Voluntarism and Life Satisfaction among Elderly in Rural Perak

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Abstract
The uncertain knowledge on level of life satisfaction among older adults has attracted an increasing number of public, political and scientific attentions. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between volunteerism activities towards life satisfaction among rural elderly in Perak, Malaysia. The relationship between the two variables shall be analysed using regression analysis. This research hypothesizes that elderly whom involve in volunteerism activity shall experience a high level of life satisfaction. A descriptive research methodology was adopted on behalf of this research. Questionnaires shall be distributed to 420 older adults age from 50 t0 75+. Information needed shall be obtained using a cross-sectional design method across rural districts in Perak. The result from this research shall provide provision for the idea that engaging elderly in voluntary activities is advantageous to their life satisfaction.
Keywords: Aging population, Voluntarism, Life Satisfaction

Introduction
The world population is ageing. This is because the world's older population continues to grow at a remarkable rate. Birth rates are decreasing but people are living longer. In the next century, the number of people age 60 and above set more than double, climbing from 7.2 billion in 2015 to 20 billion in 2050 (United Nation, 2017). For the first time in history, there will be more over 60 than under 15 (Haub, 2011). This information suggests that the elderly will soon become a major population on society. The challenge, however, is finding ways that turn the elderly into an asset by seeing them as sources of innovation.

As a developing country, Malaysia is no exception. Economic Planning Unit (EPU) published Malaysian Wellbeing Index 2013 to study this matter. One of the components, namely, social participation is also measured. In Malaysia Wellbeing Index 2013, social participation is elaborated as the sense of generality that was essential towards improving human wellbeing. It is the ability to be involved and contribute to a bigger society in the sense of freedom of life (Bakar, Osman, Bachok & Ibrahim, 2016). In layman term, it is called voluntarism. Voluntarism is an activity that is done with sincerity, without coercion from any

party, without expecting a reward or material consideration, and can benefit the group or target party (Azizan, 2006).

Research need to be done in order to have an insight on current elderly condition. Ample evidence exists that the contribution of older persons in voluntarism produces positive benefits towards themselves. This research concern is with the link between voluntarism and life satisfaction. The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between voluntarism and life satisfaction. Specifically, the researcher wants to analyse the activity of voluntarism in which the person involve to determine the level of life satisfaction.

Literature Review

Why life satisfaction is so important towards elderly? As person age, things get dull. They lost their role in society, they retired (no more 9 to 5 routine) and almost all their bucket list had been kicked out (Bakar et al., 2016). Elderly needs activity to occupy their free time. Such activity should be beneficial in term of emotion (life satisfaction) and can be done with limited physical health strength (Akintayo, Häkälä, Ropponen, Paronen & Rissanen, 2016). Life satisfaction often interchanges with quality of life. Based Felce and Perry (1995) coverage of quality of life may be categorised into five dimensions: physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, social wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and development and activity. All this dimension measure the overall life satisfaction index.

Factors found to be influencing life satisfaction have been explored in several studies. This research shall focus on informal voluntarism categories. Informal voluntarism is activity persons do within families' member, neighbourhood or friends (Azizan, 2006).

Literature spanning over decades document the positive relationship between volunteering and life satisfaction. According to Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith (1999), life satisfaction can be defined as one's life overall assessment of feelings and attitudes at particular point of time. It can be range from positive to negative level. As discover by Hamid (1998), life satisfaction was empirically proven to be related to an act of willingness to do productive activities such as involvement in community, political party, non-government organization, taking care of others and many more.

There is a rapidly growing literature on this, which indicates that voluntarism have positive effect on life satisfaction. A study done by Pillemer et al. (2017) observed the trend in voluntarism. It has been found that recruited individual toward participating in voluntary program suggest positive outcomes from their involvement.

In another major study, the degree of life satisfaction with voluntarism has shown to be an important predictor of older volunteers' perception of wanting to be happy (Dulin, Gavala, Stephens, Kostick & McDonald, 2012). Overall, bodies of research focused on the effect of voluntarism on life satisfaction have produced mixed support for the role occupancy perspectives among older adults. With regard to volunteering work Montpetit, Nelson, and Tiberio (2017) in their study on older adults voluntary experienced, show a positive level of life satisfaction when they give and received voluntary act to and from other. A study by Cheung (2016) , suggest that elderly who participate in volunteering activities was associated with less depressive symptoms (mental health). This indicates that they are having higher life satisfaction and self-esteem.

Voluntarism can be view as a form of leisure (Stebbins, 2017). As leisure is something that people search to fulfil their wants, it is understandable that people think that leisure activities

should lead to experiencing happiness. Results from Schmiedeberg and Schröder (2017) show that mingle up with friends, doing charity, and working on voluntary activities contributes positively to life satisfaction.
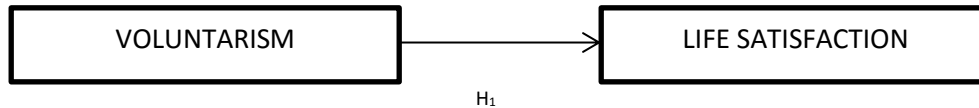
Conceptual Frameworks & Hypotheses

Figure 3.1: A theoretical framework demonstrating how these elements may interrelate
H_1: There is a relationship between voluntarism and life satisfaction.

Methodology
A descriptive research methodology was adopted for this research. Perak rural area is chosen as a population location. Based on the statistic by Department of Statistic Malaysia 2015, Perak is the third biggest aging population states. Specifically, aging population in rural area is selected due to its higher aging population in than in urban area. Malay and Bumiputera race is selected as it is the largest race in Malaysia. In addition, financial and time constrain contribute as reasons for researcher to use Perak as research location.

Table 4.1
Aging population in Malaysia

States	Total Population Projection 2030	Aging 50+ For 2030	Total Population 2016	Aging 50+ For 2016
Malaysia	39,879.30	12,165.40	31,660.70	5,887.10
Johor	4,603.70	1,502.50	3,655.10	719.10
Kedah	2,675.50	740.60	2,120.70	448.20
Kelantan	2,545.10	480.90	1,797.20	327.60
Melaka	1,114.60	352.20	901.7	192.70
Negeri Sembilan	1,279.90	368.80	1,099.70	235.40
Pahang	2,046.90	587.80	1,628.10	310.00
Pulau Pinang	2,053.60	787.10	1,719.30	386.20
Perak	2,868.20	864.20	2,483.00	623.80
Perlis	293.1	73.70	251	57.10
Selangor	8,022.60	2,763.60	6,298.40	1,009.00
Terengganu	1,625.50	358.20	1,183.90	200.40
Sabah	4,989.00	1,382.40	3,813.20	457.30
Sarawak	3,448.00	1,043.20	2,741.00	541.10
W.P. Kuala Lumpur	2,083.10	787.70	1,787.20	356.80
W.P. Labuan	120.6	39.70	97.8	13.70
W.P.Putrajaya	109.7	33.20	83.3	8.30

Source: Department of Statistic Malaysia (2016)

Population and Sampling

Target population can be define as the collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made (Shenk & Westerhaus, 1991). By using aging population (50 to 75+ years old) in Perak rural area, a sample is drawn from a total of 126,469.

Table 4.2
Total Aging Population for Malay and Bumiputera in Urban and Rural Area, Perak

Age Group 2014	Urban	Rural
50-54	37,437	30,378
55-69	29,879	27,176
60-64	21,024	23,146
65-69	12,176	15,667
70-74	9,812	14,540
75+	11,753	15,562
Total	122,049	126,469

Source: Department of Statistics (2014)

Data from 384 Malay and Bumiputera older adults were obtained from a cross-sectional design questionnaires survey across rural Perak. The researcher chose a 384 of the population consistent with recommendations for determining size of a random sample (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).Similar to many research conducted to a large population, this research employ non-probability sampling method in selecting respondent to make up the sample. As for questionnaires distribution, an additional of 38 is added to the number (1.1% x 384). This is consistent with the suggestion to accommodate failure of respondent to answer complete questionnaires given.

Questionnaires Development

The questionnaire is divided into 2 main sections:

Section A: Demographic Information, items 1- 4, obtained demographic information about the characteristic of who responded to the survey. Item 1, 2, 3 and 4 identified the gender, age, race and the residing area location (urban or rural) of the respondent respectively.

Section B: Measured the respondent's perception about these issues according to the variables specified (voluntarism and life satisfaction). Questionnaires for voluntary work are adapted from Americans' Changing Lives survey form. A set of questionnaires is adapted from Life Satisfaction Index for the Third Age (LSITA) for the life satisfaction variable. A four-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', and 'agree' to 'strongly agree' was employed. Four point scale is used based on the verdict of presenting neutral options would allow respondent to move on without giving careful thought to the question which can lead to unethical answering behaviour (Hopper, 2009).

Table 4.3

Initial Measurement Item for Each Construct and sources

No.	Variable	Source
1	**Life Satisfaction**	Adapted from Satisfaction Index
	1.1 B The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were	for the Third Age – Short Form (LSITA- SF):
	1.2 B As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	An Improved and Briefer Measure of Successful Aging
	1.3 B I am just as happy as when I was younger	(Andrew J. Barrett II, 2009)
	1.4 B I would enjoy my life more if it were not so dull.	
	1.5 B This is the dreariest time of my life.	
	1.6 B Everything I do is boring	
	1.7 B I expect interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.	
	1.8B I am just as happy as when I was younger	
	1.9B My life is great.	
	1.10B Everything is just great.	
	1.11B As I look back on my life I am well satisfied	
	1.12B I enjoy everything that I do	
2	**Volunteerism**	Adapted from Americans'
	2.1B Did you do volunteer work in the last year for a church, synagogue or other religious organization	Changing Lives Survey Research Center
	2.2BDid you do volunteer work for a school or educational organization?	Institute For Social Research (Lantz, House, Mero, & Williams,
	2.3BDid you do volunteer work for a political group or labour union in the last 12 months?	2005)
	2.4BDid you do work last year for a senior citizen group or related organization?	
	2.5BIn the last 12 months, did you do volunteer work for any other national or local organization, including United Fund, hospitals, and the like?	
	2.6B How satisfied were you with the results of your volunteer work.	
	2.7B Did you provide transportation, shop or run errands for friends, neighs' or relatives who did not live with you?	
	2.8BDid you help others with their housework or with the upkeep of their house, car or other things?	
	2.9B d you help others with their public safety house when they are not around.	
	2.10B Did you do any other things in the last 12 months to help neighbours, friends or relatives who did not live with you?	
	2.11 I had to take care of family members who do not live with me	

Data Collection Procedure

Data shall be collected by approaching senior citizen residing at rural districts. As written questionnaires are given, respondent shall be given opportunity to ask the researcher if they need to be assisted in answering the questions. The questionnaires were distributed to three selected rural district of Perak namely Muallim, Kampar and Hulu Perak. The location is randomly selected such as street intercept, recreational and health centre and day or night local market. Recipients were requested to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the researcher once completed. In order to collect authentic perception from the respondent, they were brief about the research topics. This research also adopting voluntary participation principle (Lavrakas, 2008). Each respondent is anonymous and were told that all data collected would be used only for educational purpose (Sekaran, 2009)

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of examining surveys for correctness and completeness, coding and keying data into a database in Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS. The researcher performs a linear regression analyses to answer the research question.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this proposes research shall add to knowledge in a field of social economic development. The rising population of aging nation life satisfaction that lead to overall wellbeing shall be taken care of. The researcher hopes to provide additional knowledge to identify the level of life satisfaction among elderly through voluntarism activities. As discuss in literature, policy maker as well as nation leader shall consider taking the view of this academic research in order to develop social programmes in near future as preparation for aging nation.

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