



Leisure Activities: Challenges and Benefit during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Santoso TB*

Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Department of Occupational Therapy, Indonesia

***Corresponding author:** Tri Budi Santoso, Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Department of Occupational Therapy, Surakarta Health Polytechnic (Campus II), Jl. Kapt Adisumarmo, Tohudan, Colomadu, Karanganya, Surakarta, Central Java, 57173, Indonesia, Email: budi.ot@gmail.com

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The pandemic of COVID-19 declared by WHO in March 2020 significantly impacts human life [1]. This situation has changed in many human aspects, including the health system, economic and social life. The pandemic also affected human life, and it is influenced by how we live and engage with one another, how we do our job and communicate, and human mobility [2]. The pandemic of the COVID-19 situation and the policy set by the authorities have changed the pattern of human life, including habits, lifestyle, and daily routine. For example, during a lockdown or social restriction, many workers have been forced to work from home for prolonged periods, causing personal and professional lifestyles to become inextricably linked [3]. In addition, the school is closed, and parents have additional jobs at home, such as teaching and taking care of their children, thus creating a heavy burden for personal and parent responsibilities [3]. In turn, people may suffer from high life burden levels that impact the quality of life and balance of life. In the pandemic COVID-19 situation, a comfortable lifestyle in the past may become memories that may or may not be repeated in the future.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic occurred, many countries have made physical distancing rules and implemented lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus [4]. As a consequence, reducing the demand for traveling activities, more people work and study from home, and many public events and social activities are restricted [5]. In some countries, children and the elderly are not allowed to do activities outside the home [6]. In addition, during the “normalization” period, people are allowed to do activities outside, but with social distancing restrictions of at least 1.5 meters from one another and no crowds are allowed

[6]. Moreover, those restrictions, such as social distancing and lockdown, impact people’s daily routine, lifestyle, and wellbeing [7]. Indeed, the lockdown and social isolation have resulted in a paradoxical scenario in which, on the one hand, freedom has been restricted, but, on the other hand, more time has been provided for individuals to participate in activities traditionally associated with leisure [4].

Leisure is defined as “nonobligatory activity that is intrinsically motivated and engaged in during discretionary time, that is, time not committed to obligatory occupations such as work, self-care, or sleep” [8]. Others defined leisure as a time when individuals can choose whatever they want to do except to perform obligatory activities in daily life [9]. According to Kleiber, Larson, and Csikszentmihalyi [10], leisure activities are divided into two categories, namely relaxing leisure activities (e.g., watching T.V.) and serious leisure activities (e.g., sport, games). Leisure activities can be done in many ways, and individuals are engaged in multiple activities such as recreation, sightseeing, health, being together, excitement, and acquiring different experiences, in open or closed spaces, or passively or actively, in cities or rural areas [11]. In addition, participation in leisure activities, such as fitness-based or creative pursuits, has long been associated with wellbeing [12]. Therefore, understanding leisure activity participation during COVID-19 will provide helpful information for human physical, mental health, and wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals are obligated to stay at home. Due to movement restrictions, they cannot travel and carry out their regular activities, affecting their bodily, social, and emotional health [13]. For example,

in the study of the barrier of physical activities during the pandemic, COVID-19 Farah, et al. [14] documented that social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic caused personal obstacles in the form of feeling lazy, tired, low motivation, and limited time to become individual factors for doing physical activities outside the home. Physical activities in public areas were unable to be done due to social restrictions and were substituted by other types of physical exercise [15]. Lack of time, social influence, and motivation are regularly mentioned hurdles to regular physical activity involvement among adults; the COVID-19 also had the most significant impact on physical activity levels due to a lack of sufficient facilities/equipment/space [14]. Other variables that influence people's leisure time are (1) Mental wellbeing issues such as sadness, uneasiness, and the problem of concentration. (2) Housework, such as domestic activities. (3) Limited resources such as financial difficulties. (4) Work or physical presence at work. (5) Social limitation [16].

Studies documented that COVID-19 has been linked to increased mental health issues like depression and anxiety [17,18]. For example, a study documented that COVID-19 made the majority of individuals (45 percent-62 percent) feel terrified, worried, or powerless. Furthermore, another study confirmed that over 40% of respondents said employment and financial concerns had worsened their stress levels [19]. Mind Charity [20] documented that over two-thirds (68%) of young people claimed their mental health had become worse during a lockdown, with three-quarters (74%) of those aged 18-24 saying it had gotten worse. Children and teenagers are considered a susceptible subpopulation, and there is a pressing need to lessen the pandemic's mental health toll [18]. Participating in recreational activities may have a protective effect on one's mental health [12]. The World Health Organization [21] has stressed the importance of allocating time for hobbies and leisure during pandemic COVID-19.

There are three types of leisure benefits: physical, psychological, and social [22]. Maintaining one's attractiveness, increasing energy, boosting one's capacity to perform something, having enough rest, removing weariness, and releasing additional energy are all physical benefits [23]. Physical activity and physical exercise have been shown to have health benefits on both a physical and mental [21]. In addition, physical activity has been shown to aid in the progression of the clinical disorders most commonly associated with excessive COVID-19 [24], and exercise affects the resistant framework and its antiviral defenses [25]. Sports, leisure activities, dance, and physical exercise are examples of physical activity, described as any planned, systematic, repetitive, and purposeful engagement [26]. During COVID-19, creative hobbies such as home crafts and artisanship, specialist and I.T. interests, language

activities, fine arts, and musical and performing arts were more likely than sports and outdoor pursuits to increase or be taken up new activities. Conversely, time spent on creative consumption, travel, work/study, and public service activities was less likely to rise [27]. In short, passive activities have been linked to lower happiness levels in studies, while active leisure has been linked to higher happiness levels.

Physical activity lowers both systolic and diastolic blood pressure and helps remodel left ventricular hypertrophy, both of which help to minimize overall cardiovascular risks [27]. Moderate-intensity physical activity is helpful to increase the immune system [24]. Physical activity has also been shown to help alleviate the clinical symptoms most commonly linked with severe COVID-19 [24]. To get the effectiveness of physical exercise, the exercise program, both the intensity and volume of training, must be adjusted to the conditions of each individual [28]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, no clear guidance documents or peer-reviewed articles covered the type and number of physical activities recommended for home training [24]. To stay near the WHO worldwide recommendations of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity (or a combination of both) P.A. per week while exercising in limited space, WHO guidance and other academic sources give some simple-to-implement ideas [21]. Modern technology can advertise and promote P.A. interactively and record physical parameters that may indicate fitness level (e.g., pedometers and other wearable devices). These are promising tools for enhancing and measuring home-based workouts, though specific recommendations on their use and associated goals are lacking [24].

Psychological benefits include relief from life's stressors, emotional relaxation, creative thinking, mind-body relaxation, and appreciation of life. Increased desire for psychological support, shift to home-based activities, expansion of online offerings and use, growing need for connectivity, exacerbated inequalities, survival of the leisure industry, and increased actions of helping hands and voluntarism [29]. According to Caldwell [30], leisure engagement has been connected to psychological and physical health during the last several decades. Lee and Yi [31] looked at the relationship between leisure activities and stress-coping methods in a sample of 424 Korean university students. They claimed that physical and social leisure activities helped people cope with stress better. Most critically, the sum of recreation time, along with dynamic social recreation and sports and physical movement, acted as the most grounded positive indicators of mental wellbeing.

The perceived stress of older persons can be lessened by participating in leisure activities, which will improve their mental health. The influence of leisure activities on

mental health is adequately mediated by social support and perceived stress [32]. The elderly (Age = 65.5 ± 5.1; range = 60-92 years) reported that they stated that the mental activity they gained by doing physical activity during COVID-19 health and gained higher their mental resilience scores. Furthermore, Heid, et al. [33] reported that recreational activities in the form of eating out, traveling, exercising at the gym, volunteering, carrying out self-care activities during the COVID-19 restriction period improved the mental health of the elderly. In short, it can be concluded that doing physical activity is beneficial to maintain mental health.

Finally, social advantages include making new connections and relationships, thinking about others, understanding people's feelings, and gaining trust [23]. Anaza [34] also documented that sport and leisure activities allowed people to socialize with old friends and make new acquaintances, in addition to forming professional and personal connections. Participants mentioned their interactions with others and their perception of the interactions with others. A study done by Whitehead and Torossian [35] looked at stressors, joys, and psychological wellbeing indicators in U.S. older persons (n = 825; young-old (60-69 years) = 63.8 percent, middle-old (70-79 years) = 30.7 percent, and older-old (80 years). Activities that entailed joy or comfort with family or friends, such as hobbies/leisure (19.3%), pets (18.7%), and spirituality (18.7%), resulted in improved social and mental health for the older persons (11.5 percent). Pets, hobbies/entertainment (leisure), and digital communication were the top categories for the young-old age (60-69). Family and friends, digital communication, hobbies/entertainment, and spouses/partners were regarded as the top sources of joy and comfort for the middle-aged group (70-79) [36-38].

Conclusion

In conclusion, doing leisure activities during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential to maintaining a healthy body condition and beneficial physical and social health. In a pandemic situation, people may choose to perform passive or active leisure activities to fulfill their daily living activities. Therefore, leisure activities must be adapted according to people's needs and the pandemic COVID-19 regulation.

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