**UNDERSTANDING MALAY’S ELDERLY’S EMOTION IN CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND LIFE SATISFACTION FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES**

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***Abstract*.** An elderly population is increasing around the world which witnessing most countries have reached an aging population. This situation leads to a social phenomenon when the life of the elderly becomes more challenging. Among the challenging phenomena is the social support concerning on elderly as well as their social well-being especially on their emotion. Building on existing work, this phenomenology study aims to understand social marketing in a small context of Malay elderly’s life phenomenon who stay at home regardless of various available institutional care. This social marketing study emphasizes exploring their emotion in the consumption experience of their social support and life satisfaction. In this context, an analysis of 18 informants reveals that routine and giving behaviour gives meaning to these elderlies significantly. These multiple backgrounds of informants reveal the true meaning from their real-world setting and life experience. Their insights through semi-structured open-ended probing questions which were proceeds through thematic analysis. The results were then viewed from Islamic perspectives which finally suggest it as a coping behaviour to the elderly to enable them to enjoy a quality of life and bring a greater good to their social life in the lens of social marketing.

Keywords : elderly, social support, consumption experiences, Islamic perspectives, qualitative.

# **INTRODUCTION**

People worldwide are living longer. At présent, two-third of aged people live in developing countries. The world’s aging population is increasing which reaching 2.1 Billion in 2050 and will witness aging to overtake the children population in 2047. By 2030, the number of persosn aged above 80 years old is expected to reach almost 450 million. Currently, with an almost 12% increase in the aging population aged 60 years and above, aging has been truly a phenomenon (United Nations, Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). Most Asian countries are having an increasing number of an aging population due to low birth and mortality rate (Liao et al., 2014). Elderly is someone aged more than 60 according to ASEAN and World Assembly of Ageing. In Malaysia, the aging population aged 60 years and above is increasing and has reached 2.7 Million which is nearly 10% of its overall population by the year 2020 (Malaysia Department of Statistics, 2014). The statistic is driven by a longer life expectancy, shrinking of the family size as well as a reduced rate of fertility and mortality. The increasing population of the elderly is a good sign of a good community and excellence in modern medicine and a sign of a good elderly is when they are enjoying their quality of life.

However, today the life of an elderly is quite challenging. The elderly might experience an aging process whereby disability and declining mobility to move would occur, and this would slowly expose themselves to a feeling of useless (Mollaoğlu et al., 2010), and the reduced self- care capacity would alter elderly views of their life.(Borg & Blomqvist, 2006). Besides family institution has been regarded as a primary caregiver in Malaysia especially among Malay Muslim (Dahlan et al., 2010) and staying with own family members is such a perfect place for an elderly. However, an increase of nuclear family structure over an extended family structure (Selvaratnam & Tin, 2007), (Y. Al-Kandari & E. Crews, 2014) had put an elderly in a dilemma. Younger people prefer a nuclear family and quite reluctant to live in an extended family structure. This phenomenon would put an elderly into living alone which is highly exposed them to risk especially in the recent increased rate of criminal cases involving an elderly (Mohd Yusoff, 2009). Moreover with an increased case of neglected parents (Department of Social Welfare, 2014) and an increase of longevity would put an elderly into vulnerable (Onishi et al., 2010). Without an explanation, this situation would continuously occur, and this unnecessary behavior will continue to become trends. Further unnoticed on this behavior would jeopardize the elderly and if this persists, elderly will put themselves in physical and psychologically discontented.

# **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 Consumption Experiences**

In this modern world where the social relation is more vulnerable due to daily activities, values, conflicts, and time management, getting satisfaction through experiential consumption is at risk. When Caru & Cova (2007) described consuming experiences is not limited to the market, but it applies to an individual’s daily life with and without market relation, this reflects perfectly to the life experiences of the elderly. It is because the elderly consumes more than we can ever imagine in their entire life and they would be the most required group who are believed to be able to explain deeply on consumption experiences. There would be some various dimension to look into consumer behavior but for today, superior customers’ consumption experience become a priority (Rajagopal & Castano, 2015). Consumption experience has been studied on a perception (Li et al., 2012) and yet to be explored on customer's experience or actual behavior. Considering an elderly is rich with experiences throughout their life, understanding consumption experience thru their life experiences of emotion is deem required. Triantafillidou and Siomkos (2014a) have measured various emotional experiences through satisfaction, nostalgia intensity, word of mouth communication, and behavioral intention but a deep understanding of it was suggested to be studied. Moreover, the ill-defined consumption experience (Carù & Cova, 2003a) requires more understanding of the concept especially limited in social support consumption.

**2.2 Social Support**

Social support is important to human beings where it possibly could support the physical and psychological of a human being (Uchino et al., 2012) (Thompson, 2014) and even would cure and prevent cold (Cohen et al., 1997). As it is well known for its ability to improve psychological well-being (House, 1981), social support also crucial beneficial to physical health (Uchino, 2004). It is also known that social support contributes to encouraging outcomes (Heintzelman & Bacon, 2015) and crucial to life. When consumption experience has become one of the elements to understand consumer and behavior (Carù & Cova, 2003b) this study was conducted to understand the emotion of consumption experiences of social support among the elderly.

Emotion has been accepted as a dominant role in consumer acts (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014a) and most studies have found the sign of it in consumer behavior (Richins, 1997). Emotion is a factor in behavior such as thinking, actions, physical and mental health as well as decision making. (Izard C E, 2010) and has been acknowledged as one of the key factors in consumer behavior. However, there is limited evidence on the general theory to completely explain the emotional response to consumer behavior (Johnson & Stewart, 2010). A statistical inquiry has been conducted to examine emotion management and found that emotion is controllable among an elderly (Gross et al., 1997) but they showed little expressive on determining the emotional sign. Thus, this study is designed to discover the meaning of consumption experience of social support and to describe the emotion and how it contributes to their life satisfaction. Furthermore, a need to understand it in the lens of Islamic perspectives would give a better view to their emotion in the consumption experience of social support.

# **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

In this cross-sectional study, the researcher collects data using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire. The researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from views of participants through a face-to-face interview with at least 10 to 15 elderly in Malaysia and obtain thick and rich data (Gall et al, 2003) from the elderly. With nonprobability sampling and purposive judgmental sampling, this study has been conducted to have rich data. This primary method of sampling involves selecting samples for a specific purpose in which the researcher believes to be representatives (Hair et al., 2007). This study also employed qualitative procedures with the semi-structured questionnaire to be a magnet for the wide range of interpretations based on questions adopted from DES 11-Differential Emotion Scale (Izard, 1977) on human emotions and Richins (1997). Thus with an average of two hours of length of the interview session, all 18 informants and two pilot studies have been conducted and successfully contributed to the data. The informants vary from various backgrounds, location, educational level, financial and marital status, gender, and other demographic.

# **4.0 DATA ANALYSIS**

This solo researcher conducted the study and follows all procedures of qualitative research (Yin, 2011). Nearly 30 transcriptions were prepared and transcribed by the researcher using software Atlas ti. The transcription later was coded in a cleaning process before the reassembling process was implemented. More than 250 codes assembled and later were disassembled into fewer codes (Yin, 2011). Atlas-ti. 7.5.17 is used to manage the data from an interview, field note, and reflective journal. Member check was performed including with the transcription prepared especially which were transcribed from the local dialect. Member check then validated the report about the transcription. Discussion with an expert in the field of study and method used was also performed through email. They were given the codes and quotation to check and validate the match. Finally, a few themes emerged with the deductive themes and fulfill the research question.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Diagram 1 : View from Atlas ti.

# **IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The findings are presented in the content form in a thematic analysis which relies on spoken words as well as nonverbal material (Smith, 2000) through personal interview words based on informants’ lives stories. This approach is pertinent to ‘real-life problems’ which is explored through individual experiences. The analysis revealed two common themes of the emotion of consuming social support and life satisfaction. Each theme derived from various reassembling and disassembling codes. The common themes are routine and giving behavior.

Using qualitative methodology, this study explored the meaning of social support in the small context of the Malay’s elderly. Overall this study aimed to interpret and explain the meaning Malay’s elderly bring about their meaning in consumption experience of social support and emotion towards life satisfaction. Based on qualitative analysis of this exploratory study on this small context, it can be concluded that daily routine and giving behavior would be the meaning to social support which could lead to life satisfaction among Malay’s elderly in Malaysia. The results indicate that through their lived experiences, a mechanism for a coping behavior by creating a daily routine and giving intention would save the Malay’s elderly life satisfaction. This study also found that these coping behaviors are meaningful in the lens of Islamic perspectives. This study indicates that both coping behaviors are required behavior and consistent with Islamic teaching. This result also indicates a consensus need for social marketing philosophy to encourage social marketers to identify some self-defined and self-determined role that one can use to achieve social good. This result suggests a copy behavior in which consumers like the elderly could have to sustain their social good in contemporary societies.

To conclude, it is impossible to provide and give some set of social support to Malay’s elderly in Malaysia. However, it is sufficient enough for them if we should ensure they have their preferred daily routines activities and they should always manipulate their behavior into giving intention. The daily routines and giving intention would be a charger to their emotion in enjoying their life satisfaction. After all, Islamic teaching recommends similar behavior to follow to earn life satisfaction. Finally, this study suggests extending the new meaning to social support and emotion in consuming social support as well as new perspectives to life satisfaction. Stimulatingly, this study exposes some new opportunities for further study in given findings, especially in social marketing philosophies. For instance, there would be best to measure and examine received and perceived social support among Malay’s elderly. This study also proposes a new parameter to confirm the emergent meaning of social support and validate the interpreted emotion of Malay’s elderly.

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