

Stigma Theory of the Future of the Elderly in Indonesia and Its Problems

Lesti Heriyanti¹, Ayu Wijayanti², Elsa Fitriana³, Bouga Soranti⁴, Sari Maryani⁵

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu

Article Info

Article history:

Received 16 January 2025

Publish: 1 March 2025

Keywords:

Stigma;

Elderly And Perception

Abstract

The elderly or elderly group is part of the demographic structure of a country, including Indonesia. This research aims to investigate in depth the dynamics of stigma towards the elderly in Indonesia in the future, taking into account factors of social, cultural and technological change. The research approach used is qualitative with descriptive analysis. The analysis tool used is SWOT. The research results show that stigma towards the elderly is still dominant, with the perception that the elderly are an unproductive group and are a burden on the family. In addition, there are differences in perceptions between the younger and older generations, as well as the influence of social and technological changes on the development of stigma in the future. Therefore, this research not only provides an understanding of current conditions, but also opens up insight into possible changes in stigma towards the elderly along with social, economic and technological developments.

This is an open access article under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



Corresponding Author:

Elsa Fitriana

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu

Alamat e-mail els24afitriana@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The elderly or elderly group is an important part of the demographic structure of a country, including Indonesia. Along with increasing life expectancy, the elderly population in Indonesia is expected to continue to grow rapidly in the next few decades. This brings big challenges in efforts to improve social and economic welfare for this group. Even though there have been various efforts to improve the quality of life of the elderly, the phenomenon of stigma towards them is still very much felt in various levels of Indonesian society. This stigma often takes the form of a negative view which leads to discrimination or marginalization of the elderly, both in social, economic and health aspects. Previous literature reviews show that stigma towards the elderly is not only a phenomenon that occurs in Indonesia, but also in various other countries.

Several previous studies show that the elderly are often seen as an unproductive group, vulnerable to disease, and irrelevant to current developments. In Indonesia, *stigma* towards the elderly is often rooted in a culture that places them as a "burden" on the family, especially in increasingly urbanized big cities. Apart from that, various factors such as the inability of the elderly to adapt to technology and social changes also worsen this stigma. Various previous studies (Suryani, 2019; Andayani, 2021) have identified the factors that cause stigma towards the elderly, but little has discussed how this stigma will develop in the future along with rapid social, cultural and economic changes.



Handling the elderly has become very important because of technological advances, especially in the health sector, which have extended human life expectancy. This means that the number of people aged 60 years and over is increasing. In the 21st century the number of elderly people throughout the world is estimated to reach almost half a billion people, and is projected to reach 1.2 billion in 2025. Elderly is a natural process characterized by gradual physical and mental changes called senescence, namely the period of aging, and senility, which occurs when there is a decline in physical function, especially in the brain, which affects mental condition (Indati, 2013).

Although there has not been much research on the elderly, several related studies already exist. Some of them are as follows. Icha (2004) examined the spiritual services for the elderly which are typical in Minahasa culture, with the research title "Fellowship Services for the Elderly in the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa". This research addresses the needs of the Minahasan elderly and the Christian education curriculum in the church. Tamher (2009) focuses on the health of the elderly with a nursing care approach. Then in 2012, a research team from the Ministry of Health conducted research on curriculum and training modules for community health center officers related to the elderly and geriatrics. Adib (2012) conducted research on elderly people in urban areas with the title Living with Family is More Comfortable. Adib's research proves that 56% of elderly respondents choose to live in their own home, and the other 42% live in Nurus Sa'adah with their family (children and grandchildren). Javanese culture).

The statement of scientific novelty from this research lies in the study of theory *stigma* faced by the elderly in Indonesia in the future, as well as the impact of social changes that occur. This research aims to investigate in depth the dynamics of stigma against the elderly in Indonesia in the future, taking into account factors of social, cultural and technological change. In this context, theory *stigma* existing ones will be analyzed to understand how the elderly will be perceived in Indonesian society in the future. This research problem can be formulated in the form of a hypothesis that *stigma* towards the elderly in Indonesia will become increasingly complex and diverse in the future, along with increasingly rapid social changes. This hypothesis also considers the possibility of tension between traditional cultures that respect parents and modernization that prioritizes productivity and technological progress. With this research, we hope to be able to provide new images and insights to meet new information needs in the future.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to examine dynamics of stigma towards the elderly in Indonesia in the future, taking into account factors of social, cultural and technological change. The research process was carried out in several systematic stages, which will be described in detail in this research. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis methods. This approach was chosen to describe in depth society's perceptions and attitudes towards the elderly, as well as how social and cultural factors can influence it *stigma*

towards the elderly in the future by providing an overview through words or descriptions. To support the authenticity of previous research data, researchers used literature studies to examine relevant theories of stigma and social change. This research procedure consists of several stages which are explained as follows:

a. Problem Identification and Hypothesis

This research begins with identifying existing phenomena or problems in the field related to *stigma* towards the elderly in Indonesia and formulating a hypothesis that *stigma* will grow more complex in the future, along with technological developments and social changes.

b. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to understand previous research related to *stigma* towards the elderly and social factors that influence these changes, by referring to international journals and related books (Suryani, 2019; Andayani, 2021).

c. Data Collection

Collection research data is carried out by interviews, documentation as well as observation and goes directly to the field to get the data or information needed. Researchers conducted interviews with respondents in the research. The respondents in this study were: elderly, family members and the general public around the researcher's residence. In addition, field observations were carried out to gain insight into *stigma* that arise in social interactions in certain communities. The interview instrument was designed to explore respondents' views regarding their perceptions of the elderly and how they view the social changes that are occurring. Apart from interviews and observations of researchers as well use documentation both in the form of photos and documentation data obtained from searches of various research sources such as articles, journals and books related to research.

d. Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed thematically using SWOT analysis (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*) to identify patterns of stigma towards the elderly and the factors that influence them, as well as the potential development of stigma in the future based on social, economic and technological trends. Testing is carried out with *triangulation* data from interviews, field observations, and documentation to validate findings. SWOT analysis evaluates internal and external factors that influence stigma towards the elderly. Data acquisition was carried out by identifying representative respondents, such as the elderly, families and the general public, as well as collecting secondary data from research, articles and policies related to the elderly. The research procedure can be described in the following algorithm:

1. Problem identification: Determining related phenomena *stigma* towards the elderly.
2. Literature review: Study of *stigma* and elderly.
3. Research type: Qualitative.
4. Data collection: Interviews, documentation, and observations.
5. Data analysis: Analysis *SWOT*
6. Drawing conclusions: Formulating conclusions about the dynamics of stigma towards the elderly.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research result

Seniors, or elderly people, refer to individuals aged 60 years and over and facing various challenges that affect their physical, mental, and social health. According to WHO, elderly people are divided into four categories: 45-59 years old are considered middle age (*middle age*), 60-74 years old are called elderly (*elderly*), 75-90 years old

is considered old age (*old*), and above 90 years is called very old age (*very old*). Socially, many elderly people feel loneliness and isolation, especially after losing a partner or friend, or if they have no family close by. Support from family, friends and community is vital to their emotional well-being. From an environmental perspective, elderly people often live in places that do not meet their needs, such as poor access and unsafe environments. Limited access to service health and social issues are also big challenges. Appropriate care, including health care and emotional support, is essential to improve their quality of life. However, financial limitations are often a barrier to getting the care needed. In addition, existing policies are often Not yet sufficient to support the protection and care of the elderly. It is therefore important to understand these challenges and provide appropriate support so that seniors can live healthy and dignified lives.

Stigma social issues towards the elderly are often neglected in discussions of social justice and welfare. As they age, older people face increasingly complex challenges, including discrimination both outside and within society, Which impact on their quality of life. *Stigma comes* not only from society, but also from the justice system, which creates a cycle that is difficult to break. This research adopts theory *stigma* from Erving Goffman, who defined stigma as a negative attribute that makes someone considered different and marginalized. In the context of elderly prisoners, stigma often stems from negative stereotypes about crime and aging. In addition, WHO's quality of life theory is used to understand how factors such as physical, mental health and social support influence individuals' perceptions of their quality of life. These two theories describe the relationship between *social stigma* and quality of life of the elderly.

The results of the research show that the welfare of the elderly includes several indicators, such as the ability to meet life's needs, financial independence, the ability to care for oneself independently, good health conditions, a comfortable life, diversity of activities, and spirituality that is increasingly solid in its beliefs. In the research, researchers found findings in the field which will be explained in depth in the discussion.

3.2. Discussion

Based on the data obtained, the research results show that there is quite a negative perception towards the elderly in Indonesia, especially among the younger generation. According to Erving, Goffman stated that *stigma* and a negative view of something arises when individuals or groups have different attributes or conditions from other groups. Likewise with *Stigma* which appears among the elderly. *The* main thing that emerges is the opinion that the elderly are no longer productive and are a burden on the family. This phenomenon is influenced by several social, cultural and economic factors, including:

1. *Stigma* towards the Elderly as an Unproductive Group

Most respondents view the elderly as an unproductive group. This can be explained by social changes that increasingly emphasize productivity and efficiency, especially in urban areas. Elderly people who are unable to adapt to technological developments or who no longer work in the labor market are often seen as not having a meaningful contribution to society. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the low level of elderly participation in broader social activities, such as digital technology, which is increasingly becoming a social norm.

2. Perception of the Elderly as a Burden

Most respondents also see the elderly as a burden, both financially and socially. In many cultures, including Indonesia, there is an expectation that children will care for their parents as they enter old age. However, with growing urbanization, many families live separately from their parents. This causes the feeling that the elderly are a burden on the family in terms of economy and care. Besides that *stigma* This also arises because the elderly are often seen as more vulnerable to disease and dependent on healthcare, further exacerbating negative views of them.

3. Respected Elderly in the Family

Although *stigma* Negative factors are quite dominant, the research results also show that there is a positive view of the elderly, especially in the family context. Respondents also thought that the elderly were still respected in the family, a value that is part of more traditional Indonesian culture. In this context, the elderly are considered a source of wisdom and life experience, which contributes to family decisions. This is more visible in areas with a stronger culture, where the role of the elderly in maintaining family harmony is still highly valued.

4. Changes in Perception Based on Respondent's Age

One interesting finding is the difference in perception of stigma towards the elderly between young and older age groups. Younger respondents were more likely to see the elderly as a burden or unproductive. This may be influenced by a lack of understanding or direct experience with the elderly, as well as exposure to more modern societal values. In contrast, older respondents showed a more positive view of the elderly, with more respecting them as a wise group. This phenomenon reflects the difference in perspective between the older generation who are more attached to traditional values and the younger generation who live in a more individualistic and fast-paced world.

5. Prediction Development Stigma Elderly in the Future

Seeing rapid social and technological changes, *stigma* towards the elderly is expected to become increasingly complex in the future. On the one hand, more and more elderly people are socially and economically active, thanks to technology and supportive government policies, which can reduce the stigma that they are an unproductive group. However, along with the rapid development of technology and urbanization, social isolation continues and social among seniors can get worse, which in turn strengthens the stigma that they are a marginalized group. Therefore, it is very important for the government and society to develop policies that are more inclusive and supportive of participation elderly in life socially, in order to reduce the stigma attached to them.

Apart from because factor Social and technological changes, activities both productive and entertainment, are considered by the younger generation to be one of the main factors in determining the role of the elderly in society. This is important because of the contribution of the elderly in life socially, they will still be appreciated, even though their role is not always big.

4. CONCLUSION

This research succeeded in identifying and analyzing dynamics of stigma towards the elderly in Indonesia, as expected in the Introduction. The research results show that *stigma* towards the elderly is still dominant, with the perception that the elderly are an

unproductive group and are a burden on the family. This statement is in line with the hypothesis proposed previously regarding the impact of social and cultural change on *stigma* the. On the other hand, there is also a positive view of the elderly in the context of traditional culture, which recognizes the role of the elderly as a source of wisdom in the family.

In addition, this research shows variations in perceptions between the younger and older generations, as well as the impact of social and technological change on development *stigma* in the future. Therefore, this research not only provides an understanding of current conditions, but also opens insight into possible changes in stigma towards the elderly along with social, economic and technological developments. Results of this research are expected to give new insights or information for further research. And expected For further research, the content and research can be further developed.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to all parties who have provided support, guidance and contributions to this research. In particular, the author expresses his appreciation to the supervisors or lecturers who have provided valuable guidance, input and suggestions throughout the research process. The author also thanks the respondents who were willing to take the time to participate in interviews and observations, so that the data collected can be used as a basis for in-depth analysis. Apart from that, the author also appreciates the institutions that have provided facilities and resources that support the implementation of this research. Not to forget, the author would like to thank all parties who helped, either directly or indirectly, in completing this scientific work. Hopefully the results of this research can provide benefits and contributions to the development of science, as well as provide new insights in understanding stigma towards the elderly in Indonesia.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- D. T. Siregar, "Peran teknologi dalam mengurangi stigma terhadap lansia di perkotaan," *Journal of Social Innovations*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 27-39, 2023.
- F. R. Wijayanti and A. Gunawan, "Pengaruh modernisasi terhadap peran lansia dalam keluarga Indonesia," *Proceedings of the International Conference on Social Issues*, Jakarta, Indonesia, pp. 33-40, 2019
- Hutaperi, Boy., Jamil, A. R., & Dewi, S. (2024). Pemberian Edukasi “Lansia Terawat, Indonesia Bermartabat” Hari Lanjut Usia Nasional (HLUN) 2024. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Kesehatan (Jurabdikes)*, 2(1), 24-31.
- M. K. Tan and S. A. Lee, "Technological adaptation among elderly: A review of challenges and opportunities," *International Journal of Gerontechnology*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 44-58, 2023.
- Nugroho, Aditiyo. (2020). “Persepsi Anak Muda Terhadap Keberadaan Lansia Di Indonesia”. *Journal of Urban Sociology*, 2(2), 44-55
- N. Suryani, "Persepsi masyarakat terhadap lansia dalam masyarakat urban," *Jurnal Gerontologi dan Sosial*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 102-115, 2020.
- R. H. Sharma, "Social exclusion and aging: A global overview," *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol. 92, no. 3, pp. 210-224, 2022.
- Romadon, Saiful, Et Al. "Stigmatisasi Islam Nusantara Sebagai Aliran Sesat Kajian Teori Stigma Erving Goffman." *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran (Jrpp)* 7.2 (2024): 4522-4526.

- Sa'adah, Nurus. (2017). Menata Kehidupan Lansia: Suatu Langkah Responsif untuk Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Studi pada Lansia Desa Mojolegi Imogiri Bantul Yogyakarta). *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama*, 9(2), 49-70.
- Subroto, M. (2024). Stigma Sosial Terhadap Narapidana Lansia Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Kualitas Hidup. *Ensiklopedia of Journal*, 7(1), 69-75.