

Self Esteem and Its Relation to Depression among the Elderly

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Abstract

Due to the aging Malaysian population, the issue concerning the elderly has become increasingly important. The elderly are said to have a higher risk to undergo depression compared to other age groups (Boyd & Bee, 2009). Thus this study is conducted to see the correlation between levels of self-esteem and levels of depression among the elderly in nursing homes, Kuantan and the differences by gender. This study consists of respondents aged 60 years old and above, respondents were selected based on the method of purposive sampling 50 respondents out of 83 people in four nursing homes were involved in this study. Beck's Depression Inventory research tool was used to measure levels of depression and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure the respondents' self esteem. The data obtained were analyzed using Pearson correlation and T-test. Pearson correlation test results show that there was significant relationship between self-esteem and depression levels, but the relationship is weak where the value of $r^2 = 0.301$. T-test results showed no significant difference between self-esteem by gender and level of depression by gender. Based on these findings and several suggestions have been submitted.

Key Words: self-esteem, depression, elderly and gender

Introduction

Malaysia's population is aging. Information from the Department of Statistics showed that the percentage of the elderly has increased from 5.2 percent (1970) to 7.2% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). The increase in the elderly was a direct result of the improvement of health, develop in line with declining fertility rate (birth) and mortality (death) and rising life expectancy (Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad, 2007). The elderly is a subjective concept, there are many approaches to define the elderly. Some define elderly based on the functional ability, some of which define elderly based on deformation of the physical body. The simplest approach is used to define the elderly is the chronological approach to the age of the population aged 60 years and above (Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad, 2007).

The increase of the elderly in the community is a global phenomenon that hit in any country including Malaysia. The number and proportion of older people in Malaysia is increasing and there are signs that indicate that Malaysia is moving towards aging (Heisil, 1984). In 1970, the population aged 60 years and above in Malaysia is estimated at 539,118 people and it rose to 1,705,000 people in 2005. In terms of percentage, it increased from 5.2% (1970) to 7.2% (2005). The population aged 65 years and above in Malaysia has increased from 3.1% (1970) to 4.2% (2000) and is expected to reach 7.3% in 2020 (1991). Table 1 is the distribution and percentage of the population aged 60 - 65 years in Malaysia.

Table 1: Distribution and Percentage of Population Aged 60 to 65 years in Malaysia (1970 - 2020)

years	Population 60+		Population 65+	
	Total	percentage	total	percentage
2000	1450,000	6.6	919,000	4.2
2005	1705,000	7.2	1133,000	4.8
2010	2094,000	8.3	1340,000	5.3

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia 1995 (By Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad (2007)).

The elderly are a symbol of a society that progress and developed. The elderly are the core of society and their experience can be used to build a better society in the future. Generally, when referred to the elderly, it reflects an individual who has certain physical characteristics such as grey hair, wrinkled skin, dementia and unable. While from the economic standpoint, they are classified as individuals who had expired service in a job (Abdul Aziz et al. 2006). The elderly is complex to understand, especially emotionally. The process of aging is a biological process that must be faced by all human beings. Old age is a blessing for every individual. It also refers to the process of aging in biological and physical changes. Zainab Ismail et al, (2007), suggested four approaches that can be used to define the elderly. The first approach is based on the age of the individual who has attained the age of 65 years and above. The second approach is based on physical changes such as hair color changes, hearing and vision. The third approach defines elderly based on social roles, which reached retirement age or are already a grandfather or grandmother. Fourth approach is based on the individual's perception of whether he felt that young or otherwise.

Self esteem is how we view ourselves positively or negatively, and our overall attitude towards oneself. Individuals with high self esteem will respect him and assumes himself as a useful individual. The individual low with self-esteem, would not accept him and assume he is useless and needy. Rosenberg has suggested that low self esteem can lead to depression as a result of failure to obtain positive self- acceptance (Khaidzir & Ong, 2007). There are several factors that influence the development of one's self esteem. Among them is the respect, acceptance, and attention received from significant people in one's life, including family members. The next factor is the history of success, status and position ever attained by the individual. The more success the individual achieved and the person is well known, it will increase the self-esteem of the individual (Suriyani et. al. 2009). Men and women have different views on self- esteem. Men will have higher self esteem when a desired physical is achieved while women are more towards socializing behavior that will increase their self-esteem.

Depression is an emotional disorder that can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender or socio-economic layers (Siti Taniza, 1992). He stated that an individual will suffer from depression at least three times during her life or sometimes even more than that. Depression as a disease like cancer, diabetes and hypertension because the suffering is less obvious and cannot be seen by the naked human eye (Mokhtar Mohd, Yusoff Noor Azniza & Isaac, 2007). Azizi et. al. (2006), DSM-IV outlines 16 types of disorders contained in hundreds of subheads and other forms of delirium in detail according to categories A, B and C. According to the DSM-IV, depressive symptoms will appear in about two weeks. These symptoms include cognitive symptoms in the individual a sense of worthlessness and symptoms in terms of physical function disorders such as sleeping disturbances, fatigue and loss of energy. Most of the time, individuals who suffer from depression are not recognized by family members. Thus, depression is difficult or impossible to detect. Early detection and proper treatment is essential to prevent unnecessary suffering. Among the features of depression are as follows:

- i. Persistent sadness or gloomy lasting for more than two weeks
- ii. Loss of interest and pleasure in usual activities
- iii. Lack of encouragement and motivation that causes the tasks and easy decisions to be so difficult or not possible
- iv. Extreme fatigue, difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
- v. Memory disorders
- vi. Anxiety and restlessness
- vii. Loss or increase in appetite followed by the loss or addition of weight
- viii. Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- ix. Loss of intimacy or loss of interest in sex
- x. Loss of self-confidence and avoid people
- xi. Feeling guilty, worthless, destitute, helpless and hopeless
- xii. Feel worse at certain times of the day, usually in the morning
- xiii. Mind recurrent suicidal.

Theory Approach

Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression

Beck's cognitive theory of depression had been introduced by Beck in 1967. According to Beck, most of the signs of depression is due to the attitudes and thoughts of people negatively.

Beck depression theory refers to the relevance of this theory in the research. This theory also states that a change in one's thinking is due to depression. Beck (1994) stated that individuals with depression often have thoughts of peace. Beck model describes three basic psychological concepts that result in depression, cognitive three-pronged concept, scheme and device. To describe the behavior of depression, cognitive three-pronged concept will be used. According to this theory, the depression that occurs in an individual is the result of the three ways of thinking (The Cognitive Triad). Those who suffer from depression are more likely to perceive themselves and their future experiences as an understanding of negative and unrealistic.

Scheme however is a notion that is not flexible as a result of beliefs or assumptions on past experience. Beck (1994) stated that the scheme was used to describe the cognitive structure. Schematic of the involvement of cognitive structure between the input stimulus and response personality. Scheme contains a combination of the organization's beliefs and assumptions with respect to an object, event or environment. Scheme will also serve as a stimulus scanners, information filtering, interpretation and encode information. The third concept in Beck Cognitive Theory was the tool. They will often have depression and thoughts of structural errors. It has a relationship with a misinterpretation of an event. Those who suffer from depression will also highlight the responsibility and blame themselves. They not only make extreme generalizations based on an event but also make logically conclusion (Azizi et. al.2006). Beck (1994) had applied the Cognitive Model of Social Learning. According to him, cognitive disfunction was the main to the phenomenon of depression. The concept of Beck's Negative Cognitive Triad, explained the three negative thinking: man himself, the world and the future as he thinks.

Negative thoughts about to himself were how individuals will see themselves in a negative frame of thought of himself as inadequate and worthless. This will cause the individual to attribute feelings with physical, mental, moral and then pushed himself out of any activity. Whereas, negative thoughts that created the environment or the world explained that depressed individuals usually interpret that interaction with the environment was a failure. Such individuals will feel life is always blocked and unable to handle it. They thought that the future was negative. Individuals tend to think the situation will continue setbacks. This could cause the individual to feel useless and hopeless. Morris Rosenberg (1965), *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image* has opened up opportunities for improving psychological and sociological relationship between theory Rosenberg Self-esteem scale of Rosenberg self- esteem inventory (Louis H. Janda,1996).

Two key factors that made the principle of the existence theory Rosenberg Self-esteem were the social evaluation and comparison. In the process of taking over the role of the other, the individual will begin to realize that he is the object of attention, perception and evaluation of others that causes the individual to judge himself by the views expressed by other (Louis H. Janda,1996). The second principle was related to social comparison. Thus, the overall connotation suggested that individuals with high self-esteem will tend to have better health and a happy individual, while individuals with low self esteem will feel dissatisfied with all the things done and will be restless.

Research Problems

Elderly across the world are increasing, so the issues related to the elderly is becoming increasingly important. The elderly are more likely to withdraw from being involved in social activities, except for those who have an optimistic nature to be more active. Zainab Ismail et. al (2007) states that the elderly who live on less pleasure and suffering from depression have low self-concept. Depression is an emotional state characterized by feelings of sadness, hopelessness and helplessness that extravagance. The elderly are at risk of depression and suicide attempts are higher than younger people because of the loss will usually occur at a later stage in life. For example, health-related illnesses, physical changes, loss of income after retirement, death of parents and friends, loss of spouse and a change in the determination of the place of residence. Siti Taniza (1992), the causes of depression are diverse other than hereditary factors, which include:

- i .Bitter experience events in life that is truly memorable.
- ii .Traumatized by the long-lasting effects of the bitter events like rape, divorce, separation, accidents, natural disasters, wars and so on.
- iii .Live in slums and low socioeconomic status.
- iv .Having a family is a mess or abused.
- v .The failure of a business or career.

- vi .Dismissed, economic slowdown or reduction of employees.
- vii .Suffering from chronic diseases.
- viii . Personality type, low self-esteem and others.

From the list of sources mentioned by Siti Taniza (1992) found that elderly coincide the causes listed above. These include having a flip where the elderly will likely suffer the loss of spouse and friends and this may lead them to depression. The elderly also suffer a loss of income as a result of work and retirement. In addition, the elderly are also more likely to suffer from chronic diseases. For example, the elderly tend to suffer from diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, aches and pains and so on. Declining health as we age, and this is also one of the causes that lead to depression.

Personality type of low self esteem will also lead to depression. This can be strengthened when Rosenberg (1965) have suggested that low self esteem can lead to depression as a result of failure to obtain positive self-acceptance (Khaidzir & Ong, 2007). To detect depression among the elderly may be complicated by several factors. Often the symptoms of depression are associated with the aging process or a medical condition rather than with respect to depression. The factors that cause it to detect depression, including the struggle to cope with the loss of a life partner, pain and chronic illness, loss of mobility or memory, changes in circumstances such as moving from home to the center of those who retire or change in the family. Louis Janda (1996), Self-esteem was related to the adaptation as a whole. Those higher in self-esteem levels had higher adjustment than those who have low self-esteem.

Study Objectives

The general aim of this study was to examine the relationship between self-esteem and depression among the elderly living in nursing homes. While the specific aims were to: i. Review the level of self-esteem among the elderly living in nursing homes in Kuantan, Pahang ii. Review the level of depression among the elderly living in nursing homes Kuantan, Pahang. iii. Examine the relationship between self-esteem level of depression among the elderly living in nursing homes Kuantan, Pahang iv. Examine the differences in the level of depression among the elderly by gender v. Examine the differences in self-esteem among the elderly by gender.

Literature Reviews

Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad (2007) stated that the increase of aging population is said to be a phenomenon of the 21st century as a direct result of the improvement of health, develop in line with declining fertility rate (births) and mortality (death) and rising life expectancy. Today, the aging population has caused a lot of problems not only for developed countries but also developing countries. This study discusses the situation of the elderly in Malaysia and the contribution of local scholars on the study of the elderly in Malaysia. While Zainab Ismail, Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad & Zuria Mahmud (2007) stated that the elderly are a marginal group in the community who have a unique lifestyle. Some of the elderly through the aging process positively and can function in society, while some are confronted with the problem of not being able to function and survive in frustration.

Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad (1999) in his study entitled Social Relationships, Support and Wellness Rural Elderly in Kelantan. He managed to create two models of measurement and form two scales to estimate the actual well-being (material) and perceived well-being (subjective) of the elderly in the study. It shows that rural elderly are still able to maintain the level of well-being and quality of life even if they are poor in material wealth. He noted that elderly in the area is not overlooked by family members and neighbours. The satisfactory level of well-being was due to varieties of social support from family members and close neighbours.

In the context of support, he points out that the spouses, children and neighbours play a different role in which spouses and children found to be important as a source of emotional support. Adult child is also important in the context of financial support, while the support of religion, and the information obtained from neighbours. Siti Nor Yaacob et.al (2009), the relationship between the lonely, stress, self esteem and depression among adolescents in Malaysia. The instrument used in this study were self- Administered Questionnaire, Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) perceive Stress Scale, the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The results showed that loneliness, stress and self-esteem have a significant relationship with depression and stress was the main cause of teenage driving towards depression. Khaidzir Hj Ismail & Ong Lee Lee (2007) in their study aimed to assess the relationship between psychopathy, psychopathology and self esteem.

The instrument used was questionnaire Antisocial Process Screening Device, symptoms Checklist 90 Revised and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. The results showed that trait psychopathy, psychopathology and self esteem have no significant correlation. Thus, self-esteem and psychopathology is not a good predictor of trait psychopathy.

Meanwhile, Salsali and Silverston (2003) in his study among psychiatric patients found that respondents who were married had higher self esteem than unmarried respondents. This study used the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale as a self- esteem inventory to assess respondents. The study included gender in influencing self- esteem in psychiatric patients suffering psychosocial stressors. This study utilizes Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the Janis and Field Social Adequacy scale to measure self-esteem. Their study found that female patients have low self-esteem compared with male patients. Mokhtar Mohd Yusoff & Azniza Noor Ishak (2007) studied the influence of depression on academic achievement and students' self-esteem University Utara Malaysia. The results showed no significant differences between gender, marital status, academic achievement and self-esteem to depression. The study also showed a significant relationship between depression and academic achievement and students' self-esteem PKPG program. Siti Taniza (2006) in her study showed 63.8 % of the teachers have serious depression. The cause of this problem are, health, career and financial difficulties, religious and behavioral problems such as marital problems and other psychosocial problems.

Weissman Salsali, M., and Silverstone, P.H. (2003) had conducted a study on 38,000 adults covering 10 countries found that there were similarities and differences in the level and depressive symptoms. For example, the study showed that women in the U.S. suffer from depression than men. Many studies found that women are vulnerable group and suffers from severe depression than men.

Methodology

Study Design

This study has two designs. First, this study was descriptive in nature where it is carried out to give a systematic description of the facts and characteristics of a population or area of interest factually and accurately (Sidek, 2002). The second was a study to investigate the correlation of the extent to which variations in one factor balanced with variations in one or more other factors based on the correlation coefficient (Sidek, 2002). This research is in the old people's home, located in the Social Welfare Department in Kuantan, Pahang.

The study population consisted of four nursing homes registered under the Social Welfare Department Kuantan, Pahang. The elderly population in the old house consists of different backgrounds. However, this study only focused on the elderly aged 60 years and above. Thus, the populations of the elderly who live in nursing homes were just 83 people. The sample size was determined by Krejcie Morgan (1970) in which the number of the population should have 83 to 70 samples. However, due to the problems that inevitably there were only 50 elderly are eligible for the respondents to this survey. Regarding this research measurement tool was the questionnaire there were three parts, part A was about background, part B was Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) and part C is Inventory Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. All inventory had very high reliability, which was 0.86 (coefficient Alpha). While Inventory Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale reliability was 0.74.

Data Collection and Analysis

This research used the method of collecting data using descriptive analysis aims to analyze the levels of depression and self-esteem as a whole. While inferential statistical analysis method is hypothesis testing studies involving test t-Test and Pearson. A total of 50 sessions with structure bubbling inventiveness has been run using an instrument inquired about the study. There were 23 (46.0%) male and 27 (54%) female respondents. The study consisted of two races, the Chinese and Indians. The Chinese respondent was 45 (90.0%) while the Indian was only 5 (10.0%). This study involves three rating categories namely the respondent's age category 60 to 69 years, 70 to 79 categories and the category of 80 years and above. Adaptive study also demonstrated that respondents who were in the neighborhood of 60 to 69 years of age were 19 (38.0%) respondents. Respondents aged 70 to 79 years were 23 (46.0%) respondents while respondents aged 80 years and above were 8 (16%) respondents. Among the 50 respondents, 33 (66.0%) respondents were Buddhists, while Hindu respondents were only 5 (10.0%) respondents and the Christian respondents were 12 (24.0%) respondents.

The level of depression tested using Beck's Depression Inventory. There are six stages of melancholy in this inventory. Among 50 respondents, 9 (18%) respondents got normal result, while 7 (14%) respondents experienced a mild feeling of disorder. The border of clinical melancholy and depression 10 (20%) respondents. Serious depression was the most crowded stage of respondents experiencing 11 (22%) respondents, while the least respondents experienced are extreme depression only 3 (6%). While Self-esteem Rosenberg scale also had been used to test the respondent self-esteem stage. There were three stages namely high self-esteem, normal and low. From the marks obtained in the investigation, most of the respondents have a normal stage of self-esteem 37 (74%) respondents. Respondents who had high self-esteem 3 (6%) respondents while respondents with lower stage self-esteem 10 (20%) respondents.

Data Analysis Statistical Inference

To examine the relationship between self-esteem and depression, Pearson correlation test was used. Pearson correlation test results showed a correlation between self-esteem and depression was $r = 0.549$, p (two ways) of <0.05 , the value $r^2 = 0.301$. Referring to Backer Sidek (2002), stated that the value of r^2 was less than 0.10 indicate a weak relationship; the values r^2 between 0.10 and 0.25 indicates a strong and moderate correlation, the value of r^2 more than 0.25 indicates a strong relationship. The value of $r^2=0.0301$ showed that only a weak relationship between self-esteem with depression and this value indicates that only 30.1% was contributed by the melancholy than self-esteem. Hypothesis is rejected intends a significant correlation between self-esteem and depression.

Levene test showed significant value $P > 0.05$, the decision will be referred to the differing variances. The average depression level of male ($M = 3.35$, $SE=0.318$) is different to the female depression ($M=3.30$, $SE=0.310$). However, the distinction is not significant, $t(48) = 0.115$, $P > 0.05$. Decision demonstrated that the hypothesis is found fail to reject which mean that there was no significant distinction between the melancholy stage elderly men and women.

Levene test showed significant values $P > 0.05$, thus there was no variance difference in the result. The average of self-esteem elderly male ($M=2.13$, $SE=0.095$) was different to the elderly women ($M=2.15$, $SE=0.103$). However, the distinction is not significant, $t(48) = -0.125$, $P > 0.05$. Hypothesis failed to reject, it showed that there was a significant distinction of self-esteem between elderly men and elderly women.

As a whole, the result of Pearson correlation indicated the hypothesis is rejected, which mean there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and depression level in the elderly residents who live in old people's homes, but this relationship is weak only 30.1% of self-esteem factor contributing to the melancholy. Mean while, The result of the t-test proved the hypothesis was accepted as there was no significant distinction between melancholy and self-esteem between gender of elderly.

Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

Relationship between Self-Esteem and Depression Levels among Elderly

According to the results obtained in this study, which is significant, P (two-way) <0.05 , the values of $r^2=0.030$, this indicates a significant relationship between self-esteem and depression among the elderly living in nursing homes. Siti Taniza (2006), the causes of depression are varied, between one of the causes listed in her study was that low self-esteem. This view corresponds to the results obtained.

However, the study by Pearson correlation showed that only 30.1% of depression attributed to self esteem alone. This means that there are other factors that contribute to the depression of the elderly who live in nursing homes. This is supported by the Malaysian government's health information where it is stated that there are many factors that would lead an elderly person to depression. The elderly have a higher tendency to suffer from depression than other age groups. The main factor is the lack of social support, loss of income (retired), emotional loss (death of a relative, partner and friend) and health problems.

The Difference between Levels of Depression and Gender among Elderly

The results obtained by t-test showed that there was no significant difference between levels of depression and gender of the elderly. From the information available in government health info, suggested that women have a higher chance of suffering from depression. But Siti Taniza (2006), state of depression is an emotional disorder that can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender and socio-economic level.

Sherina et.al (2005) findings in 2004 on the elderly aged 60 years and above had shown that there was a difference between the sexes on the level of depression.

Louis H. Janda (1996), said that women (65.1%) were more likely to have depression than men (46.1%). Next Boyd & Bee (2009) stated that gender is a factor in depression. According to him, the elderly women had twice the tendency than older men to suffer from depression. This was probably related to the stress experienced by those in daily life. In addition, one of the possibilities was that women were more likely to seek help for depression, the results obtained were also high. Overall, it could be said that most of the studies done by researchers have shown significant differences between levels of depression and gender of the elderly.

The Difference between Self Esteem and Gender among Elderly

The results obtained by t-test showed that there was no significant difference between self-esteem and gender of the elderly. These findings prove that the self- esteem of the elderly person is not affected by gender. Men and women have different views on self- esteem. In conclusion, the results of previous studies have supported the results of this study there was no significant difference between self- esteem and gender.

Study Implications

Overall, the results of this study indicate that self- esteem is not the only factor contributing to the depression of the elderly. If you want to overcome the problem of depression among the elderly living in nursing homes, the community should be sensitive to the feelings of older people where they need more love after retirement, the loss of a spouse and have health problems. All these factors contribute to the depression of the elderly.

As a child, love is not just simply send their parents to old folks homes and pay each month, she also have to show that she still care and love them. Children should not give full responsibility of caring for their parents to old folks home. Although, they do not had time, as children they need to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of the elderly so they do not feel left. The elderly really need more love, this can also increase self-esteem among them and thus avoid them suffering from depression.

Environment also plays an important role. The old people's home environment was unsatisfactory. Researchers had found that some nursing homes were too small to accommodate the number of older people staying there. In addition, extended care was also not very satisfactory. This means they did not get professional care. Nursing homes gave less attention to the mental health of the elderly. They only provided a place to sleep and eat on their own, but not routed to the appropriate activities. Light activities such as morning exercise, play chess, storytelling and reading were very important to maintain the mental health of the elderly. Activities of which they are capable of doing such a sweeping, cooking, washing can be inserted. Through these activities, the elderly would not think that they were not well and may lead to low self-esteem and ultimately lead to depression.

Suggestion

It is proposed that counseling services should be provided to the elderly. It will provide an opportunity to share their stories and express their feelings. To the elderly who have children, they are encouraged to bring their parents back home, so that an elderly have the opportunity to enjoy the affection of their children and grandchildren while they will feel appreciated. In terms of care, the home of the parents need to be more concerned with the care of the elderly, which should be more concerned to take caregivers with knowledge and skills in terms of care and the number is also necessary to add more depending on the number of lodger. Employee must have certain conditions such as patience, compassion, respect for elders and others. This condition was important to ensure that the elderly get the best care not only physically, but also mentally.

The government should also launch a campaign to nursing homes such as mental health care campaign, talks, sport or activities for the elderly. Such activities not only can open a space for elderly to get acquainted with new friends but also can provide opportunities for them to be active with the community. Interaction in the community is important to keep the emotional health of an individual.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, this study stated that nursing homes are actually not just a place to sleep and eat for the elderly, but it is a new environment for them. Living like the elderly waiting to die, most of them were unhappy. These findings support some of the findings and opinions of researchers in relation to self-esteem and its relationship to the level of depression in the elderly. However, it is seen that the study of the elderly in Malaysia is still underserved. The elderly is an important asset and still have plenty of space to be explored in depth.

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