

Social Connectedness in the Transition to Retirement Among Civil Servants: A Cross-sectional Study in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

Background: Retirement is a transitional phase that affects various life aspects, including social connectedness. Many civil servants feel socially unprepared, leading to reduced interactions, increased isolation, loneliness, and depressive symptoms. This highlights the need for social readiness to support retirees' well-being. Therefore, this study describes the readiness of social connectedness of prospective retired civil servants in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Methods: A descriptive quantitative study with a cross-sectional design was conducted online via WhatsApp from November to December 2024, involving 171 prospective civil servant retirees who participated in the retirement preparation program organized by the Regional Civil Service Agency, using a consecutive sampling technique. The instrument used was the civil servant retirement readiness questionnaire by Mardova, which had been modified. Data analysis included univariate and bivariate analysis (Spearman's rho, Chi-square, and Fisher's exact test).

Results: Most respondents (60.2%) were categorized as "Ready" regarding social connectedness readiness. There was a significant difference in social connectedness readiness based on gender (p -value=0.005), where female respondents tended to be more socially prepared than males.

Conclusions: Most prospective civil servant retirees are classified as socially ready. The level of social readiness among prospective retirees varies by gender.

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INTRODUCTION

Abraham Maslow, through his hierarchy of human needs theory, explains that humans have basic needs such as food, water, and clothing, followed by higher needs including love, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (McLeod, S., 2025). Work not only fulfills economic needs but also provides basic social connectedness (Hammer, et al., 2024) as suggested by Steers and Porter (1983) who state that employment enables social interaction and self-fulfillment (Hege, 2023; Muhibar, 2021).

According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia had 142.8 million employed individuals in February 2024, including 3.7 million civil servants (Central Statistics Agency or BPS, 2024). In line with Government Regulation No. 45 of 2015, civil servants in Indonesia retire at the age of 56. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, 663 civil servants retired in 2023 (Development Planning Agency at Sub-National Yogyakarta or Bappeda DIY, 2023). Retirement is a transitional phase marked by significant changes in physical, psychological, financial, and social aspects of life; difficulties in managing this transition may lead to retirement syndrome (Madero-Cabib et al., 2022; Comi et al., 2020). Retirement syndrome is characterized by feelings of emptiness, loneliness, uselessness, lack of clear understanding of future conditions and dissatisfaction with one's performance after retirement (Qorbani et al, 2024).

Preparation is a concept related to readiness for retirement that includes dimensions of health, psychological, financial, housing, social, and active leisure (Solhi et al., 2022). However, most retirement preparation programs and empirical studies both locally and globally tend to focus predominantly on financial and psychological readiness (Yeung & Zhou, 2017; Hansson et al., 2019), while the social dimension remains underexplored. International studies highlight that loneliness was observed among retired individuals and furthermore, the impact of retirement on social connectedness was highlighted (Greš et al., 2025). Despite this, there is still limited evidence on how individuals prepare socially for retirement, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

In Indonesia, research related to

retirement has primarily focused on financial readiness (Hamidi & Adrianto, 2022), psychological adjustment (Nizeyumukiza et al., 2020), or the impact of retirement training programs (Nugraha et al., 2024). Studies specifically examining social connectedness before retirement are still scarce, and no published research to date has explored this among Indonesian civil servants. Meanwhile, Yogyakarta's Regional Civil Service Agency (BKD) organizes retirement preparation programs annually, but preliminary findings from this study reveal that these programs do not adequately address the social connectedness aspect.

Good social connectedness are essential for successful aging, providing emotional support, a sense of belonging, social engagement (Muthmainnah et al., 2019), and social well-being (Feng et al, 2023). Therefore, assessing the level of social connectedness among prospective retirees is crucial to prevent social isolation and improve adaptation during retirement.

Based on the literature gap, limited empirical findings, and increasing importance of social readiness in healthy aging, this study specifically examines the social connectedness readiness of civil servants approaching retirement in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the readiness level of social connectedness among civil servants approaching retirement in Yogyakarta and identify factors associated with it.

METHODS

Design

A quantitative approach utilizing a descriptive method and cross-sectional design was employed to examine the retirement preparedness of prospective future retirees in the Yogyakarta region and to analyze its association with demographic variables. Data was collected through an online survey from November to December 2024.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, Universitas Gadjah Mada, with number KE/FK/1729/EC/2024. Prior to data collection,

all participants received detailed information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and processes, and provided written informed consent.

Participants

A total of 171 civil servants scheduled to retire between January and June 2025 were recruited based on predetermined inclusion criteria. This number met the minimum sample size requirement calculated using Dahlan's formula: $n = \frac{(Z\alpha)^2 PQ}{d^2}$ where $Z\alpha$ is the z-score at a 95% confidence level (1.96), P is the estimated population proportion with specific characteristics, Q is $1-P$, and d is the acceptable margin of error. This calculation yielded a minimum of 154 participants. To anticipate potential dropouts, 10% was added as recommended by Dahlan, bringing the total minimum sample to 171.

The sampling method used was consecutive sampling with the inclusion criteria: (1) prospective retirees aged 57–64 years; (2) those who had participated in the retirement briefing sessions by the BKD; and (3) individuals willing to complete the questionnaire in full. Exclusion criteria included: (1) those currently ill or requiring rest, and (2) those with diagnosed cognitive impairments.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of a demographic questionnaire and a retirement readiness questionnaire for prospective civil servant retirees. The demographic questionnaire collected data on age, gender, education level, rank/grade, income, marital status, and the presence of chronic illness. These variables were used to describe the characteristics of the study sample and served as the basis for analyzing associations with retirement readiness. The retirement readiness questionnaire was adapted from an instrument developed by Mardova8, which initially comprised 53 items. For this study's purposes, the researcher revised the questionnaire and modified the language and sentence structure with the supervisor. Researchers focused on the social connectedness readiness aspect within 12 statement items. The response scale in this questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale model. The final total score for social connectedness

readiness was 12-60, with interpretations as follows: very ready (81-100%), ready (61-80%), moderately ready (41-60%), not ready (21-40%), and very not ready (0-20%).

Following the modification, the questionnaire underwent thorough validity and reliability testing by Mulyani et al. (unpublished) involving 175 participants who met the same eligibility criteria as the primary study but were drawn from a different sample. Since this study utilized only one domain, construct validity and reliability were reassessed using 163 data points. The results showed r-values ranging from 0.343 to 0.762, indicating validity as all r-values exceeded the r-table value of 0.153 (Mulyani et al., unpublished). The reliability analysis demonstrated that the questionnaire was reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.813 (Mulyani et al., unpublished).

Data Collection

Data was collected online using a Google Form distributed via WhatsApp. The research team coordinated with an appointed BKD staff member to facilitate dissemination. The designated person in charge (PIC) shared a broadcast message with relevant government institutions, which included detailed study information, exclusion criteria, an informed consent statement, and a link to the questionnaire. Researchers actively monitored participant responses throughout the data collection period. To enhance response rates, reminder messages were sent by BKD every two days.

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted univariate analysis of numerical data (age and readiness score) using median, minimum, and maximum because both datasets were distributed abnormally after a normality test with Kolmogorov-Smirnov (p-value < 0.05). Categorical data (gender, rank/grade, marital status, and social connectedness readiness) were analyzed using frequency and percentage. Bivariate analysis was conducted using Spearman's rho to test the correlation between age and readiness, while Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were used to compare prospective retirees' social connectedness readiness based on other demographic characteristics. The data were recategorized into 2x2 groups: rank/

grade (low: I-II; high: III-IV), marital status (married vs. unmarried/divorced), education (high school vs. college), and income (low: \leq IDR 2,500,000; high: $>$ IDR 2,500,000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents' Characteristics

Table 1 shows the characteristics of prospective civil servant retirees in this study. Most respondents were 59 (63%), aged 56-60. This study's findings align with those of (Hutasoit et al., 2022), who examined 55 prospective retired civil servants at the Directorate General of Intellectual Property, Ministry of Law and Human Rights. In Hutasoit's research, most respondents were >57 (61.8%). Both of these studies are in accordance with the conditions in Indonesia, which are regulated in law number 20 of 2023 concerning civil servants, Article 55, concerning the retirement limit for civil servants at the age of 58 years for administrators, supervisors, and executive officials, and 60 years for high-ranking officials. The two respondents aged 56 were early retirees, and those aged 57 retired the following year.

Most of the respondents were male (56.7%), in line with research by Hutasoit et al., (2022) and (Fardila et al., 2015). However, in contrast to the National Civil Service Agency or Badan Kepegawaian Negara (BKN), the majority of civil servants in 2023 will be female (54%) (BKN, 2024). This difference may be influenced by generation "Y" which is dominant today. At the same time, the respondents are Generation X. Generation Y tends to be filled with more women participating in the workforce. In contrast, Generation X is still dominated by men who first entered the government bureaucracy. According to the BKN (2024), before 2017, most civil servants were male, but from 2017 until now, there have been more female civil servants.

The majority of respondents had a tertiary education (81.9%), in accordance with research by Gerung et al., (2022), which showed the dominance of higher education in civil servants. As many as 93.6% of respondents were married, according to research by Putra & Sukmawati (2020). Indonesian culture that supports marriage is a dominant factor in the marital status of civil servants (Djawas et al.,

2021). Most respondents had a high rank/grade (93.6%), which aligns with Fardila et al., (2015). In addition, 98.2% of respondents had a high income ($>$ IDR 2,500,000.00), supporting the results of Sari & Eriva (2020).

Description of Social connectedness Readiness of Prospective Civil Servant Retirees

The majority of respondents in this study were in the "Ready" category in social readiness (60.2%). This result differs from Mardova's study in Padang which showed the majority of civil servants were in the "Very Ready" category. The median social readiness in this study was 47 (range 31- 60), indicating good but not optimal readiness (≥ 49).

The high percentage of "Ready" and "Very Ready" categories indicates that the majority of prospective retirees have fairly good social connectedness, although not yet fully optimal to support the retirement transition. This may be due to a lack of preparation in expanding social networks outside of work, which has the potential to affect psychosocial well-being (Bauger & Bongaardt, 2016). Social networks included living arrangements, marital status, number of social ties or contact with family and friends (Kelly et al., 2017) can help reduce the risk of isolation, stress, and decreased quality of life (Hampton & Totty, 2023).

Furthermore, an overview of each questionnaire statement item answered by respondents from "Very Suitable" to "Very Unsuitable" can be seen in Table 3. Based on Table 3, there are 3 items with the highest average value, namely item 35 with an average of 4.26, item with an average of 4.12, and 34 with an average of 3.99. In addition, there are also 3 items with the lowest average, item 38 with an average of 3.45, item 31 with an average of 3.64, and item P32 with an average of 3.70.

Most prospective retirees demonstrated social readiness by remaining active in civic, spiritual, and community activities. Involvement in these social activities reflects their desire to continue contributing and find meaning in life after retirement (Smith et al., 2024). However, participation in social activities in the work environment tends to decrease, and the use of leisure time for activities with friends is still limited.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Prospective Civil Servant Retirees in November-December 2024 (n=171)

| Variable | f | % | Median (Minimum-Maximum) |
|--------------------------|-----|------|-----------------------------|
| Age (years) | | | |
| 56 | 2 | 1,2 | |
| 57 | 56 | 32,7 | |
| 58 | 3 | 1,7 | 59 (56-60) |
| 59 | 108 | 63,2 | |
| 60 | 2 | 1,2 | |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 97 | 56,7 | |
| Female | 74 | 43,3 | |
| Highest Education | | | |
| High School | 31 | 18,1 | |
| College | 140 | 81,9 | |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Married | 160 | 93,6 | |
| Unmarried/Divorced | 11 | 6,4 | |
| Rank/Grade | | | |
| Low | 11 | 6,4 | |
| High | 160 | 93,6 | |
| Income | | | |
| Low | 3 | 1,8 | |
| High | 168 | 98,2 | |

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 2. Description of Social Connectedness Readiness of Prospective Civil Servant Retirees in November and December 2024 (n=171)

| Domain | f | % | Median (Minimum-Maximum) |
|---------------------------------------|-----|------|-----------------------------|
| Social Connectedness Readiness | | | |
| Very Ready (49-60) | 50 | 29.2 | |
| Ready (37-48) | 103 | 60.2 | 47 (31-60) |
| Moderately Ready (12-36) | 18 | 10.5 | |

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Previous research by Lahdenperä et al., (2022), showed that strong social connectedness facilitate adaptation to retirement. Although the loneliness factor has not been measured directly, loneliness remains a concern because it can increase the risk of depression (Lee, et

al., 2021). Interventions to strengthen social networks, such as participating in community activities and maintaining family relationships, are pivotal to improving the quality of social connectedness before retirement (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015).

Table 3. Analysis of Item Scores on the Civil Servant Social Readiness in November and December 2024 (n=171)

| Item | Statement | Very Suitable | | Suitable | | Quite Suitable | | Not Suitable | | Very Unsuitable | | Mean±SD |
|------|---|---------------|------|----------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|-----------------|-----|--------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | |
| 27 | Visiting family <i>Saya rutin berkunjung ke rumah anak-cucu atau kerabat</i> | 33 | 19.3 | 90 | 52.6 | 43 | 25.1 | 5 | 2.9 | 0 | 0 | 3.88 ± 0.742 |
| 28 | Being visited <i>Anak-cucu kerap mengunjungi ke rumah saya.</i> | 30 | 17.5 | 97 | 56.7 | 35 | 20.5 | 7 | 4.1 | 2 | 1.2 | 3.85 ± 0.795 |
| 29 | New hobby <i>Saya menekuni hobi baru.</i> | 27 | 15.8 | 89 | 52 | 41 | 24 | 14 | 8.2 | 0 | 0 | 3.75 ± 0.818 |
| 30 | New friends <i>Saya menambah teman baru untuk masa pensiun</i> | 33 | 19.3 | 87 | 50.9 | 42 | 24.6 | 9 | 5.3 | 0 | 0 | 3.84 ± 0.792 |
| 31 | Workplace socializing <i>Saya meluangkan waktu untuk kegiatan sosial kantor tempat saya bekerja</i> | 17 | 9.9 | 90 | 52.6 | 50 | 29.2 | 14 | 8.2 | 0 | 0 | 3.64 ± 0.772 |
| 32 | Leisure activities with friends <i>Saya dapat memanfaatkan waktu senggang bersama teman-teman dengan melakukan kegiatan seperti memancing, menjahit, arisan, dan lainnya</i> | 19 | 11.1 | 93 | 54.4 | 48 | 28.1 | 11 | 6.4 | 0 | 0 | 3.70 ± 0.751 |
| 33 | Socializing with peers <i>Saya meluangkan waktu untuk bertemu dengan teman sejawat</i> | 20 | 11.7 | 101 | 59.1 | 46 | 26.9 | 4 | 2.3 | 0 | 0 | 3.80 ± 0.665 |
| 34 | Neighborhood social participation <i>Saya mengikuti kegiatan sosial di tempat tinggal saya (PKK, Posyandu, senam sehat, dll)</i> | 42 | 24.6 | 90 | 52.6 | 34 | 19.9 | 5 | 2.9 | 0 | 0 | 3.99 ± 0.751 |
| 35 | Community-based leisure activities <i>Saya mengikuti kegiatan kemasyarakatan untuk mengisi waktu luang misalnya (gotong royong, majelis pengajian, dan lain sebagainya)</i> | 62 | 36.3 | 93 | 54.4 | 15 | 8.8 | 1 | 0.6 | 0 | 0 | 4.26 ± 0.638 |
| 36 | New community participation <i>Saya tergabung dalam komunitas baru (olahraga, kegiatan sosial, dll)</i> | 31 | 18.1 | 85 | 49.7 | 40 | 23.4 | 14 | 8.2 | 1 | 0.6 | 3.77 ± 0.863 |
| 37 | Spiritual leisure activities <i>Saya mengikuti kegiatan spiritual untuk mengisi waktu luang misalnya (majelis pengajian, pendalaman alkitab, dan lain sebagainya)</i> | 55 | 32.2 | 85 | 49.7 | 28 | 16.4 | 3 | 1.8 | 0 | 0 | 4.12 ± 0.737 |
| 38 | Office involvement post-retire <i>Saya bisa mengikuti acara/kegiatan kantor setelah pensiun</i> | 14 | 8.2 | 77 | 45 | 53 | 31 | 26 | 15.2 | 1 | 0.6 | 3.45 ± 0.869 |

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Description of Social Connectedness Readiness Level Based on Demographic Characteristics

Table 4 presents the results of the analysis examining the relationship between demographic characteristics and social connectedness readiness. A statistically significant association was found between

gender and social connectedness readiness (p -value = 0.005). In contrast, no significant relationships were observed for age (r = 0.098; p -value = 0.201), education level (p -value = 0.076), marital status (p -value = 0.512), rank/grade group (p -value = 1.000), income level (p -value = 0.557).

Table 4. Results of Analysis of the Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Social Connectedness Readiness of Retired Civil Servants in November and December 2024 (n=171)

| Demographic Characteristic | Social Connectedness Readiness Level | | Readiness Score r | p-value |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | Very Ready f (%) | Ready and Moderately Ready f (%) | | |
| Age | | | 0.098 | 0.201 ^a |
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 20 (11.7%) | 77 (45%) | | 0.005 ^{*b} |
| Female | 30 (17.5%) | 44 (25.7%) | | |
| Last Education | | | | 0.076 ^b |
| High School | 5 (2.9) | 26 (15.2%) | | |
| University | 45 (26.3) | 95 (55.6%) | | |
| Marital Status | | | | |
| Married | 48 (28.1%) | 112 (65.5%) | | 0.512 ^c |
| Single/Divorced | 2 (1.2%) | 9 (5.3%) | | |
| Rank/Grade | | | | 1.000 ^c |
| Low | 3 (1.8%) | 8 (4.7%) | | |
| High | 47 (27.5%) | 113 (66.1%) | | |
| Income | | | | 0.557 ^c |
| High | 50 (29.2%) | 118 (69%) | | |
| Low | 0 (0%) | 3 (1.8%) | | |

Source: Primary Data, 2024

*significant if p-value < 0,05; ^aSpearman test, ^bChi-square, ^cFisher's exact test

Given these results, gender was the only demographic variable showing a statistically significant relationship with social connectedness readiness. These findings are in line with Wang & Matz-Costa (2018), which analyzed 7,287 individuals over the age of 50 in the US, showing that social support is more influential for women than men. In addition, women tend to have stronger social networks, contributing to their retirement preparedness (Wang & Matz-Costa, 2018). Women prepared more for social connectedness in retirement because they receiving and giving more support through their lives and experiencing more benefits from the support of their social interactions (Pedreiro et al., 2021). Women tend to have earned less, had shorter careers (OECD, 2021) and more stable social relationships outside the home than men (Pedreiro et al., 2021) so they are more socially prepared for retirement. In addition, gender roles keep them responsible for domestic duties, so social support from family, friends, and community is an important element in retirement readiness (Mussida & Patimo, 2021; Stancliffe et al., 2015). However, historically, men are seen as the primary breadwinners, so their self-identity

is often closely tied to work, making retirement a challenging transition (Urbaniak et al., 2023). Men must be more active in community activities and build strong social networks to mitigate the negative impact.

The relationship between age and social connectedness readiness showed a weak correlation and was not statistically significant ($r = 0.098$, p -value = 0.201). This result is in contrast to Comi et al., (2020), which mentioned that older individuals have better social connectedness readiness because they have simplified their social network to include relationships with greater emotional support. Although there was no significant relationship between age and social readiness, age can affect other aspects, such as financial readiness (Chow et al., 2019), as well as physical and psychological conditions that impact social activities (Rook & Charles, 2017). Older individuals tend to experience declining health that limits social interaction (Chow et al., 2019), while younger individuals have a wider social networks (Bruin & Parker, 2019).

Also, no significant relationship was found between education and social connectedness readiness. However, Du et al.,

(2023), found that older adults with higher levels of education tend to have better cognitive function, partly because they are more socially active. Education enhances social engagement by strengthening cognition, resource access, and active lifestyles in old age (Du et al., 2023).

This study showed that marital status was not significantly associated with social connectedness readiness at retirement, in line with the findings by Tantri et al., (2022). However, Chiao et al., (2022), found that living without a spouse, due to divorce, death, or not being married, increases the risk of loneliness after retirement due to loss of social support. The absence of a spouse narrows social networks, reduces interactions, and increases isolation, especially for those who depend on a spouse as the main support (Chiao et al., 2022).

This study shows that rank/grade is not significantly related to social connectedness readiness at retirement. However, Mardova, (2020), found that the civil servant class IV was more ready to retire than class III, which was related to higher income. Previous research, Nizeyumukiza et al., (2020), also supports the view of Mardova's findings, that financial stability obtained by higher groups is often an important factor affecting the quality of social connectedness in retirement. This study also shows that income is not significantly related to readiness for social connectedness in retirement. However, Hansson et al., (2019), found that income affects life satisfaction, with social support as a moderating factor that can offset financial limitations.

The lack of significant findings regarding education level, marital status, rank/grade, and income level about social readiness may be influenced by the skewed distribution of respondents. This imbalance can affect the analysis results, as the small number of respondents in specific groups can reduce the statistical power to detect significant differences (Wiradhani et al., 2019).

Research Limitations

This study was limited to civil servants in Yogyakarta, so the findings cannot be generalized nationally. The imbalance in the demographic distribution of respondents hindered the analysis of the relationship

between the variables studied. In addition, the lack of documentation of respondents' city and institutional origin limited the analysis of geographical and institutional factors.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of prospective retired civil servants in the Special Region of Yogyakarta are in the ready category regarding social connectedness readiness in facing retirement. In addition, there are significant differences in social connectedness readiness based on gender, where female respondents tend to be more prepared than males.

The results of this study can serve as a basis for prospective retirees to strengthen their social networks to reduce the risk of stress in retirement. Male prospective retirees are advised to be more active in building and strengthening social networks before retirement by joining communities or social organizations and establishing close relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. In addition, government agencies are expected to provide training programs that support social connectedness readiness. This findings may inform the nursing profession in developing holistic care approaches. Future studies should use a more representative sample and include geographical and institutional variations to improve result generalizability.

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