

# ADULT CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF ELDERLY PARENTS' LIVING ARRANGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM FOR ELDERLY CARE

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## Abstract

Recent projections for Malaysia indicate a three-fold increase in the elderly population, which is expected to rise from 2.0 million in 2022 to 6.0 million in 2040. With a growing number of elderly individuals choosing independent living, there is a need for formal and informal assistance to support them. However, standard aid from the government or NGOs is limited and might strain the social care system. This article delves into the potential of volunteerism to aid elderly care in Malaysia. The study conducted a three-month survey using convenience sampling, involving 134 participants, to understand adults' perceptions of elderly living arrangements and their willingness to engage in elderly care volunteerism. It emphasizes the enduring value of children, both sons and daughters, caring for elderly parents and underscores collaborative decision-making between parents and children regarding living arrangements. Examining time banking and volunteerism, the study reveals limited awareness about time banking among participants but a strong willingness to participate. However, concerns arise about volunteers' ethnic backgrounds and expectations, prompting questions about volunteerism's effectiveness in Malaysia's diverse context. In conclusion, while the tradition of filial piety remains strong in Malaysia, work demands highlight the need to prioritize volunteerism as a promising approach to elderly care. However, comprehensive education and training for both volunteers and recipients are vital to ensure the efficacy of volunteerism, especially the time bank system. This approach is essential to effectively address the increasing challenges of the aging population.

**Keywords:** Perception, Volunteerism, Elderly

## Abstrak

*Anggaran terkini untuk Malaysia menunjukkan peningkatan tiga kali ganda yang ketara dalam populasi warga emas, dijangkakan meningkat dari 2.0 juta pada tahun 2022 kepada 6.0 juta pada tahun 2040. Dengan lebih ramai warga emas memilih*

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*untuk tinggal secara bebas, terdapat keperluan untuk bantuan formal dan tidak formal bagi menyokong mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, bantuan formal dari kerajaan atau NGO adalah terhad dan mungkin menimbulkan tekanan pada sistem penjagaan sosial. Artikel ini membahas potensi sukarelawan untuk membantu penjagaan warga emas di Malaysia. Kajian ini menjalankan tinjauan selama tiga bulan menggunakan pensampelan mudah, melibatkan 134 peserta, untuk memahami persepsi orang dewasa tentang susunan kehidupan warga emas dan kesediaan mereka untuk terlibat dalam sukarelawan penjagaan warga emas. Ia menekankan nilai kekal anak, baik lelaki mahupun perempuan, yang menjaga ibu bapa emas dan menegaskan keputusan bersama antara ibu bapa dan anak-anak mengenai susunan kehidupan. Dengan memeriksa sistem perbankan masa dan sukarelawan, kajian ini menunjukkan kesedaran yang terhad mengenai sistem perbankan masa di kalangan peserta tetapi kesediaan yang tinggi untuk terlibat. Walau bagaimanapun, timbul kebimbangan mengenai latar belakang etnik dan harapan sukarelawan, menimbulkan soalan tentang keberkesanan sukarelawan dalam konteks yang pelbagai di Malaysia. Kesimpulannya, walaupun tradisi bakti anak tetap kukuh di Malaysia, tuntutan kerja menunjukkan perlunya memberi keutamaan kepada sukarelawan sebagai pendekatan yang menjanjikan untuk penjagaan warga emas. Walau bagaimanapun, untuk memastikan keberkesanan sukarelawan, terutamanya sistem perbankan masa, pendidikan dan latihan menyeluruh untuk kedua-dua sukarelawan dan penerima adalah penting. Pendekatan ini adalah penting untuk menangani cabaran yang semakin meningkat disebabkan oleh populasi yang menua.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Persepsi, Sukarelawan, Warga emas*

## Introduction

The aging population poses a pressing global demographic challenge that demands thoughtful consideration and proactive strategies to address the associated implications across various sectors of society. In Malaysia, recent projections indicate a three-fold increase in individuals aged 65 and over, expected to rise from 2.0 million in 2022 to 6.0 million in 2040 (The Star, 2023). This demographic shift has significant implications for Malaysia's economy, healthcare system, and social welfare programs, necessitating meticulous planning and preparation to manage the opportunities effectively and challenges an aging population presents.

As the aging population expands, there will be an augmented demand for medical attention and support, potentially straining the healthcare infrastructure and escalating healthcare costs. Additionally, the potential decrease in the workforce due to an aging population could adversely impact productivity and impede economic growth. Addressing these challenges mandates the implementation of policies and programs that encourage active aging, promote healthy lifestyles, and create opportunities for older adults to remain engaged in the workforce and society.

However, Malaysia's proactive planning and preparation are of greater importance to ensure the well-being and security of its elderly population in terms of living arrangements, all while maintaining social and economic stability.

In Malaysia, it is a prevalent trend among elderly individuals to prefer living with their children due to cultural, financial, and social factors. The artistic value of respecting and caring for elders in their old age is deeply ingrained in Malaysian society, fostering the belief that it is their children's responsibility to provide care (Nor, Nur, Mohd, Sharifah, Mohamad, & Mashitah, 2021). Financial considerations also influence this preference, as many older adults lack the financial means to live independently and thus rely on their children for support (Shaista et al., 2021). Moreover, social reasons, such as the desire for companionship and social support, further contribute to the preference for cohabitation with family members.

However, there is an emerging shift in this traditional pattern, with a growing number of older adults in Malaysia opting for independent living. This shift can be attributed to changing family dynamics, where the increased participation of women in the workforce results in fewer available caregivers within the family (Mohd et al., 2017). Improved healthcare in Malaysia also plays a significant role, enabling many elderly individuals to live independently for extended periods (Mehta & Leng, 2017). Furthermore, changing social attitudes that accept and respect elderly individuals living independently have reduced stigmatization, providing them with greater flexibility in their living arrangements (Alavi et al., 2011).

This current scenario reflects a blend of traditional and modern values in the living preferences of elderly Malaysians. As the needs and preferences of older adults continue to evolve, this trend will likely persist in the future, necessitating careful planning and consideration of support systems to cater to the changing dynamics of the aging population and ensure its well-being.

In the context of elderly care in Malaysia, children's perception of this issue is multifaceted and dynamic, influenced by several key factors (Alavi, 2008). Traditionally, children are taught to hold deep respect for their elders and to assume responsibility for their care in their old age, which remains prevalent in many families (Alavi et al., 2010). However, the evolving reality of elderly care, particularly with the increasing participation of women in the workforce, has led to a growing demand for formal and informal elderly care services (Malaysia Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development, 2020).

Given the significant increase of elderly individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily choose to live independently, there is a need to provide formal and informal assistance to support these elderly individuals. Formal assistance from the government or NGOs may substantially strain the social care system. Therefore,

volunteerism may be viable in addressing social, emotional, and healthcare needs in elderly care (Handley et al., 2022). Hence, this article explores the potential role of volunteerism in supporting elderly care initiatives in Malaysia, drawing insights from the experiences in countries like Japan, where volunteerism has played a vital role in elderly care (Chen, 2013). Through a comprehensive examination of children's perspectives on elderly care and volunteerism, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for policymakers, caregivers, and stakeholders to implement appropriate policies and arrangements that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the aging population in Malaysia who may end up living on their own.

## **Literature Review**

The perception of children regarding elderly living arrangements is an essential and multifaceted aspect of elderly care in Malaysia. As the country experiences a significant demographic shift with a rapidly aging population, understanding how children perceive and influence elderly living arrangements becomes crucial in developing effective policies and support systems. This comprehensive literature review aims to thoroughly analyze existing research on children's views and attitudes towards elderly living arrangements in Malaysia. By examining the cultural, familial, and social factors, the role of volunteerism, and the preferences of the elderly themselves, this review seeks to shed light on the complex interplay of influences that impact the preferences and decisions surrounding elderly care in the country.

### **Cultural factors**

Malaysia is rich in cultural diversity, and traditional values play a pivotal role in shaping children's perceptions of elderly living arrangements. The cultural value of filial piety and respect for elders is deeply ingrained in Malaysian society (Nor et al., 2021). Many children are raised believing that it is their moral duty to care for and support their elderly parents, leading to a strong preference for cohabitation with family members (Beh & Folk, 2013). Studies have shown that children from cultures that emphasize intergenerational cohabitation are more likely to support elderly parents living with them. For instance, in the Chinese culture, where Confucian values are prevalent, filial piety plays a central role, and children are expected to take care of their aging parents (Mooney & Williams, 2016).

### **Familial factor**

Family dynamics significantly influence children's perceptions of elderly living arrangements. The roles and responsibilities within the family, particularly regarding caregiving for elderly parents, can vary based on cultural, socioeconomic, and generational factors. Children raised in families with a history of intergenerational cohabitation may be more inclined to advocate for this traditional living arrangement

as it aligns with family values (William & Thornton, 1993). On the other hand, children from families that prioritize independence and autonomy may be more accepting of elderly parents living independently or in senior care facilities (Setiyani et al., 2019). In some cases, the decision on elderly living arrangements may be a collective family decision, where the views and opinions of multiple family members are considered (Martin, 1989).

## **Social factors**

Social attitudes and societal changes also contribute to children's perceptions of elderly living arrangements (Zainab et al., 2012). As more women enter the workforce, there is a growing demand for formal elderly care services, leading to a shift in the traditional family caregiving dynamics (Nordin et al., 2017). The evolving reality of elderly care in Malaysia and changing social norms can influence children's views on the most suitable living arrangements for elderly parents. Additionally, urbanization and migration trends in Malaysia may also impact children's perceptions, as extended family support networks may be affected when family members reside in different geographical locations (Mohd et al., 2017).

## **Volunteerism in elderly care**

Volunteerism plays a significant role in elderly care and can positively influence children's perceptions of elderly living arrangements in Malaysia. Volunteer programs that engage children in caregiving activities and intergenerational interactions can foster empathy and appreciation for the elderly (Carr et al., 2015). Such initiatives can offer children valuable insights into the challenges and needs of the elderly population, leading to more informed and compassionate views on elderly living arrangements (Lloyd-Sherlock et al., 2017). For instance, volunteerism in Japan has been instrumental in addressing social, emotional, and healthcare needs while fostering a sense of community and intergenerational connection (Yanahara et al., 2020; Chen, 2013).

## **Elderly preference**

Understanding the preferences of the elderly themselves is vital in shaping elderly living arrangements. Research on the elderly population's preferences regarding their living arrangements in Malaysia provides valuable insights into their needs and desires in their later years. Some studies have explored the elderly's desire to remain independent and age in place, even if it means living alone (Ismail et al., 2020). Privacy, autonomy, and familiarity with surroundings significantly influence their living arrangement choices (Evans et al., 2018). Elderly individuals often value the emotional attachment and memories associated with their homes, making them hesitant to relocate to unfamiliar environments (Ismail et al., 2019). Living

independently at home provides control over one's living space and daily routines, essential for maintaining a sense of self and dignity (Evans et al., 2018).

Additionally, elderly individuals value social connections and may prefer living arrangements that allow continued interactions with peers and the elderly (Areff & Lyndon, 2018). Social engagement is crucial for promoting mental well-being and preventing loneliness and isolation among the elderly (Hamid et al., 2021). Many older adults strongly desire to live in communities that offer opportunities for socializing, participating in activities, and engaging in leisure pursuits (Khan & Tahir, 2014).

### **Time bank volunteerism for elderly care**

The Fureai Kippu system, a form of time banking in elderly care, has been recognized as a complex yet potentially beneficial model (Hayashi, 2012). Studies show that it effectively generates social capital, especially among the elderly, fostering mutually beneficial relationships among participants (Collom, 2008). The application of time banking in elderly care, as evidenced by research such as Ding (2022), has positive effects, contributing to social and personal values for the elderly.

In the Malaysian context, a study on the national plan for aging populations revealed that only 2 percent of individuals above 40 years old express a willingness to volunteer. However, a more detailed examination discovered that those aged 30 to 49, particularly those with higher education levels, are more likely to donate their services. Interestingly, individuals tend to lean towards donating money rather than offering services as income increases. This suggests that the effectiveness of time bank volunteerism observed in Japan and other countries may face challenges in replication in Malaysia due to the lower willingness to volunteer.

Despite this, there is a glimmer of hope. The National Plan on Aging Populations study found that 75 percent of respondents indicated that compensation would impact their volunteerism behavior (ILMIA, 2020). This suggests that while the traditional model of volunteerism may face obstacles, introducing compensation elements could potentially increase volunteer participation in Malaysia.

### **Summary**

The above literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of children's perception of elderly living arrangements in Malaysia. Cultural, familial, and social factors, the role of volunteerism, and the preferences of the elderly themselves all contribute to shaping these perceptions. Understanding children's views and attitudes, along with the preferences of the aging population, is essential in developing holistic and person-centered elderly care solutions. Policymakers, caregivers, and stakeholders

must consider the diverse needs and preferences of the elderly and foster intergenerational dialogue and community engagement to create an inclusive and compassionate society that supports its aging population effectively.

By incorporating insights from children and the elderly, Malaysia can proactively address the challenges and opportunities associated with its aging population. This comprehensive understanding will aid in developing tailored policies, support systems, and elderly care initiatives that promote well-being, autonomy, and social connectedness for older adults. As Malaysia continues to undergo demographic shifts, the collaboration between generations and recognizing the elderly's agency in decision-making processes are crucial steps toward building a more age-friendly and caring society.

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

The survey aimed to gain comprehensive insights into three critical areas of elderly care among adults aged 20 to 60. The study focused on understanding adults' perceptions regarding their elderly living arrangements, their awareness and willingness to participate in volunteerism programs for elderly care, and the type of care and assistance required by elderly parents. These areas held significant importance in the context of an aging population, and exploring these perceptions could inform policies and interventions to enhance elderly well-being and support systems. The survey used convenience sampling to collect data from a diverse group of participants within the target age range over three months.

The sample was drawn from individuals aged 20 to 60 with elderly parents above 60 still alive. A convenience sampling approach was used to ensure a broad representation of adults within this age range. Convenience sampling allowed for easy access and participation, as participants were selected from online platforms, social media, and community centers. This approach enabled researchers to gather data from individuals with diverse backgrounds, occupations, and socio-economic statuses, offering valuable insights into the target population's perspectives.

To achieve statistical significance and meaningful results, the survey aimed to include 150 participants. However, only 134 questionnaires are completed and usable for further analysis. The sample size was carefully determined through rigorous calculations to ensure sufficient statistical power for valid analysis and interpretation of data. By collecting data from a sizeable group of participants, the study aimed to produce reliable findings that reflected the broader views and experiences of the target population.



The survey instrument was thoughtfully designed to address three main areas of interest. Firstly, participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding their elderly parents' living arrangements. This included questions about cohabitation with elderly parents, preferences for independent living, and factors influencing their decisions. Secondly, the survey explored participants' awareness and willingness to participate in volunteerism programs to provide care and support to the elderly. Understanding the factors that motivated or hindered participation could inform the development of effective volunteer programs tailored to the needs of both volunteers and the elderly. Lastly, the survey inquired about the type of care and assistance required by elderly parents, shedding light on the challenges faced by caregivers and the support systems necessary to address those needs effectively.

Data collection was conducted over three months to allow for adequate responses and reach the target sample size. Participants were invited to complete the survey through an online platform, ensuring convenience and flexibility in participation. This approach aimed to encourage a higher response rate and facilitate data collection from participants in various geographical locations. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: respondents and their parents' background, perceptions on their elderly parents' living arrangement, perceptions on volunteerism as a means to support elderly care, and the type of elderly care required and the type of people required to provide such elderly care.

Ethical considerations were given utmost priority throughout the survey process. Participants were provided with clear explanations regarding the survey's purpose and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the survey, and strict measures were implemented to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of personal information.

Data analysis involved the quantitative method as this is an explorative study. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize survey responses for the three key areas. Inferential statistics, such as crosstabulation, was applied to explore potential relationships between variables. Additionally, qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes, enriching the study's findings with in-depth insights.

In conclusion, the survey design offered valuable insights into adults' perceptions of elderly living arrangements, their engagement in volunteerism programs for elderly care, and the type of care and assistance needed by elderly parents. By employing a convenience sampling approach, the study aimed to capture diverse perspectives, ensuring relevance and applicability to the broader adult population aged 20 to 60 years. The findings from this survey could inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems to enhance the well-being and quality of life for the elderly, fostering a more compassionate and inclusive society.



Findings

Respondent background

The demographic characteristics of the survey participants shed light on their gender distribution, income levels, ethnic backgrounds, educational achievements, and employment status. Understanding these key demographic factors is crucial for contextualizing the survey results and gaining a deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the respondents. Such demographic insights enhance the robustness of the analysis and interpretation of the survey findings, ultimately contributing to the broader understanding of the research topic.

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the respondent's background. The survey participants were predominantly male, making up almost two-thirds of the total sample, while the remaining respondents were female. The data further revealed that most of the participants (44 percent) reported a monthly household income above RM10000, with approximately one-quarter earning less than RM5000 per household.

Regarding ethnicity, the survey indicated that a significant proportion of the respondents identified as Malaysian Malay, representing the majority of the sample. In contrast, less than 10 percent of the participants belonged to non-Malay ethnicities. Additionally, a substantial number of the respondents demonstrated a high level of education, as most held either a basic or a postgraduate degree.

Furthermore, the survey highlighted that slightly more than three-fourths of the respondents were currently employed, suggesting an active and engaged workforce among the participants.

Table 1: Respondent Background

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	92	68.7
Female	42	31.3
<b>Household Income</b>		
Less than RM5000	33	24.6
Between RM5000 to RM10000	42	31.3
Above RM10000	59	44.0
<b>Ethnic</b>		
Malay	120	89.6
Chinese	11	8.2
Indians & Others	3	2.2

**Table 1 (continues)**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Education Level</b>		
Secondary and below	5	3.7
Diploma	10	7.5
Degree	55	41
Post Graduate	64	47.8
<b>Current Work Status</b>		
Working	31	23.1
Not Working	103	76.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **Current living arrangements and perception of who should decide on the living arrangements for elderly parents**

Table 2 illustrates that almost two-thirds of the respondents' parents currently reside either with the respondents themselves or alongside their other children. Only a third of the parents of the respondents live independently. The rationales provided for these prevailing living arrangements stem from the desire to ensure the comfort of the elderly parents or to cater to the convenience of the children. Additionally, the majority of the elderly parents who do reside independently do so out of a lack of alternative options. However, it is noteworthy that almost all respondents have indicated that their parents express contentment with the present living situation.

**Table 2: Current Living Arrangement of Elderly Parents**

	N	%
<b>Current living arrangement</b>		
by themselves	49	36.0
with children	85	63.4
<b>Happy with current living arrangement</b>		
Yes	132	98.5
No	2	1.5
Total	134	100.0

Table 3 shows the perceptions of children concerning the living arrangements of their elderly parents, taking into account cultural influences and modernization trends. The research examines beliefs about caregiving responsibilities and preferences for different living settings for elderly parents. A diverse group of respondents participated in the survey, revealing insights into traditional cultural expectations and evolving perspectives on elderly care.

The caregiving role for elderly parents is a complex and culturally influenced phenomenon. In line with Eastern cultural norms, most respondents (65%) asserted that the duty of caring for elderly parents falls upon sons. A slightly lower proportion (47%) believed this responsibility lies with daughters. This traditional perspective aligns with the cultural expectation that sons are primarily responsible for the well-being of their elderly parents until their passing (Hamid, Salam, Nor, Abd, Rahman, & Khan, 2021). Notably, a substantial portion of respondents (20% to 32.1%) remained uncertain about whether sons or daughters should assume this responsibility, possibly reflecting the influence of modernization on cultural values (Zainab et al., 2012; Ibrahim & Zainab, 2012).

Modernization processes might contribute to the shifting perceptions observed in this study. Despite variations in beliefs about the gender-specific caregiving role, an overwhelming 91% of respondents agreed that the responsibility to care for elderly parents rests on the children, regardless of their gender. This finding underscores the enduring importance of filial duty even in the face of evolving family dynamics and cultural values (Nainee et al., 2016).

Regarding living arrangements, 86% of respondents advocated for a collaborative decision-making process involving parents and children. This highlights a desire for open dialogue and mutual agreement in determining the best living situation for elderly parents. Interestingly, only 40% of respondents endorsed the idea of parents living independently if they chose to do so, suggesting that the preference for intergenerational cohabitation remains strong.

When placing elderly parents in care facilities, the survey revealed nuanced perspectives. A mere 8.9% of children expressed a willingness for their parents to reside in old folk homes or elderly care facilities. This hesitance may stem from concerns about social isolation and the perceived emotional toll of separating from parents. In contrast, 25% of respondents believed nursing homes or care facilities are suitable options for sick, elderly parents. This viewpoint likely arises from the belief that specialized medical attention and enhanced healthcare services can be better provided in such environments.

The findings of this study illuminate the intricate interplay between cultural norms, modernization, and evolving family dynamics in shaping children's perceptions of elderly parent living arrangements. While traditional expectations regarding caregiving persist, there is evidence of shifting preferences towards collaborative decision-making and consideration of elderly care facilities, particularly for those with health-related needs. As societies evolve, understanding these perceptions becomes pivotal in addressing the changing landscape of elderly care.

**Table 3: Perception of Children of Elderly Parents Care and Living Arrangement**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>I believe son(s) shall take care of their elderly parents.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	6	4.5
Disagree	13	9.7
Neutral	28	20.9
Agree	30	22.4
Strongly agree	57	42.5
<b>I believe the daughter(s) shall take care of their elderly parents.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	12	9
Disagree	16	11.9
Neutral	43	32.1
Agree	35	26.1
Strongly agree	28	20.9
<b>I believe both son(s) and daughter(s) shall take care of their elderly parents.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	4	3
Disagree	1	0.7
Neutral	6	4.5
Agree	22	16.4
Strongly agree	101	75.4
<b>I believe elderly parents shall stay on their own if they choose to do so.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	28	20.9
Disagree	20	14.9
Neutral	32	23.9
Agree	38	28.4
Strongly agree	16	11.9
<b>I believe it is up to the elderly parents to decide who and where they choose to stay.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	4	3
Disagree	4	3
Neutral	20	14.9
Agree	53	39.6
Strongly agree	53	39.6
<b>I believe that widow/widower parents shall stay with their children.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	4	3
Disagree	15	11.2
Neutral	44	32.8
Agree	29	21.6
Strongly agree	42	31.3
<b>I believe elderly parents shall stay in old folk homes / elderly care homes.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	55	41
Disagree	38	28.4
Neutral	29	21.6
Agree	9	6.7
Strongly agree	3	2.2

**Table 3 (continues)**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>I believe sick, elderly parents shall stay in nursing homes or care homes.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	41	30.6
Disagree	26	19.4
Neutral	30	22.4
Agree	24	17.9
Strongly agree	13	9.7
<b>I believe parents and children must decide together on the elderly parents' living arrangement.</b>		
Strongly Disagree	2	1.5
Disagree	2	1.5
Neutral	15	11.2
Agree	33	24.6
Strongly agree	82	61.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Perception of time bank and volunteerism**

In the realm of elderly care, time banking, and volunteerism emerge as pivotal mechanisms for bolstering community support (Collom, 2008). This study investigates the levels of awareness, propensities for participation, and apprehensions associated with time bank volunteerism, particularly among the respondents.

One intriguing revelation stemming from the data is the discernible lack of familiarity with the concept of time banking as a vehicle for volunteerism in elderly care. From Table 4, almost 80% of respondents astonishingly demonstrated a deficiency in recognizing the essence of time banking. However, approximately 40% of the participants showcased their readiness to immerse themselves in time bank volunteerism. This favorable inclination can be traced back to concisely elucidating time banking within the questionnaire. Notably, most respondents hold a perspective that aligns with the time bank system as a promising avenue for elevating the quality of elderly care (Carr et al., 2015).

Despite this sanguine perspective, delving deeper into the respondents' perceptions unraveled a pronounced concern about the profiles of volunteers. Table 5 shows that 75% of participants conveyed their misgivings, primarily revolving around the ethnic backgrounds of volunteers. Additionally, the respondents delineated specific expectations from the volunteers. While Malaysia revels in its multicultural tapestry, boasting diverse ethnic affiliations, the perceptible divides among Malaysians concerning religion and race take center stage. Consequently, the respondents harbored substantial reservations about extending acceptance to aid offered by volunteers (Ng & Yim, 2020). These concerns naturally raise questions concerning

the viability and efficacy of the volunteerism system within the unique milieu of Malaysia.

**Table 4: Perception of the Respondent on Time Bank and Volunteerism**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Awareness of Time bank</b>		
Yes	28	20.9
No	106	79.1
<b>Willing to participate in Time bank</b>		
Yes	82	61.2
No	52	38.8
<b>Time Bank is a sound system.</b>		
Yes	114	85.1
No	20	14.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5: Challenges in Accepting Help from Volunteers**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Background of Volunteers</b>		
Yes	100	74.6
No	34	25.4
<b>Concern about volunteer's ethnicity</b>		
Yes	75	56
No	59	44
<b>Concern about volunteer's Age</b>		
Yes	41	30.6
No	93	69.4
<b>Have specific preference for volunteers</b>		
Yes	79	59
No	55	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>

To sum up, the exploration into the potential of time banking and volunteerism as instruments for serving the elderly shines a light on an intriguing dichotomy. Despite a significant chunk of respondents displaying an openness to engage in time bank volunteerism, underlying concerns regarding the ethnic backgrounds of volunteers and the intricate socio-cultural dynamics within Malaysia have emerged as salient. This study underscores the imperativeness of disseminating awareness about time banking and confronting the intricate crossroads of ethnicity, religion, and race that emerge within volunteerism.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In Malaysia, the value of filial piety and respect for the elderly remains deeply entrenched, particularly within the Malay ethnic culture. As evidenced by the prevailing sentiment among respondents, a significant majority firmly subscribe to the belief that the duty of caring for elderly parents falls upon their children, regardless of gender (Mooney & Williams, 2016). However, the evolving landscape, marked by an influx of women into the workforce and improvements in health and wealth, has engendered a shift in the dynamics of elderly living arrangements. Increasingly, the decision regarding living situations for the elderly is being collaboratively determined by the elderly parents and their adult children, frequently resulting in elderly parents residing independently (Pezzin et al., 2007; Bromley & Blieszner, 1997).

The notion of introducing a time bank as a form of volunteerism to support independently living elderly individuals garners favor among children, as revealed by the research findings. This novel approach, however, faces substantial challenges when transposed to Malaysia's cultural and religious milieu. While the desire for such volunteerism is present, practical implementation encounters hurdles from cultural and religious differences. Unlike in homogenous societies like Japan, where cultural and religious homogeneity aligns with volunteerism efforts, Malaysia's multicultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic fabric complicates the effectiveness of such initiatives. Notably, gender and ethnicity assumptions regarding volunteers play a pivotal role in the reception of volunteer care by elderly recipients (Young, 2019)

Hence, it can be deduced that Malaysia's enduring filial piety culture persists. However, the strains arising from work demands, particularly among women, necessitate the advancement of volunteerism as the preferred course. Nonetheless, essential education and training for both volunteers and recipients are imperative to guarantee that volunteerism effectively serves as an alternative to elderly care, adeptly addressing the escalating challenges posed by the aging population.

The valuable insights from this study need to be considered alongside its limitations. The reliance on a restricted and relatively uniform group of respondents hampers the applicability of the findings to the entire nation. Future research efforts should focus on broadening the participant pool across diverse sections of the country to bolster the strength of drawn conclusions. By encompassing a more comprehensive portrayal of Malaysia's socio-cultural variety, researchers can better understand the intricate dynamics among filial piety, evolving demographics, and the feasibility of volunteerism as a solution for elderly care.



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