

## THE GLOBAL AGING AMERICA THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACTIVE AGING, CITIZENSHIP, AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

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### Abstrak

*Riset ini menginvestigasi pengaruh dan partisipasi dari para lansia aktif di Amerika dalam isu-isu global. Tujuan utama dari riset ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi partisipasi, motivasi, dan kontribusi dari warga lansia/senior dalam isu global. Artikel ini dapat memberikan pengertian mengenai latar belakang individu yang membentuk konteks budaya untuk berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan yang berhubungan dengan isu global. Penelitian dilakukan dengan in depth interview, kepada para lansia yang aktif di organisasi Osher Lifelong Program dan League of Women Voters, Fort Collins, Colorado, Amerika Serikat. Hasilnya, riset ini menemukan bahwa pengalaman yang diperoleh selama mereka masih di usia produktif menjadi motivasi bagi mereka untuk berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan mengenai isu global. Motivasi ini juga dipengaruhi oleh keuntungan dalam kegiatan mengenai isu global yakni keuntungan individual seperti kebutuhan sosial dan pembelajaran. Peserta riset juga mengemukakan keuntungan bagi komunitas, seperti kepuasan berbagi dan mempengaruhi perspektif komunitas untuk mendiskusikan wacana global dan kontribusinya pada pilihan politik.*

*Kata Kunci: Lansia aktif, kompetensi antar budaya, governmentality, isu global, partisipasi*

In this election, I am more concerned about those soldiers in Iraq, kids in failing schools and the threat that terrorists are going to strike our cities. The world that my six kids and 10 grandkids are going to live in is much more important to me than the golden-age goodies promised by pandering politicians” (Ganon, 2004).

Researches about senior citizenship have recently received scholars’ attention, especially for academia that concentrates in the gerontology, the study of the social and psychological aspects of the aging society. Many developed countries are concerned about senior citizens because of their potential contributions in civil society organizations (Principi, Chiatti, & Lamura, 2012), volunteering for community (Welleford & Netting, 2012), and industrialized world pension or social protection schemes (Walker, 2002). In political and governmental aspects, senior citizens have become one of the significant focuses for political campaign (Gannon, 2004). Also, the increasing numbers of elderly in developed countries affect the age-related, intergenerational, and ageing policies (Carney, 2011). For example, Muramatsu and Akiyama (2011) present that the need for research about Japan senior citizens

is urgent, since Japan has encountered a super-aging population. In 2009, approximately 23% of the Japan population will be above 65-years-old (Statistic Bureau, 2010). According to research from Long Term Care Market (M2PressWire, 2006), the United States has the revenue for more than \$394 billion as a consequence of population shift to senior citizenship, higher demand for healthcare, and higher life expectancy of 79.1 years.

At the government level, the United States has developed the Older Americans Act to provide a program that facilitates the civic engagement for older Americans (Administration on Aging, 2007). The National Council on Aging in 2006 named civic participation as a program priority. This attention comes from the assumption that civic participation or activity for elderly will increase the social capital (Sander & Putnam, 2006), sustain elderly health (Seeman & Crimmins, 2001), and empower their role as citizens for community and social organization (Ranzijn, 2002). The seniors also participate in educational activity in the lifelong learning group, and participate in politics (Henkin & Zapf, 2006). Walker (2002) argues that the alterations of family structure, where the productive adults have no longer time and energy to take care of

their elderly relatives or parents, led to the demand for promoting the healthy ageing concept, independent living for elderly, and social health care. All these efforts come together to support the conceptual key of “successful ageing” (Rowe & Kahn, 1997) appeared in 1960 and then advanced to the strategy of active ageing, which also prompted in the World Health Organization (Walker, 2002).

However, researchers point out that there is less influence of seniors in global politics. Vincent (2001) points the lack of encouragement for seniors in understanding the globalization issues and the sense of the global community (look also Cornway and Crowshaw, 2009). This research investigates the influence and participation of senior citizens in globalization issues and understanding of the global community, diversity, foreign policy, and international relations due to the progress of globalization (Phillipson, 1999). The increasing diversity of the older population will require understanding to prevent the exclusion of seniors (Walker, 2002) that will hamper the age-friendly community (WHO, 2011). Additionally, the progress of high-speed technology in lessening geographical boundaries will magnify more global perspectives in the realm of aging discourse (Phillipson et al, 1999). Thus, research in seniors’ participation in global issue, international affairs, diversity, or foreign policy will contribute to the ongoing discussion on active aging and govern mentality to encourage seniors to be healthy, active, and informed citizens (Cornway&Crowshaw, 2009).

The main objective of this research is to identify the participation, motivation, and contribution of senior citizen in global issue. The research will allow us to understand the individual background, which shapes the existing cultural context of senior participation, social constructions, and personal experience in participating in global issue-related activities. For this purpose, the following research questions have been identified:

What are the motivations of senior citizens in participating in global issue activities? 1).What are the backgrounds of personal experiences that influence seniors to participate in global issue activities? 2).What are the benefits for senior citizens, organizations, and community when looking at the participation of seniors in activities related to global issue?

What are the contributions or influences of activities related to global issues for seniors? 1).What are the influences of the global activities to seniors’ perception on active citizenship? 2).What are the influences of the activities related to global issue to their competence in

intercultural communication?

How do senior citizens’ activities create understanding of the global community, diversity, and international politics through these activities?

### Literature Review

#### Active Aging

Active aging is the conception of substituting the powerless, vulnerability, lack of responsibility, and less roles images that shadow the old age perception with the role of “middle age” (Walker, 2002, p. 122) or productive age through various actions and values. Walker (2002) also presents the idea of preserving the activities in productive age to active ageing to lead to the contentment of elderly even though they have retired from their jobs. Bass, Caro, and Chen (1993) propose the notion of “productive ageing” as the answer to US elderly who demand more activities at their retirement time other than leisure activities and family duty. While Keogh (1996) argues that depression in old age could happen because of the feeling of incompetent, isolation, and separation from the community they used to partake during their productive age. Heikkinen (1995) argues further that gloominess could be one of the greatest causes of illnesses, the underprivileged quality of life, and dementia.

Various researchers offered key points to address the strategy of active ageing in government policy. Walker (2002) presents seven keys in determining the strategy of active ageing as important factors in policy decision maker in ageing issue. These seven keys are (1) meaningful activities for elderly which not only considers the activities in economic factors or money orientation but also as the contribution of individual concern to individual, family, local community, and society at large; (2) the participation of all elderly, even though they are dependent; (3) a preventive concept, for example to prevent the loss of skill, illness, disability, and other negatives factors; (4) the activities can influence intergenerational stakeholders, not only the elderly; (5) the concept of active ageing also exemplifies rights and obligation as senior citizens. (6) The strategy needs to be empowering and participative. Here, the elderly can take action by using bottom up communication, not only top down communication from the government or organization, and (7) respect for national and cultural diversity.

Rowe and Khan (1997) propose the term of “successful ageing” and proposed two points to support the elderly to reach the concept of successful ageing. The elderly

needs to maximize their cognitive and physical function, through education, sports, and social relations and the elderly need to participate in productive activities, such as doing functional capacity such as volunteer or paid work to create the self-efficacy.

The increasing attention to senior citizen also brings attention to the concept of elderly independency and empowerment to reduce the dependence on the community or family. Conway and Crawshaw (2009) refers the paper of Foucoult (1991) about the govern mentality, as a way to control a group of citizens without unswerving and intimidating power but by emboldening the self-governing to act and think according to the objectives of the government. Cornway and Crawshaw (2009) argue that senior citizens need the construction of “the golden age” to be healthy, active, self-responsible, and stayed informed. Rowe and Kahn (1997) agree with this construction by defining successful aging as a “low probability of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical-functional capacity, and active engagement with life” (p. 433). The strategy to create govern mentality is by promoting a “strong image” and positive connotation, such as to connote old age with health and active senior citizenship. Supplanting negative connotation and the stereotypical image of old age leads seniors to govern themselves to follow the image and self-govern their group through government facilities and policies (Cornway & Crawshaw, 2009).

The government’s support implementing the govern mentality is imperative. The support can be through policy making, health care, and community service. Binstock (2005) mentions the term of ‘senior power’ for United States seniors because the elderly have power in several decision-making process systems in the USA. Scholars have discussed the “power” of elderly in US politics and policy decision-making process. The senior has higher social status and political influence through a combination of policy design and lobbying (Estes, Biggs, & Phillipson, 2003). Even in the “target population” model, American seniors deserve the government investment the most (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). The American elderly is included in the target populations as having the strongest political power and positive construction, together with business, veterans, and scientists. The high level of voting activity of seniors causes the power. The seniors are also considered as a politically active group (Binstock, 2000 and Campbell, 2002). Gannon (2004) recognized this, as a retiree and new member of seniors group; “I crossed that golden-age threshold into senior citizenship, receiving a Medicare card, a Medigap insurance policy from AARP and my

new status as a member of America’s most pampered class and most feared voter group” (Para. 1).

All the privileges from seniors, lead to the next questions, which is about to what extend the seniors engage in global issue, and from their participations, they can increase their intercultural communication competence. The question address the issue of globalization (Vincent, 2001), technological development (Phillipson et al, 1999), the diverse group of seniors due to the increasing numbers of immigrants (Phillipson et al, 1999), and the emerging of the global community through the development of transportation, knowledge, and international affairs (Cornway and Crowshaw, 2009). In this situation, intercultural communications as the interaction process of people who have different background to reach basic mutual understanding become a valuable discussion (Villa, 2004). A successful communication in the seniors group to the realm of difference cultures will support the emerging of “friendly aging community” (WHO, 2011), where all seniors or anyone from different background feel comfortable to interact with each other.

#### **Intercultural Communication Competence**

Various researches have been conducted to understand the communication competence related to intercultural context. For example, the intercultural communication competence related to the successful interaction (Spitzberg&Cupach, 1984), immigrant acculturation (Brein&David, 1971), interracial relations (Stening, 1979), and many others. Even though, the conceptualization and definition related to communication competence is still debatable (Hammer, 1989), but intercultural communication competence still can be detected and identified through individual skill, experiences narratives, perceptions, and behaviors.

There are also various identifications of intercultural communication competences. Ruben (1976) starts with the seven behavioral dimension such as show respect, ability to response others in a non-judgmental manner, ability to acknowledge individual in nature, empathy, problem solver roles, relationship building oriented, and tolerance for ambiguity. Another identification is from Thomas (2003), which argues that intercultural competence is the ability to acknowledge and respect different values and cultures in order to create mutual adaptation, tolerance, cooperation, and productive circumstance to live together. While, Chen and Starosta indicate that the intercultural communication competence is the ability to compromise the cultural meanings through effective communication (1996).

The identification of intercultural communication competence can be understood through various ways. For example, Ruben (1976) assesses the competence through behavioral observations of participants who joined the cross-cultural program, while Nishida (1985) conducts research by testing the language ability of Japanese who traveled to the United States after the program has finished. However, understanding individual competence can also be identified through individual description towards their lived experiences in the intercultural communication (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, this research will employ the phenomenological research as the method to understand seniors’ commonalities in the phenomenon of global aging.

#### **Methods**

In this research, I used a qualitative research approach to the global aging America. The research was conducted through in-depth interviews with eight active seniors who participated in Osher Lifelong program at Colorado State University and the League of Women Voters. These two organizations were chosen as a starting point to find active seniors who are involved in activities related to global issue.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Colorado State University is a learning community for adults aged above 50 years old (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, 2012). The members of Osher Lifelong Learning do not have to have a college degree; members can take part in a small, engaging, and interactive group. The Osher was started in 2006 through cooperation with Bernard Osher Foundation (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, 2012). The lifelong learning group provides opportunities for seniors to share, learn, exchange ideas, build friendship, and express individual interests.

The League of Women Voters (LVW) is a non-partisan organization that engages citizens in public policy, democratic participation, and government affair through education and advocacy (League of Women Voters, 2012). Since 1920, the LVW has informed the citizens through facilitating members of the community with informative publications, in depth study, and balanced information. The LVW has various divisions to achieve the objectives; one of the divisions is the International Relations Team, which sponsors monthly discussions on international issue with the program of the Great Decision. The purpose of this division is to educate citizens on the United States’ positions under international relations such as United Nations, international trading, and national defense. The LVW

also has collaborates with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute to present a Great Decisions program twice every year (League of Women Voters, 2012). The Great Decisions is a discussion program from the Foreign Policy Association. The Great Decisions provides books, CD’s, and other form of media to facilitate groups of citizens to discuss the United States foreign policy challenges (Foreign Policy Association, 2012).

The interview questions posed are open-ended and exploratory. This approach allowed the researcher to explore topics in more depth and unearth new ideas. Although this methodology was not exhaustive of all seniors’ perspectives, these interviews allowed for comparison among different viewpoints and experiences from seniors who actively involved in activities related to global issues. I presumed that different people who involved in this program would have some different and some common perspectives. For this reason, I started by collecting data on how diverse the seniors’ experience with global issue activities; such as did they participate in the group discussions about global issue, foreign affair deliberations? Did they have discussion with international students? I started by interviewing the coordinator of OSHR and the League of Women Voters in International Relations, working my way through the global issue activities until I have interviewed the active members of OSHR activities and the League of Women Voters related to their participation in global issues. This approach allowed me to compare the experience of the organizational coordinators who conduct the activities with those who experience the activities as members. Finally, I tried to find the commonalities of senior’s experiences, perspectives, and competences to understand the issue of global aging.

I used the snowball technique. To sample participant I started with the coordinator of the OSHR program and the coordinator of International Relations in the League of Women Voters. Then I asked the coordinators for suggestions on whom else to speak with, getting the names of the active members who involve frequently on activities related to global issue. Secondary data was obtained in the form of organizational documents, press coverage of OSHR and the League of Women Voters, and literature owned by the organization. Analysis provided a thick description of seniors’ experiences and opinions on the global issue participation that reflected the shared experiences of all the different members. As appropriate, I integrated direct quotes into the case study.

The research conducted face-to-face interviews for 30-45 minutes each. The participants were eight

seniors, four men and four women with ages range from 63 to 76 years old, who were actively involve in Osher Life Long Learning Program and/or The League of the Women Voters. I used personal recommendations from the Coordinator of the International Relations Division of the League and the announcement of volunteering as research participants at a meeting of Osher, to find the respondents. The interview participants were actively involved in Osher and/or the League of the Women Voters in International Relations from three years to more than eight years. The participants were volunteers in various organizations, students in the CSU Life Long Learning Program, pensioners from academic or military occupations, housewives, teachers, and entrepreneurs. Their activities related to global issue are the discussion class in Osher Life Long Learning as facilitators or members, United Nation Association, the League of the Women Voters in the International Relations, Fulbright Alumni Program, host of International guesses or students, volunteers or sponsors in Non Government Organizations which involve in development or health program in other countries, and teacher for international students or adults immigrants.

### Findings

The meanings that the elderly have about participation in activities related to the global issue offer perspectives to help us understand the theoretical framework of active aging and citizenship. In the interview, the researcher asked about individual perspectives and experiences participating in activities related to global issue, about the implementation of these concepts from their perspective and how the activities help them develop their intercultural communication competence. Based on the data, the researcher found three ways in which participation of seniors in global issue can connect with the concept of citizenship, active aging, and intercultural communication competence. These are the connection between the global issue and personal motivations, participation in global issue, active aging, and citizenship, and participation in global issue and intercultural communication competence.

### The Connection between Global Issue and Personal Motivations

Vincent (2001), Cornway and Crowshaw (2009), and Philipson (1999) point out that seniors have lack of encouragement to participate in global issues, international affairs, and foreign policy. While, seniors have power in politic through their participation in voting (Vincent, 2001), seniors also

become the target of fund raising for campaign donations of legislative candidates (Binstock, 2005). The participation of seniors in global issues, minor or major can influence their voting decisions and is part of citizens understanding of the US foreign policy. The motivations of the seniors' active involvement in global issues started from their past personal experiences such as childhood experiences, job, spouse's job, hobby, and travelling.

I have always been politically interested in international affairs. I know that we still can live without knowing what's going on in another village, but I always have curiosity about what's going on in the next hill. (JR, 73)

My husband and I have travelled to the unexpected "Stands" country in Central Asia: the Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakstan. We also travel to Turkey, South America such as Brazil, Guatemala and then Morocco, and Eastern Europe such as Czech Republic. (BL, 65)

I was involve in Presbyterian Church because my father was a minister in there, one time there were bunch of boys come from Iceland in 1950's in our small community in Alaska. Since then I am interested to know about international people, their countries, and global issues. (AK, 76)

Some of seniors acknowledged that in their productive age or when they still worked, they could be involved actively in their interest in international affairs, but when they retired they continued their learning process related to international affairs, international politics, global issues, and foreign policy.

I've always been interested in cross cultural cognition when I still work in the university, and when I was in India for the Fulbright study grant, I was interested in Hindu family. I went to Poland, Russia, and Kenya. A lot of opportunity, I pay much more attention when I travel. The travel helps you to understand human behavior better. When I was in graduate school at Cornell, I know many people do not even go outside New York, and it gives you narrow perspectives about issues. They probably think that for example, the US health care is the best. It means that they never travel, because you know it is not true. Now after I retired, I also have chances to involve in something that I have never studied or travelled before (TZ, 70)

Interview participants acknowledged the benefits from participating in the activities related to global issue. The participants mentioned the benefits of the program could start from personal benefits such as the activities helping them to keep thinking and learning,

keep the brainwork, meet new friends who have the same interest, and give satisfaction to share specific information from their experiences and knowledge about international issues to other participants.

The benefits are you learn something; in our ages it is also social needs to meet with people, not only staying at home, and you are teaching. The best thing about this class is we can do both teaching and learning. It is a personal satisfaction for me; when I teach something, I feel very good about it. (JR, 72)

I think if I only listen to lecturer, it is not effective. I physically need to learn for example through the interaction with other students. It forces you to think about what is the position if I put my self in other countries or other people's "shoes." (RT, 63)

However, about the benefits for the communities and countries, the interview participants were range from skeptical about their significant impact to being optimistic. Their responses depended on the way the participants use their knowledge for their communities. Their contributions of included facilitating their friends' knowledge in the group discussion, providing opinion and information in the local newspaper about international issue, supporting the local organization who care about the global issue, supporting local political candidates if the candidates have the same vision related to the international issue, filling out the ballot for data collection of foreign policy association, and delivering ideas and opinions to their senator or congressman.

I think the only contribution to the community is primarily to your fellow classmates. Because of the OSHER, we fill out ballots, and it goes to New York, which I'm sure they will ignore. But we can have dialogue and exchange opinion. (JR, 72)

I just think that local community; through the work of network you can influence the conversation in the place like OSHER.

It is important to add conversation core about America and constant question about issues. (RF, 62)

Well, about the influence to community I can say yes and no. If we are informed citizens and try to influence foreign policy, we can choose candidate that share the same vision about foreign policy. I go out the campaign in elections. I support candidates who can combine the interest of domestic or foreign interest. In our country, the paradigm in foreign policy is pretty simplistic, it is "us" versus "them", that mentality; they not always have altruistic perspectives. Foreign policy should not only look up upon the interest of our country, it should be change. It should integrate the interest of the world.

Mutual benefit. I involve as volunteer. The last election I campaign in head quarter, call perspective voters. Walk through the neighborhood four to five days of elections. (RT, 63)

Ballot is important; the Foreign Policy Association will read it. The result of the ballots is available to the US legislations, if they want to know what American think. However, I could say that the questions are silly sometimes, and I am skeptical. FPA will listen to us, but the legislations will not. (BL, 65)

These responses provided information about the personal motivations of the seniors in participating in global issues. The benefits of the activities were not only to themselves, but also to their community and countries. Walker (2002) points out that the strategies of active ageing are providing activities that make the elderly can contribute to their individuality, local community, and society at large. The seniors' understanding of the benefits of participating in the global issues gives them an opportunity to feel useful, powerful, and active. Other than that, their acknowledgement of the benefit of their participation in the global issue can establish their conceptual framework about the idea of active aging and citizenship based on their personal opinions, experiences, and perspectives, gives them an understanding of the right and obligation as seniors citizens, and empower them to utilize bottom up communication to the government since they can be included as informed citizens who aware about the government policy (Walker, 2002).

### Participation in Global Issue, Active Aging, and Citizenship

The concept of active aging is connected with health, active, independency, and staying informed (Cornway and Crowshaw, 2009). It is also connected with the ability of the seniors to do activities, not only for leisure but also activities related to civic participation, political contributions, volunteering, which empowers their role in the society. The conceptual framework of successful aging or active aging is also similar to the individual perspectives of seniors. The interview participants are aware of the concept of active aging and able to connect their personal definition with their activities related to global issue.

Active aging means the active seniors. It is good if you take care of your health, keep you active, and help yourselves. By being active you make the contribution, giving back to the community. Many active people in OSHER or LVW think that they have to do it because they think that they owe the community. Therefore you



can be an active senior by giving back more than taxes and times. (BL, 65)

Active aging has an impact in the quality of life, for example, choices that we make about nutrition, exercise, health, smoking, and alcohol. I remember I still can help the disable children to play ski even though I am 65; I still can do everything. I take good care of my self. Living longer and healthy. Aging is a relative term. It is affected by choices you made. (MF, 65)

The interview participants defined active aging in positive connotation related to their ages, their activities to support their bodies, brain work, and exercising. The participants also agree that the activities related to global issue help them to fulfill their standard of active aging because the activities help them to think, discuss, listen, and meet people. The activities help them to feel useful as individual and as senior citizens.

The worst thing when retired is to stop learning. The activities to think about the world and foreign policy will challenge your minds, your concept or idea. (MF, 65)

The participants connected active aging with the participation as citizenship, through their activities in international affairs or global issue. The participants identified that citizenship is well-informed citizens who participate in democratic system and act or make decisions based on the information they have received in the political realm.

From the global issue discussion such as about immigration, people can have knowledge about immigration, clarify their beliefs, and the people able to talk to their representative in a more educated standpoint which that's what we need. We need citizens that are educated to more issue, so that they can talk with their legislator in a more sophisticated way. Sometimes when I write a letter to our representative about a piece of legislation, I reference the fact that I live in India and I talk with Indian. So I use the international experiences for my participation. (LY, 63)

In the participation of citizenship, you don't have to be in political party. I mean it is an option, but your participation in-group where you have particular interest, could also be mean as citizenship, because you influence the whole conversation. Participation in the group of people like Osher club: will influence people about local issue and local policy such as conservation (RF, 62)

The participants also provided information related to their opinions on international issues and the US foreign policy. These examples were their concern as citizens of the United States and their actions indicating

their participation in active citizenship.

I am a baby boomer generation. I am the post World War II generation, when at that time, all came home with victories, economy went crazy, and that feeling still alive. A lot of us are not happy with what the government has done related to foreign affairs, and we are ashamed for number of things. And we will vote that next time, we won't let them to do it. Right now, we have the pressure that we need to attack Iran; because they are going to make a bomb. Wait a second! Have they made a bomb? No. Have they said they make a bomb? No. And you said, we should attack them anyway? Are you crazy? (JR, 72)

Information needs to be disseminated. International issue can be about something that people have missed the information. That is why I like to explore about the topics, the unusual one. I want to point out things to the community about something that people do not understand. For example, why women did not get same salary? We try to influence the community. (BL, 65)

The senior citizens are aware that active aging can be connected to citizenship and the activities related to international affairs. From their perspectives on citizenship, the seniors also connect it with perceptual and behavioral changes they feel when they participate in the activities related to global issue. Thus, their recognition of the changes of their perceptual and behavioral because of their participation in the global issues can also be connected with the identification of intercultural communication competence.

### **Participation in Global Issue and Intercultural Communication Competence**

Intercultural communication competence can be identified through individual skill, narratives, perceptions, and behaviors. The interview participants indicated their intercultural competence in ways such as a non-judgmental manner, an ability to acknowledge individual in nature, and empathy (Ruben, 1976). They also described their personal experiences related to different people from different backgrounds, countries, and cultures. They are aware that they are being respectful, adaptable, tolerant, and cooperative with different circumstances and people (Thomas, 2003).

I have changed my perception to several issues for example about Somali pirates, which is during that study about Somalia, in Africa. One of participant studied about the sea, what happened to Somalia. It is a terrible pirate, robing people, terrible! The nation of Somalia is so badly disorganize, no government to take care of their country, especially the fisherman. When

the country feels apart, the other country take all the fish they have, the nuclear trial happened. Now, here you are a fisherman and you have no fish, people take away your fish. What will you do? Not to say that it is right, you have to look at the behind reason of that. How it could be corrected. (MF, 65)

This statement shows a non-judgmental manner. From their narratives, the participants also indicated their ability to acknowledge human nature, understanding the standpoints of different people, and have empathy with other people from different countries.

What do we know about a country name Oman? Oman was a British colony. The son of king, he studied in England. He turned Oman kingdom, which before was a country built by his father as an old school Muslim guy. Now, this country has amazing development such as in tourism, scuba diving. I can understand that an informed leader can benefit a country. (BL, 65)

The statement also shows changing of perception and looing at different perceptions toward a country. It is non judgmental, but it shows curiosity and appreciation to a country. The interview participants also connected their interest in international affairs to their personal experiences. Changing perceptions happened when they encountered the experiences and shared them with other participants within the global issue discussion.

When I was in Turkey, in the Church of the Constantine's mother, I get helped from a person from the Kurds. Kurds was a forbidden language in Turkey. There is a problem in Turkey with the Kurds. However, when I met him he said that he was happier as Kurds in Turkey than being a Turks in Amsterdam. I don't like of racism. But I know it happens in the world and I want to share it to those who have interest in global issue. I also share that one day I get a criticism from other people. It happened in Greece. I get an insult for being an American. Why your government does this and that? It makes me want to explain about America. They were so biased, why are they attacking me about this? So, learning about the US foreign policies makes me aware on what my government has done in other country, and if I can do something to prevent the bad decision, I will gather with other people to prevent that (BL, 65).

When we went to Guatemala, we have empathy, for those people because UNITED Fruit Company, it is a US company have huge plantation of banana, they were really taking advantage to Guatemala people. They get small salary. Also back in 1970, the US foreign policy kicked out president who have negative relations with the USA. The US kicked him out and put another guy who has favor to USA. I have a big empathy to their

country. (MF, 65)

In these statements, the participants provided information about their ability to see the human aspects of individuals but also they aware of the foreign policy of the government and were able to criticize these policies.

The participants also acknowledged that the intercultural competence they have existed before. Thus, the activities become the impact of their competences in intercultural understanding.

I think I am culturally aware before these activities. I grew up with very globally-minded parents. I kind of prepare; I know that difference is a good thing. That other people from different places, they have favorite and less favorite things. There is a hymn in Finland; there is blue sky here; and other countries have their own blue sky and their dream. (AK, 76)

There is always interesting if you know about other people countries. You know about the politeness of interaction. I'm much more aware on cultural differences. However if I am knowledgeable about a country, at least it leads to good discussion about it, and it shows your respect. (JT, 70)

Participants' activities did not necessarily change behavior or perception; perhaps because their intercultural competence existed before the activities. The activities could also be part of ways to sustain and exercise their existing intercultural communication competences. The activities help them go to a deeper level of understanding of several issues, and stimulate their empathy and awareness.

In the relationship with different people, I can continue to be more respectful; I appreciate differences, and I stimulate my interest. I experience more in personally. I want to see these places, from the class discussion, you know the concept of truism: you don't know what you don't know. (RT, 63)

I have a friend. He was a doctor. Three times he went to Vietnam. He met a doctor in Vietnam. He was apologizing, he says, "I was here during the war." Then the Vietnamese doctor say, "Which war?" He is not angry about it at all. I have the feeling of responsibility that we've not always done the right things and understanding more on that. I think people need to get more education about the issue, make more understanding about this issue. MF, 65

Participants showed a degree of empathy with the degree of responsibility as a citizen. They indicated their respect to other people and the information or knowledge about different countries was able to make them aware about the world's issue.

## Discussion

This research investigated the participation of senior citizens in global issues. Based on information from the interviews, the activities related to global issues have implemented the concept of active aging. The seniors felt that they continued their interest, challenged their minds, actively engaged, and learned about international political issues. The seniors also understood that active aging should be connected with well-informed citizens, healthy individual, and happiness. The activities, such as discussions about international issues in Osher and the League of the Women Voters, help seniors fulfill their social needs and stimulate them to think and work in something they like. The ability of seniors to share information can help them feel useful as individuals, empower their roles in the community, and engage them in challenging activities outside the retirement routine of leisure time, and family caregiver. The construction of active aging from the governmental perspective (Cornway&Crowshaw, 2009) is also confirmed in this research. The findings support that the concept of active aging has a positive association and can encourage seniors to be active, healthy, and stay informed.

The research also examined the influence of global issue on the personal concept and standard of active citizenship. The seniors confirmed that by understanding the US foreign policy and global issues, they can make political decisions, articulate their beliefs and values, and act based on information they have gained. However, this research found the participation of seniors to be dutiful citizenship or DC (Bennet, 2011). In the civic style, dutiful citizenship requires citizen input to the government in formal public organizations and campaigns and channeled through membership in defined social groups. The seniors identified their political participation related to global issues ranging from political campaigns to legislative constituent input to social or political organization to volunteering. The seniors participated more in defined social groups and the existing democratic system, the civic style of dutiful citizenship.

Finally, the participation of seniors in the activities related to global issues also influenced their perceptions and behaviors of intercultural communication competence. The seniors indicated the values of empathy, tolerance, non-judgmental, and respect through these activities. However the research did not measure the quantitative influence of the activities before and after or use an objective measurement of competence. The research only describes the phenomenological reflection of seniors upon their changing perceptions

toward global issues and what kind of behavior connected with their personal experiences related to the global community. The seniors acknowledged their ability through their narrative in understanding humans as individuals, reasoning beyond a negative activity or crime, and providing critical points towards their own government foreign policy.

Limitation of the research is the qualitative result cannot be generalized. The result came from the deep elaboration of interviewing small number of participants, thus it does not represent the population. The sampling is also an “ideal sample” or those who actively participate in global issue. The research will give different result if the participants are diverse, ranged from those who are active and those who are unwilling to participate to explore the challenge of participating the global issue such as skepticism of contribution and individual difficulties.

Future research should use quantitative measurements of participations in global issues. Another possibility to extend this research is to investigate the seniors’ activity related to global issues through digital media usage. Future research could also combine the seniors’ influence on global issue and the concept of self-actualized citizenship or AC (Bennet, 2011). In this research seniors identified the interest of global issue with self-interest or personal motivations of hobby, satisfaction, social needs, and self-esteem. These motivations relate closely to rooting self-actualization in social expression and the idea of sharing over peer networks, which connect with the civic style and communication logic of self-actualized citizenship. Bennett (2011) has pointed out in his research that digital media may be able to optimize the participation of young people who has less interest in politic, and it would be beneficial to investigate the optimization through digital media of an influential population target in the US politic, the global seniors.

## Conclusion

The research found that personal experiences in the past and in the productive ages influenced the motivation of seniors to participate in global issues. The motivations also were influenced by the benefits of involving in global issue, which are individual benefits such as social needs and learning experiences. The participants also described the community benefits, such as satisfaction of sharing and learning, influencing community to discuss the global discourse and contribution to the political choices. Thus, the global issue activities supported the concept of active aging

and citizenship.

The activities in global issue also influenced the changing of perception from participants. The participants could have different perspectives when examined the issues, performed non-judgmental manners, and looked for different or uniqueness of issues. The participation in global issue also influenced the intercultural competences such as sympathy, empathy, and tolerance.

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## PENGARUH TERPAAN MEDIA TERHADAP SIKAP KAUM IBU DALAM PENDIDIKAN ANAK

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### Abstract

*In the current era of globalization, the mass media is a means to obtain the information and entertainment that has become a necessity that can not be separated again in everyday life. Current information and entertainment has become a commodity that can generate money for the managers of mass media. In line with the growth of communication technology, mass media has grown to be an industry that is vital for a country. One important characteristic of the current era of globalization is the rapid development of communication, such as the emergence of a satellite dish, cable TV, internet, teleconferencing, etc., which results in loss of borders of a country due to the reach of the mass media are almost limitless.*

*Keywords: Mass Media, Television*

### Latar Belakang

Dalam studi media, dikenal istilah terpaan media (media exposure). Terpaan media itu menyangkut seberapa banyak media berhasil menjangkau publik, berapa banyak jumlah orang yang membaca koran, mendengarkan radio, atau menonton televisi.

Mengingat terpaan media massa yang dapat menimbulkan efek positif maupun negatif maka perlu satu keterampilan baru bagi seseorang agar bisa bertahan dan relatif bebas dari pengaruh media yang bersifat negatif dengan menggunakan media secara sadar dan selektif serta berpikir secara kritis tentang pesan-pesan media (media literacy).

Lingkungan sosial individu ikut menentukan kebutuhan apa yang akan dicari dalam menggunakan media baik media massa maupun non media massa, dimana berdampak pada pemenuhan kebutuhan dan kepuasan dalam diri orang yang menggunakan media.

Dalam rangka melakukan pengamatan secara empiris terhadap terpaan media tersebut, akan digunakan kaum ibu sebagai obyek penelitian. Kaum ibu dipilih karena ibu merupakan guru terbaik dalam pendidikan anak.

Begitu banyak problematika kontemporer yang menyita perhatian kita saat ini. Permasalahan itu begitu memprihatinkan ketika pelaku utamanya adalah anak-anak muda yang masih tumbuh berkembang. Tawuran antarpelajar, misalnya, sering kali mencuat, bahkan sampai menimbulkan kematian jiwa. Aksi-aksi keke-

rasan jalanan juga dilakukan anak-anak muda. Pun, anak-anak muda merupakan sebagian dari pelaku utama kasus penyalahgunaan obat-obatan terlarang dan kriminalitas.

Menyaksikan fakta yang terjadi, beberapa solusi coba ditawarkan. Kunci utama mengatasi kenakalan remaja adalah dengan cara mendidik mereka secara baik. Wacana pendidikan moral sudah lama bergaung meskipun sebenarnya masih mengalami kesulitan dalam penerapannya. Pendidikan agama juga tidak terlepas dari upaya revitalisasi agar memberikan makna bagi pembentukan moralitas. Tak ketinggalan pula anjuran memberikan keteladanan sebagai sarana pembangunan karakter dan pendidikan anak-anak.

Tentu saja, pendidikan terhadap anak akan efektif jika dilakukan semenjak dini. Anak pada usia 0-6 tahun dikatakan berada dalam usia emas (golden age). Menurut Elizabeth B Hurlock (1978), anak mengalami tahapan perkembangan fisik, perkembangan motorik, perkembangan bicara, perkembangan emosi, perkembangan sosial, perkembangan bermain, perkembangan kreativitas, dan perkembangan moral pada usia emas tersebut. Jadi, pada titik inilah perhatian kita perlu ditujukan dalam upaya melahirkan generasi masa depan Indonesia yang berkualitas.

Pendidikan anak usia dini yang saat ini cenderung diformalkan tentu layak diapresiasi. Tapi, pernahkah kita berpikir bahwa pendidikan anak pada usia dini mem-