

“We do not have a budget”: Evaluating village-level sports programmes for older adults in Aceh

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Received 12 October 2025; Accepted 15 April 2026; Published 26 April 2026
Ed 2026; 11(1): 56-70

ABSTRACT



Background: Regular physical activity is essential for maintaining health and well-being among older adults. However, despite policy efforts, sport participation among older adults in Aceh remains low, particularly in rural areas. This condition reflects a lack of empirical evidence on how village-level sports programmes are planned, implemented, and evaluated. **Objectives:** This study aims to evaluate the planning, implementation and evaluation of village-level sports programmes for older adults in Aceh. **Methods:** A qualitative multiple case study was conducted involving 12 village leaders selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis and analysed using thematic analysis procedures. **Results:** The findings revealed that the village-level sports programmes are not systematically planned, consistently implemented or critically evaluated. The village-level government dependency on previous programmes, socio-demographic and participant constraints, conceptual and cultural barriers, budget prioritisation bias and informal substitution to the formal planning are the reasons for the programme planning failure. It is implemented mostly event-based, and no evaluation is conducted systematically. **Conclusion:** The study demonstrates that village-level sports programmes for older adults in Aceh are largely unstructured and lack sustainability due to weak planning and evaluation systems. Strengthening governance and institutional support are essential to improve programme effectiveness.

Keywords: Village-level sports program; older adults; program evaluation; rural communities; sport policy

 [https://doi.org/10.25299/sportarea.2026.vol11\(1\).25280](https://doi.org/10.25299/sportarea.2026.vol11(1).25280)

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How to Cite: Munzir, Is, Z., Syahputra, M. (2026). “We do not have a budget”: Evaluating village-level sports programmes for older adults in Aceh. *Journal Sport Area*, 11(1), 56-70. [https://doi.org/10.25299/sportarea.2026.vol11\(1\).25280](https://doi.org/10.25299/sportarea.2026.vol11(1).25280)

Authors’ Contribution: a – Study Design; b – Data Collection; c – Statistical Analysis; d – Manuscript Preparation; e – Funds Collection

INTRODUCTION

The elderly population is an important focus in public health and community development due to its demographic segments’ expansion. Many previous studies have reported that older people who engage in regular physical activity tend to maintain better physical strength and emotional stability. Regular exercise helps reduce the risk of chronic illness and supports independence in daily life. Because of these benefits, promoting active lifestyles among the elderly has become an essential part of health and social policy. (Childs & de Wit, 2014; Engeroff et al., 2022; Toros et al., 2023). The benefit of sports for older adults are helping them to keep from getting long-term ailments (Sarani, 2018), improving their balance and mobility (Gayman et al., 2017; Sánchez-Santos et al., 2024; Tsuji et al., 2020), and improving their mental health and social life

(Ghența et al., 2022; Heuwinkel, 1990; Jenkin et al., 2017). Community-based sports and physical activity programmes can be a good way to promote healthy ageing in rural locations where healthcare and social services may not be as good as in urban areas in Indonesia.

However, in rural areas, the older adult's health quality remains low, reflected in the number of cases of high prevalence of chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and joint disorders among this population. In addition, many older adults report lower physical ability, including difficulties in mobility and balance in daily activities independently.

According to the Sports Development Index (SDI) Mutohir et al. (2024), Aceh scores only 0.464, placing it in the lower-middle category nationally. Specifically, two important metrics, sports participation (0.382) and physical fitness (0.433), are lower than the national average. The sports participation index for elderly people (over 45) is 0.350, which is an extremely alarming issue since the score is lower than other elderly people's sports participation in other provinces in Indonesia. However, most of the elderly people in Aceh, Indonesia, live in rural villages, indicating a systematic gap in how government regulation is delivered at the grassroots level.

A varying level of funding to the village-level administrative unit has been allocated to address local-level issues in terms of physical infrastructure and human capital enhancement. Nonetheless, current findings in the Indonesian Sport Index Mutohir et al. (2024) showed the physical health of elderly people is highly concerning. Meaning ideally, village-level administrations are expected to serve as pivotal authorities in dealing with localised policies in directly approaching the local issue. One of those issues is sport and physical activities among the elderly population based on the Indonesian Sport Index (Mutohir et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the knowledge gap in the sport initiatives at village-level administration has remained unexamined, hampering the ability for the higher government administration (province-level government) to intervene in the above concerns. The absence of this type of data could result in the central government regulation being irrelevant to the grassroots issues about the health of the senior population in the village. Assessing the portrayal of how village-level government addresses issues is essential for determining the efficacy of regulations and the implementation of sports for the elderly within village-level policy. Village administrations are anticipated to operate as pivotal authorities in developing and executing localised policies that directly approach the issues with sports and physical activity among the elderly population (Mutohir et al., 2024).

Numerous prior studies have been undertaken to examine the sporting patterns of elderly individuals. The primary concerns in literature pertain to the challenges (Bachtiar et al., 2019; Kienle et al., 2021; Tufail et al., 2022; Turner et al., 2018), and advantages of sports for the elderly (Gray, 2009; Jamshidi et al., 2018; Jenkin et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018; Sánchez-Santos et al., 2024; Sarani, 2018; Shaikh & Dandekar, 2019), with the study highlighting the physical (Deck et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2020), and psychological (Jenkin et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020; Stenner et al., 2020), obstacles faced by this demographic in engaging in sports. For instance, the decline of physical function. Therefore, it necessitated particular focus to inspire them towards athletics.

A concern regarding the elderly physical and psychological well-being is raised by a systematic review study conducted by Tufail et al. (2022) that examine the sport involvement among the elderly people in Indonesia. This study confirms the Indonesian Sport Index Mutohir et al. (2024) data that stated that senior community tend to have less involvement in the sport activities compared to adult and children. Stenner et al (2020) found that most of the motivation of elderly people engage in sport is the social-based motivator (Camaraderie) such as group support which can only be attained through a systematic regulation by the decision makers.

Despite existing research on the benefits and challenges of sports participation among older adults, existing studies focused on individual-level factors such as physical (Meredith et al., 2023), psychological (Chen et al., 2025), and motivational barriers. The empirical evidence on how village-level governments design, implement, and evaluate the sports programmes for older adults remains limited, particularly in rural Indonesian contexts such as Aceh. This research filled the literature gaps within the field where the previous studies have provided a foundational basis on the portrayal and motivation of elderly people in participating

in physical exercises. This research comes to discover the village sport policy in Aceh, which is supposed to be a platform for the government to elevate senior citizen participation.

This study is grounded in the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017), which is considered a systematic framework to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes. It is illustrated in the following figure.

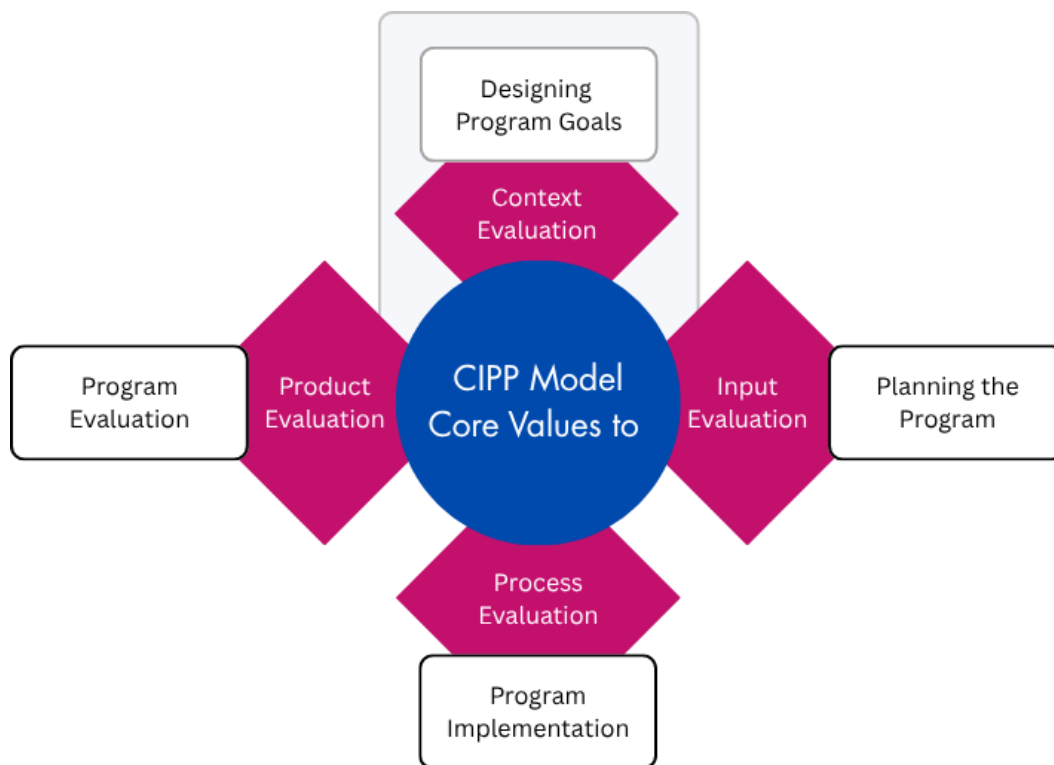


Figure 1. The CIPP Approach to Evaluation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017)

The context is to examine the environmental conditions related to older adult sports participation at the village level, while the input focuses on planning aspects, including resource allocation and institutional support for the programme. While the process dimension evaluates how the programmes are implemented in practice, including participation, coordination, and quantity and its quality. Finally, the product in CIPP assesses the outcomes and impacts of the programmes and ensures sustainability and benefits for older adults that are categorised as the evaluation in this context.

This gap is particularly significant in the context of Indonesia, where village leaders are expected to function as key implementers of community-based policies. Especially in Aceh, villages that are located in rural areas are a functioning setting to portray the programme in the context of rural areas. Without a clear finding of how sports programmes are planned, implemented, and evaluated at this level, higher-level policy could potentially risk being misaligned with local and factual conditions in the field. Therefore, this study was designed to address this gap by investigating how village-level sport programmes for older adults are planned, implemented, and evaluated in Aceh.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative multiple case study design [Creswell \(2018\)](#) to examine how village-level sports programmes for older adults are planned, implemented, and evaluated in Aceh. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on evaluating the sport programme in the field. A multiple-case design was used to compare several villages, as each may have different conditions that influence how the

programmes are carried out. By looking at more than one case, the study can identify both similarities and differences across settings.

Research Participants

Twelve villages were purposively selected to ensure variation in local contexts and geographical representation, based on the following criteria: (i) location within Aceh Province, (ii) proportional regional distribution, and (iii) classification as rural areas according to Badan Pusat Statistics data. A total of 12 participants were involved during the data collection that consisted of 12 village leaders, each representing a village and responsible for policy and programming decisions.

Research Procedure

The research begins with a pre-data collection where permission from the relevant village authorities was obtained. The data collection begins with a semi-structured interview as the primary data source of this research, and then the non-participant observation of older adult exercises is conducted where available. This is used to obtain a deeper understanding of the implementation programme in the village. Lastly, the document analysis was conducted as the supporting data source that is used to validate the claim and investigation on their planning and evaluation of the programme. All instruments were developed based on three analytical domains: (i) planning, (ii) implementation, and (iii) evaluation aligned with the CIPP evaluation framework by focusing on context, input, process, and product dimensions (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The context dimension was included in the input since the program goal (context) must be part of the planning (input) at the village-level sports program for older adults.

Data Validity

The researcher conducted data triangulation techniques by comparing information about programme planning, implementation and evaluation obtained from different sources, i.e., interviews, observations and documents. Data from these different sources were carefully cross-checked to identify similarities and differences, allowing the researcher to confirm the consistency of the findings.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using a qualitative data analysis proposed by Mile et al. (2014) that consists of data condensation where the raw data was coded and categorised based on themes related to planning, implementation, and evaluation frameworks. The data display then was conducted, which involves organising findings into thematic matrices and figures and tables to facilitate interpretation of the data and findings. Lastly, data verification is employed, where a conclusion and verification are done through identifying patterns, relationships and discrepancies across cases.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board of the LPPM (*Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*) Bina Bangsa Getsempena University. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by using pseudonyms and removing identifiable information from the dataset.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study are presented based on three core components of policy evaluation: (i) planning, (ii) implementation, and (iii) evaluation. The data for each component were derived from interviews and document analysis. A summary of the results is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Village-Level Sport Policy for Older Adults in Aceh

Component	Frequency (n=12)	Percentage (%)
Availability of Planning (Context and Input)	3	25.0
Availability of Implementation (Process)	8	66.7

Table 1 presents a summary of the components of village-level sports programmes for older adults across the 12 observed villages. Only 25% of villagers demonstrated formal planning, while 66.7% reported some level of programme implementation. Notably, none of the villages conducted a formal evaluation of their programmes. The finding highlighted three major findings: the programme planning failure, implementation inconsistency and absence of evaluation in the village-level sport programme for older adults.

Planning Failure

The findings showed a systematic failure in planning for older adult sports programmes across villages. Most villages do not have a structured plan specifically devoted to sports programmes for the elderly. Only 25% of village leaders reviewed had any formal document or regulation that mentioned elderly physical activities in their annual agenda. In most cases, the planning process was limited to the *Rencana Program Kerja Village (RPKG)*, the village's yearly work plan prepared by local authorities.

However, the existing planning programme is largely symbolic rather than functional since the programmes were listed without being translated into actionable strategies. In those three villages, elderly sports were listed as part of the broader effort to improve community well-being. The RPKG documents typically mentioned the programme title and budget allocation, which ranged from 2% to 10% of the village's annual budget. However, the document analysis showed that the RPKG documents did not include details on the program implementation steps, objectives, indicators of success, budget, and people in charge who are responsible for implementing the program.

In one case, the only details provided were the programme's name and a short note from the previous year's evaluation that was listed in a table. Interestingly, one village reported that it sometimes adjusted its annual plan midyear. This improvisation is based on several inputs such as budget allocation, the number of senior citizens, and many other considerations that allow the village-level government to add or remove this programme. The findings explain this condition:

a. Dependency on the Previous Programme

Planning often relies on previous programmes rather than current needs assessment. Programmes are continued simply because they existed before and received no complaints. Village H explained that their planning process primarily follows the previous year's programmes. They noted that the inclusion of sports regulations for older people has been part of the RPKG for several years. When researchers enquired about the reason for including sports regulations for the elderly, they responded that this initiative was already in place before the current official took office.

"... we just merely followed what has been designed by previous Village Leader, if it was there and not such complain from the people, it means it worth continuing" (Interview – Village Secretary, Village H)

It was noted that the decision whether the planning is carried out involves discussions involving both the village government and some residents.

"... this (the programme) could be revised if the discussion with the local people think it is okay (worth of continuing) then we will continue it (the programme)" (Interview – Village Leader, Village B)

Therefore, planning in these villages tends to rely on what has been done before, rather than on a careful assessment of current needs. Programmes are often continued simply because they already existed and no one complained about them. Although planning involves discussions with community members, these discussions are mostly used to confirm whether a programme should continue, not to critically evaluate or redesign it.

b. Socio-Demographic and Participation Constraints

Dispersed settlement patterns and a low participation history lead village leader to exclude programmes from formal planning, reflecting a structural accessibility barrier as it is reported by villages A and K. Village K explained that the programme was not planned well due to concerns about the increasing elderly population in their village and the absence of the guardian. Most senior residents live only with their spouses, making them more vulnerable to illness. Additionally, many of their children have moved to cities for better job opportunities or to pursue higher education. As a result, the village emphasised the importance of protecting the elderly by not involving them in the programme planning process.

“A lot of older citizens here already, how come, their children move to the town to find a better life some are for working and some studying in universities. If they got ill who are going to take care them in the process of the evaluation” (Interview – Village Leader, Village K)

Some explained that there was no sense of urgency to discuss or plan the programme with senior residents, since the community itself did not consider sports activities for older citizens to be a priority and/or popular. However, the reasons for the other village-level governments not assigning a planning process in sport programmes for older citizens are varied. Some stated that the lack of senior citizens' participation in the previous year made them eliminate this programme.

“... last year we've conducted once, but no one shows up” (Interview – Village leader, Village A)

Some stated that the demographic of the senior citizens is very far; each of the houses in that village is located quite far from one another. Because of this, senior citizens have a hard time accessing the rendezvous point where the sports programme is done.

“The house in this village is quite far from each other, so that the older is hard to reach the meeting point for exercise” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village A)

The absence of proper planning is largely influenced by accessibility and participation challenges. Dispersed settlement patterns make it difficult for elderly residents to gather, while previous low attendance discourages village leaders from continuing or formally planning the programmes. In some cases, concerns about the vulnerability of elderly individuals, especially those without close family support, also lead to more cautious decisions, including limiting their involvement in structured activities. As a result, these structural and demographic factors create a practical barrier that leads village governments to exclude elderly sports programmes from formal planning.

c. Perceptual and Cultural Barriers

Some of the reasons for the absence of the sport programme for the elderly are the perceptions of the senior citizens themselves. They think that they did not need more exercise programmes because they themselves have moved while gardening or farming, which is their main source of information. They think their body fitness is still maintained because of these activities.

“They think that they indeed have maintained their body health by going (working) to the garden or rice field. So, it is no problem if we did not plan the programme” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village C)

However, they also stated that the programme is quite unpopular in their region. The citizens are afraid of being judged when doing the programme. Because it is rare for the citizens to see a senior citizen doing yoga or any other type of exercise. Thus, the villager assumed that there is no need for proper planning for this programme in Rencana Program Kerja Village (RPKG).

“They did not want to come because exercising is very rare, quite unpopular. They were afraid of being judged... so we don't plan it in RPGK” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village J)

The cultural perceptions and social norms act as significant barriers to program participation for the older adults. Many elderly people believe that their daily physical activities, such as farming or gardening, are sufficient to keep their bodies healthy. Moreover, the unfamiliarity of organised physical activities, such as group exercise or yoga, creates a sense of discomfort and fear of social judgement. Thus, these perceptions lower the older adult participation and discourage village authorities from formally planning such programmes.

d. Budget Prioritization Bias

Village governments prioritise infrastructure and general social programmes, positioning elderly sports programmes as non-essential. Some village leaders stated that the lack of budgeting is the main problem because the village is still focusing on other types of sectors, such as infrastructure, etc. This focus on other types of sectors makes their budget allocation low for the sport programme for the elderly.

“We focus on infrastructure ... because our village is now facing infrastructure issues” (Interview - Village Leader, Village L)

That budget constraint significantly limits the ability of village leaders to plan and prioritise elderly sports programmes. Thus, village governments tend to focus on more infrastructure needs that are more urgent. As a result, elderly sport initiatives are often viewed as non-essential and receive minimal or no allocation.

e. Informal Planning

Even without formal inclusion in RKPG, activities are occasionally conducted. Almost all the village-level government stated that even though this programme is not planned in RKPG, the programme is still run sometimes. The reasons for properly planning the sport programme for the elderly are varied, such as the demographic challenges, the older perception and participation, and the availability of the budget to be allocated to the programme. Despite not being formally included in the RKPG, almost all village-level governments mentioned that these activities still occasionally take place. They are carried out informally, as the belief is that the village-level sport programme does not require specific budget allocation and can be implemented without formal planning.

“We still planed the program during the meeting (village government meeting) if the exercise is important, we'll do it anyway” (Interview - Village Leader, Village C)

The statement above stated that the elderly sports programmes are treated as informal and flexible programmes, depending on contextual decisions. Not structured planning, which limits the program's consistency and sustainability.

Implementation Inconsistency

The implementation of elderly sport programmes is highly inconsistent and largely informal. There are two main ways of implementing the exercise for older adults at the village level.

a. Even-based implementation

The implementation of elderly sports activities at the village level was generally sporadic, unplanned and occasional. Seven out of twelve villages (A, D, E, F, G, H, and I) reported that they carried out sports programmes for senior citizens even without formal planning or budgeting and despite these programmes not being included in the RKPG. These activities were typically held in conjunction with national holidays, rather than on a regular schedule.

“Yes, we do. We usually do it during our free time, maybe on a public holiday like August 17th that’s when we run the program” (Interview - Village Leader, Village E)

“No, we don't have (schedule). But we run it (older adult sport program) when there is a time” (Interview - Village Leader, Village F).

“Sometimes, when there’s a day off or national holiday season” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village A)

The implementation of elderly sports programmes is irregular and event based. The activities are carried out only when time allows the village government to do so, or sometimes it's during special occasions such as National Independence Day and many other special occasions like the secondary agenda. It is an indication of the absence of structured scheduling and institutional commitment in implementing older adult sport programmes at the village level.

b. Routine Implementation with Limited Case

Only 2 out of the 12 villages (H and K) carried out elderly sports activities on a consistent schedule, with one holding sessions monthly and the other biweekly. These villages had the schedule fixed because both villages had formally integrated the sport or exercise for elderly people programme into the RKPG planning documents (see table 1).

“We have a monthly program like small exercise, sometimes jogging, sometimes aerobics, for the elderly. So yeah, the activities must be simple” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village K)

“Sometimes we do the activities every two weeks. But yeah, not that many people actually show up” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village H)

In addition, Village B also listed the sport or exercise regulation for elderly people in the RKPG with details of the objectives, budget allocation, schedules of the programme bimonthly, and person in charge who is responsible for the implementation of the programme. However, the village secretary reported that the implementation is challenging because it was difficult for elderly people to gather at a point. As a result, the senior citizen participation in the programme was very low, and unfortunately, the programme was discontinued due to the lack of attendance after two cycles.

“We did run it in two months ago. But no one showed up. (we are). thus, we (the village government) stopped doing it (older adult sport programme)” (Interview - Village Secretary, Village B)

Formal planning can support more consistent implementation; however, it does not guarantee program success. Even in villages with structured schedules and clear planning documents, the older adults' participation remains a challenge.

Absence of Evaluation

A critical finding of this study is the complete absence of formal evaluation mechanisms across all villages. An investigation into the village-level sport or exercise for elderly people programme’s implementation in twelve villages found that ten out of twelve had actively initiated such programmes; however, a significant shortcoming was observed regarding programme evaluation. None of the ten villages that implemented these activities had conducted any formal evaluation of their processes or results.

This finding is supported by the absence of documentation such as meeting documentation, attendance records, evaluation reports, or photographic evidence that would validate a structured evaluation process. While some village officials verbally asserted that evaluations had taken place, the lack of supporting documentation led the researcher to conclude that no formal assessments were conducted.

Discussion

This study found that older adult sports programmes in village-level government are unplanned regularly and implemented inconsistently, and there is no programme evaluation at the end of the programme. This study reveals a systemic weakness in village-level elderly sports programmes. This pattern indicates an issue of institutional fragility, where the program exists without being fully planned (context and input), implemented (process) and evaluated (outcome) as a CIPP evaluation model program. The absence of planning, consistency, and evaluation indicates that the programme operates in a symbolic or peripheral manner, rather than as a core public service that is primarily the focus of the village-level government. As a result, decision-making becomes reactive, short-term, and disconnected from measurable outcomes, limiting the programme's capacity to generate sustained impact. It implies that without proper programme planning, implementing and evaluating, the sport programme for older adults will remain fragile and unsustainable.

In the context and input evaluation, the older adult sport programmes at the village level are not formally planned and integrated into the RKPG because they lack essential elements of the programme such as budget allocation, clear objectives, and implementation procedures. As a result, the programme delivery becomes non-standardised and relies heavily on improvisation by the committee. It reflects weak institutional management since the programmes operate without a clear structure, shared direction, or long-term orientation.

Consequently, the implementation (process) that is reflected in the implementation of the older adults' sport programme at the village level becomes reactive and spontaneous, which is subject to improvisation and inconsistencies. It limits the programme's potential to achieve meaningful and expected outcomes (Alhussein et al., 2022; Gabrielsson et al., 2026). This condition indicates weak governance and poor policy implementation because the absence of formal planning could disrupt resource allocation before the programme and accountability mechanisms during the programme (Peng et al., 2022).

Moreover, a programme without proper planning (outcome), implementation and evaluation causes the absence of predefined indicators as tools that could measure the programme's success. Irregular and event-based implementation further weakens programme effectiveness (Bayle, 2023; Suwarno et al., 2022; Viollet et al., 2023). These conditions show the importance of formally integrating the programmes into village planning, supported by clearer structures and simple evaluation methods.

From a theoretical perspective, this condition indicates weak implementation fidelity, where programme delivery does not align with its intended goals, as well as a breakdown in the activity outcome linkage emphasised in programme and evaluation frameworks. Without regular engagement, the programme cannot generate sustained behavioural change, which is essential in health-related interventions (Duan et al., 2025). As a result, event-based implementation risks reducing the programme to a symbolic activity rather than a meaningful public service, limiting its effectiveness and diminishing its long-term value.

By contrast, the older adults' sport programmes that run on a routine schedule, held every two months or at other infrequent times, resulted in a better outcome. However, because the programme is not frequent enough, the resulting impact remains limited. With the schedule, some planning has been designed, but the low level of activity is still not enough to provide steady health benefits to the older adult (Oliveira-Brochado et al., 2017; Qu et al., 2026). From a behavioural perspective, sustained health improvement requires repeated and continuous engagement, which cannot be achieved through infrequent routines (Oliveira-Brochado et al., 2017).

The absence of evaluation in elderly sport programmes presents critical challenges. Systematic evaluation is essential for assessing whether a programme's inputs, activities, and outputs align with its intended outcomes and impacts. Without any evaluation, it is hard to accurately measure the effectiveness of the programme, completely monitor the progress of the programme, or determine whether the programme is achieving its goal in improving elderly health. Furthermore, without evidence-based evaluation, sport programmes risk becoming ineffective, lacking accountability, and failing to achieve their intended social and developmental objectives, the research reveals several critical consequences (Vitali, 2023). The overall findings suggest a fundamental issue in the way elderly sport programmes are positioned within village

governance, pointing to a condition of systemic policy weakness rather than isolated implementation problems.

The informal planning and the conduct of the programme in an irregular schedule, and no clear evaluation of the programme shows that the programme has not become a priority policy of village-level government. Informal planning, irregular schedules, and the absence of evaluation show that the programme has not become a policy priority of village-level government. It tends to run on the sidelines rather than as an established service (Ladwig et al., 2023). In practice, the programme is often seen as optional, handled only when needed, and given low priority instead of being managed with clear goals, proper resources, and responsibility. This condition also reflects a deeper governance gap, where responsibility is diffused across stakeholders but not effectively assumed by any. Village leaders tend to prioritise more visible and immediate sectors such as infrastructure, while higher-level government structures may not provide sufficient guidance or enforcement to ensure programme standardisation. At the same time, lower older adult participation and social cultural perceptions among older adults doing exercise signal that the programme is not essential.

The most significant implication of not having proper planning, systematic implementation and critical evaluation is the risk of becoming unsustainable and socially insignificant (Lee, 2022). If this condition persists, public resources may continue to be used inefficiently, and opportunities to improve elderly well-being at the community level will be systematically missed. Therefore, the issue is not merely about improving programme implementation but about repositioning elderly sport programmes as a legitimate and prioritised component of local public policy, supported by clear structures, accountability mechanisms, and sustained commitment.

The number of the villages who implemented the sport programme for senior citizens should be appreciated; however, irregular exercise does not support long-term health goals that are targeted by the programme and even worse (Conde-Pipó et al., 2021; Jenkin et al., 2018; Molina-López et al., 2024), it may even increase the risk of injury, especially if sessions are intense and not adjusted to the individual's condition. If physical exercise is not conducted regularly for older adults, several disadvantages may arise that can negatively affect their health and well-being (Deck et al., 2023; Mollinedo-Cardalda et al., 2021). Irregular physical activity reduces the potential benefits that consistent exercise provides, such as improved cardiovascular health (S Oliveira et al., 2023), better joint mobility, muscle strength, balance, and mental well-being (Jenkin et al., 2016; S Oliveira et al., 2023). However, for older adult citizens, the benefits are crucial in preventing physical functional decline (Gayman et al., 2017), managing chronic illnesses, and lowering the risk of depression (Kim et al., 2020).

To encourage participation, the implementation of the sport programme for older adults is supposed to carry out using light (small) physical activities that are adapted to the physical condition of elderly participants. The most common types of exercises include light stretching, walking or even a small movement of gestures, which are generally safe and accessible for older adults (Ladwig et al., 2021; Nayak et al., 2021). The decision of the village-level government in picking such type is important to the elder citizen in many ways (Burnight & Mosqueda, 2011; Kukudrua et al., 2024). The light type of exercise could increase the number of elder citizens participating in the programme because people preferred health-related behaviours when they perceived the benefits that outweighed the risks and barriers (Lufthiani et al., 2022).

This study contribution to literature is significant in two ways. First, it provides evidence of the gap between the ideal village-level sport programme design for older adults and their actual implementation at the village level. Second, this study adds to the field of rural sport governance by showing how village-level institutional capacity, policy priorities, and governance practices influence the sustainability and effectiveness of village-level sport programmes for older adults in Aceh.

However, there are several limitations of this study that may be further researchers consideration; they are (i) the reliance on self-reported data from village officials may introduce bias, especially on politically sensitive topics such as budget allocation and programme implementation, (ii) while the study covers twelve villages, the findings may not be generalisable to all rural areas in Indonesia, particularly those with different ethnic, economic, or geographical contexts, and (iii) the evaluation of programme outcomes from the

perspective of the elderly themselves was not included in depth, which could have added a valuable layer of understanding to participation dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the implementation of sport programmes for the elderly in twelve villages is lacking in planning, execution, and evaluation. Although ten villages had implemented the programme, most initiatives were informal, inconsistently executed, and lacked strategic direction, with only two villages incorporating them into their annual planning documents (RKPG). The findings highlighted that the absence of formal planning severely affects programme sustainability, as programmes lack structure and resource allocation, making them vulnerable to discontinuation. In addition, the occasional implementation found in most villages undermines the health goals of the initiative, which requires routine physical activity to be effective. The lack of any formal evaluation process is also very concerning since it made it nearly impossible for the stakeholders to monitor progress and identify areas of improvement.

These findings highlight the need for each village to institutionalise older adults' sports programmes within their RKPG and APBG to ensure adequate annual funding and programme standardisations, including weekly activity schedules, monitoring checklists, and minimum service standards. At the district and provincial levels, along with cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms involving relevant stakeholders. Further studies are required to find out the village-level institutions in sustaining health-orientated programmes across different villages' contexts and challenges. Longitudinal research on the health impact of regular village-level sports programmes for older adults. While future studies should also explore model intervention of village-level sport programmes for adult citizens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was made possible with the generous support of the Direktorat Riset, Teknologi, dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat, Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Sains, dan Teknologi. The researcher extends sincere gratitude for their funding and facilitation. Appreciation is also given to academic advisors, colleagues, and the local government officials of the participating village for their valuable assistance, as well as to all individuals who contributed their time and insights throughout the study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest in this research.

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