” are approximately 10%.

The rate of the respondents who state that there is no one living together with them is 72.4%. It has been found out that the majority of the elderly (68.3%) do their own housework without a housemaid to help them.

The rate of the ones who state that they do their own daily or weekly shopping is 79.5%.

The rate of the elderly who go out every day is 36.82%. In short, the elderly have been observed to be active in their daily lives.

On the other hand, regular participation in social and cultural activities (cinema, theatre, concert, active work in charity organizations, etc.) has been observed to be low (22.9%).

Social Communication and Participation in Social and Cultural Activities Degree of Relationship with Friends and Neighbors

It is seen that the elderly often meet their friends (85.9%) and neighbors (76.1%). The rates reveal that they are socially active. The frequency of seeing with neighbors is lower than that of meeting friends (Appendix 7).

Appendix 7. Relationship with Friends

Meeting Friends	Yes	No	total	Yes
65-74	169	15	184	
75-84	160	34	194	
85+	23	9	32	
Total	352	58	410	

When the rate of meeting friends is examined depending on the age groups, it is seen that the rate of meeting friends drops as people get older. While the rate of meeting friends is 91.8% for the age group 65-74, the rate falls to 71.9% for the group aged 85 and above (Appendix 8).

Appendix 8. Relationship with Neighbors

Meeting Neighbors	Yes	No	total	Yes
65-74	156	28	184	
75-84	135	59	194	
85+	21	11	32	
Total	312	98	410	

When the frequency of meeting neighbors is examined depending on the age groups, it is seen that the rate of meeting neighbors drops as people get older. While the rate of meeting neighbors is 84.8% for the age group 65-74, the rate falls to 65.6% for the group aged 85 and above.

The investigation of agreement to the statement “Living with the young increases life satisfaction” according to the age groups:

The rate of the respondents who agree with the given statement is observed to drop as the age range increases (Appendix 9).

Appendix 9. Living with the Young

Living with the Young	Agree	Disagree	total	Agree

65-74	164	17	181
75-84	164	27	191
85+	28	4	32
Total	356	48	404

The investigation of agreement to the statement “*The relationships I have with family members make me happy*” according to the age groups:

The rate of agreement with the statement “*The relationships I have with family members make me happy*” is found out to increase as the age range increases. The rate of agreement to this statements is 96.7% for the group aged 65-74, 99.0% for the age group 75-84, and 100% for the ones aged 85 and above (Appendix 10).

Appendix 10. Relationship with Family Members

Relationship with family members	Agree	Disagree	Total	Agree
65-74	177	6	183	
75-84	190	2	192	
85+	31	0	31	
Total	398	8	406	

Participation in Social Activities Depending on the Age Groups

The rate of the elderly who regularly participate in social and cultural activities such as the cinema, theatres, concerts and active work in organizations has been detected to be 78.1%. The rate of participation is observed to fall

depending on the age groups. While regular participation in social and cultural activities such as the cinema, theatres, concerts and active work in organizations is 91.7% for the age group 65-74, the same rate drops to 67.9% for the group aged 75-84 and to 61.3% for the ones aged 85 and above (table 4).

Table 4. Participation in Social and Cultural Activities

Participation in social and cultural activities	Participates	Does not participate	Total	Participates
65-74	165	15	180	
75-84	129	61	190	
85+	19	12	31	
Total	313	88	401	

The following figure shows the distribution of old people’s actual participation in social activities (within last year, last two years, and last five years).

While old people are seen to be socially active, the rate of going on sea holidays is found to be low (figure 1).

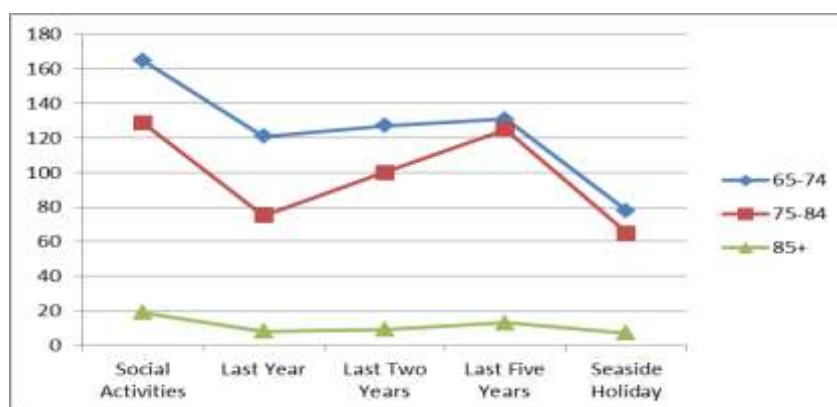


Figure 1. The Age-Based Figure of Participating In Social Activities – Last Year – Last Two Sea Holidays

The table indicates that the rate of sea holidays is 36.6%, and the rate decreases as people get older (table 5).

Table 5. Seaside Holidays

Seaside holiday	Goes	Does not go	total	Does not go
65-74	78	106	184	
75-84	65	129	194	
85+	7	25	32	
Total	150	260	410	

The Correlation between Participation in Social Activities Depending on Age Groups and Life Satisfaction

There is a 12% correlation between old people’s life satisfaction and meeting with their friends. No correlation has been detected between old people’s life satisfaction and meeting with neighbors.

A strong correlation has been detected between old people’s life satisfaction and being with the young with 15%. The correlation between life satisfaction and having good relationships with family members has also be found out to be strong with 26% (table 6).

Table 6. Correlation Analysis (Social Activities Depending on Age Groups and Life Satisfaction)

Social Communication and Participation in Social Activities	Life Satisfaction	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meeting friends	.121*	.014
Meeting neighbors	-.042	.395
Being together with the young	.150**	.002
Good relationships with family members	.267**	.000
Participation in social activities	.119*	.018
Doing physical activity	-.043	.389
Sea Side Holidays	.382**	.000

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

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between participation in social activities and life satisfaction among the elderly is 11.9%.

A strong correlation has been detected between going on sea holidays and satisfaction in life conditions with 38%.

No correlation has been detected between old people's life satisfaction and the level of physical activity.

Table 7. Correlation Analysis Social Communication and Participation in Social Activities with Satisfaction in Life Conditions

Social Communication and Participation in Social Activities	Satisfaction in Life Conditions	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meeting friends	.101*	.041
Meeting neighbors	-.020	.693
Being together with the young	.178**	.002
Good relationships with family members	.275**	.000
Participation in social activities	.090	.073
Seaside Holidays	.247**	.000
Life satisfaction	.708**	.000
Doing physical activity	-.101*	.042

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

There is a 10% correlation between old people's satisfaction with life conditions and seeing their friends. No correlation has been detected between old people's life satisfaction and meeting with neighbors (table 7).

A strong correlation has been detected between old people's satisfaction in life conditions and being with the young at 17%. The correlation between life satisfaction and good relationships with family members is also strong at 27%.

No correlation has been detected between participation in social activities and satisfaction in life conditions.

Table 8. Correlation Analysis Results between Old People's Age Groups and Social Communication and Participation in Social and Cultural Events

Social Communication and Participation in Social Activities	Age Groups	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meeting friends	-.174**	.000
Meeting neighbors	-.177**	.000
Participation in social activities	-.287**	.000
Seaside holidays	-.125*	.011

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

There is a strong correlation between going on sea holidays and satisfaction in life conditions at 24%.

A very strong correlation has been detected between satisfaction in life conditions and life satisfaction with 70%. Favorable life conditions that please the elderly have a great impact on life satisfaction.

A negative correlation has been detected between old people's satisfaction in life conditions and the level of physical activity with 10%. It can be stated that as the level of life conditions decrease, physical activity increases.

There is a negative correlation between the age of the elderly and meeting with their friends (17%) and neighbors (17%). As the age goes up, meeting with friends and neighbors decreases (table 8).

T test analysis results reveal that there are meaningful differences in old people's meeting with their friends and neighbors depending on the age groups.

A negative correlation has been detected between the age of the elderly and participation in social activities with 28%. As the age goes up, participation in social activities falls down.

There is a negative correlation between age and sea holidays at 12%. As the age increases, the rate of sea holidays drops.

Elderly Participation in Social And Physical Activities

When the correlation between life satisfaction and participation in daily activities without regard to age groups, and participation in social and physical activities in the Senior Daytime Life Centers of old people who took the survey is evaluated, it is determined that there is (table 9);

- A strong and positive correlation between life satisfaction, and participation in activities and seaside holidays,
- A positive correlation between life satisfaction, and participation in social activities in the last year and the last two years,
- A strong and positive correlation between life satisfaction, and willingness to go on trips organized by the Senior Daytime Life Centers.

Table 9 . Correlation Analysis Results Between Life Satisfaction and Participation in Social and Physical Activities

Participation in Social and Physical Activities	Life Satisfaction	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Doing Physical Activities	,309**	,000
Participation in social activities	,100	,166
Last year	,151*	,034
Last two years	,162*	,023
Last five years	,131	,066
Sea Side Holidays	,446**	,000
Attending the Senior Daytime Life Centers	-,058	,418
Being with courses	,015	,840
Going to the trips	,198**	,007
Paying one lira	,052	,467

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Regarding the age groups in the survey, when the correlation between participation in activities in their daily lives, and participation in social and physical activities in the Senior Daytime Life Centers is evaluated, there is;

- A negative and strong correlation between age and participation in physical activities,
- A negative and strong correlation between age and participation in social activities (in the last year, and two and five years), and in seaside holidays,

- A negative and strong correlation between age and willingness to go on trips organized by the Senior Daytime Life Centers,
- A negative and strong correlation between age and attending courses, going on trips, and paying 1 TL.

In short, it is seen that while age groups increase, participation in social and physical activities decrease (table 10).

Table 10. Correlation Analysis Results Between Age Groups and Participation in Social and Physical Activities

Participation in Social and Physical Activities	Age Groups	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Doing Physical Activities	-,309**	,000
Participation in social activities	-,287**	,000
Last year	-,292**	,000
Last two years	-,241**	,000
Last five years	-,150**	,002
Seaside Holidays	-,125**	,011
Going to the Senior Daytime Life Centers	-,281**	,000
Being with courses	-,353**	,000
Going to the trips	-,283**	,000
Paying one lira	-,193**	,000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Below is presented the distribution of old people willing to go to the Senior Daytime Life Centers according to age groups (figure 2). The fact that there is a high number of old people (especially at the ages 75-84 and above 85) who are willing to pay 1 TL to the social center, and want to spend time with youngsters is a curious outcome. Willingness to spend time with youngsters at an older age shows how significant a requirement is going to be satisfied with the help of the Senior Daytime Life Centers. Considering the distribution of old people’s willingness to participate in courses and trips organized by the Senior Daytime Life Centers in the age-based figure below, it is evident that trips are more substantially preferred.

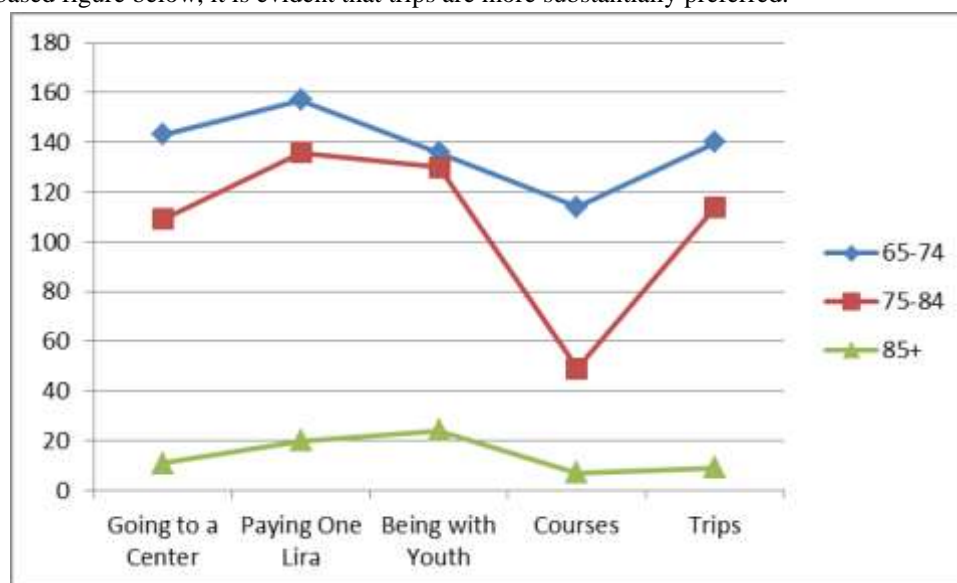


Figure 2. The Age-Based Figure of Participating In Going to a Center – Paying One Lira -

4. CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

Just like the other stages of life, old age is an inevitable state that will affect every human being. It can be early or late, with fewer or more problems depending on one's genetic heritage, nutrition, environmental factors, and cultural attempts (SPO, 2007).

This study has investigated old people's participation in social and physical activities depending on the age groups and its impact on life satisfaction. To achieve this purpose, we have come up with socio-demographic and socio-economic features of the elderly people with whom questionnaires have been conducted.

At the end of the correlation analysis, although it was determined that as the elderly get older according to the age groups,

- Seeing friends,
- Spending time with youngsters,
- Being on good terms with the family members,
- Participation in social activities, and
- Going to sea vacations increase life happiness,

It is also determined that as their age grows,

- Meeting with friends and neighbours lessens,
- Participation in social activities and
- Going to sea vacations decreases.

Despite all these, it has been detected that as the age increases, the willingness to spend time with the young rises.

In short, as the age rises depending on the age groups, participation in social and physical activities drops.

This study has investigated old people's participation in social and physical activities depending on the age groups and its impact on life satisfaction. To achieve this purpose, we have come up with socio-demographic and socio-economic features of the elderly people with whom questionnaires have been conducted.

The analysis results reveal in general that;

- The elderly are physically active,
- They are socially active with a low rate of sea holidays,
- Participation in physical activity, sea holidays and participation in social activities increase life satisfaction. Accordingly, it has been concluded that willingness to go on trips organized by the Senior Daytime Life Centers will increase life satisfaction.

As a result of correlation analyses, the following conditions have been observed as the age increases depending on the age group:

- Old people's participation in physical activity in their daily lives decreases;
- The rates of participation in social activities (within the last one year, last two, and five years) and going on sea holidays decrease;
- Their willingness to go to proposed the Senior Daytime Life Centers decreases;
- Their participation in social and physical activities in the Senior Daytime Life Centers decreases;
- Their willingness to attend courses, go on trips, and pay 1 TL as the center fee also drops.

According to WHO's definition, health is a state of complete well-being involving all physical, mental, social, and economic aspects of life. For this reason, social health can only be achieved by means of policies that embrace all these elements. A healthy society involves healthy children and adults as well as healthy elderly. To this end, apart from general health policies, Turkey should develop and execute special health policies for the elderly as soon as possible (SPO, 2007).

The importance of a healthy process of getting old on individual and social levels should be acknowledged. Within the scope of a study conducted in England, Allen et. al. (1992) has proposed a care and service center for the elderly. Such a system should be put into practice both on social and institutional levels. All kinds of initiatives should be taken socially to achieve this purpose.

The Senior Daytime Life Centers Suggestion For The Elderly:

In the extent of the research, in addition to the Senior Daytime Life Centers with various activities for the elderly, a house of size 45 m² is suggested. In the first stage, it is planned for each town to have one, and in later stages, it is planned to spread into each neighbourhood. The predicted issue concerning the neighbourhood-based plan is the lack of location choices for these units in neighbourhoods. The plan is to try the units and their operation in towns, and then passing to the second stage.

Senior Daytime Life Center for the elderly is going to include the units below in the scheme.

- 45 m2 1+1 housing unit (based on the age groups in the town population)
- All kinds of support (hygiene, health, etc.)
- Health center
- Social center
- Hobby gardens

The locations demanded by the elderly for the Senior Daytime Life Center are present in the figure below; most of them demand a garden, and demand a theatre, cinema, prayer room, chatter room, and a crossword (puzzle) room.

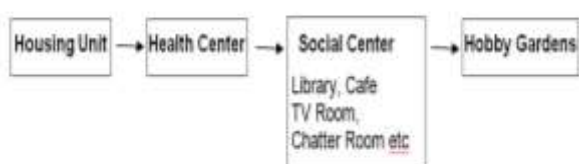


Figure 3. Diagram of The Senior Daytime Life Center

Most demanded locations, with the order of highest percentage is: library, physical therapy and rehabilitation center, newspaper reading room, café, TV room, infirmary, bridge room.

The activities that the elderly want to do in the Senior Daytime Life Center are music, handicrafts, painting and sports. Additional activities that they ask for are theatre, writing poetry, humanities education, health course, weaving rugs, reading and writing, knitting, learning foreign languages, etc.

This suggestion's objective is the participation of old people in production, and increase of their communication opportunities with every age group, especially with youngsters. Another objective is to prevent emotions like loneliness and abandonment to become an issue for the elderly.

Therefore, the Senior Daytime Life Center suggested in the content of this study is going to be an application that increases the physical and social interaction of old people, especially the ones that are left lonely after a certain age.

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