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# TO BECOME A CAWIR METUA: LIFE SATISFACTION OF THE KARO ELDERLY

## A SOCIAL SECURITY CASE STUDY ON THE KARO ELDERLY IN LINGGA VILLAGE, SIMPANG EMPAT SUB-DISTRICT, TANAH KARO REGENCY

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### Abstract

Elderly becomes one of the crucial issues faced by many countries in the world today. The composition of the elderly population is growing rapidly in both developed and developing countries. The increase in the number of elderly requires attention so that they not only live long but can enjoy their old age happily and improve the quality of their life. In some areas, large numbers of elderly people become burdensome if they have health problems resulting in increased health care costs, decreased income, increased disability, lack of social support and independence. This statement is not entirely true, because there are elderly who are still able to be independent to achieve life satisfaction. This study employed a qualitative approach to get a picture of life and concepts related to elderly life. Emik view of the power was used to analyze the life of elderly from Karo ethnicity. The data were collected by using participant observation and depth interview which was performed on five elderly families and questionnaires for 100 respondents of elderly Karo family in Lingga Village. The strength of informants in establishing rapport became the key of success in this Karo elderly research. The result of the research showed that Karo elderly felt shame if they have to live with their children or be dependent because it is the nature of a Karo person to be independent. It is reinforced by a very strong culture of shame. In addition, Karo people have a standard of life satisfaction which has been a part of their culture. It is the satisfaction of life when all of their children have married and have enough income. In Karo society, it is called *Cawir Metua*. Someone who has reached the *Cawir Mertua* is supposed to hold a party to tell people that he or she has achieved satisfaction in life.

**Keywords:** Elderly, Shame Culture, *Cawir Metua*

**JEL Code:** A13, H55, J28, P25

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world, after China, India and the United States. Indonesia is the most populous country in Southeast Asia. Population projection 2010-2035 indicates that Indonesia will enter the period of ageing, in which 10% of the population will be over 60 years old by 2020. This number is predicted to increase by 11.8 percent in 2025, 13.8 percent in 2030 and 15.8 percent in 2035. (Infodatin: 2015). A large number of elderly population in Indonesia in the future will bring positive and negative impacts. It will be a positive impact if the elderly are healthy,

active and productive. On the other hand, the large number of elderly people becomes a burden if they have health problems that result in increased health care costs, decreased income, increased disability, lack of social and environmental support that is not friendly to the elderly.

Increasing number of elderly population requires particular attention and treatment. There are two categories of elderly population, the elderly who are potential and elderly who are not potential. Government Regulation (PP) No. 43 of 2004 states that the elderly who are potential are those who still have the ability to meet their own needs and usually do not depend on others. Meanwhile, the elderly who are not potential are those who have no ability to meet their own needs and usually depend on others. The elderly population who are not potential can hinder the development of the country. Therefore, the various conditions of the elderly need to be studied so that the development program implemented can protect and empower the elderly. In the Indonesian government's policy, the development of the elderly is set through a family-based approach. This argument is presented in accordance with the paradigm of elderly empowerment which implies that the elderly is a family affair which is also in accordance with the culture of society and economically cheaper.

The role of the family as the main support system in caring for the elderly is to care for this category of age, to maintain and improve its mental status, to anticipate economic change, and to motivate and facilitate the spiritual needs of the elderly (Maryam et al., 2008). Of course, treatment of the old age in the family cannot be separated by the values “and habits or the so-called culture adopted by a family. According to Prof. Koentjaraningrat, culture is the “whole system of ideas, actions and the work of human beings in the framework of the life of society that made human self by learning”. This explains that what humans do is a set of ideas and actions that are recognized by society as a guide for human life in society. On this basis then, what is done family members in family life has been lined up in the culture that has occurred for generations (Koentjaraningrat, 1986).

It will guide the family in treating the elderly as one of the family members. Society and its culture will determine the pattern of their activities, attitudes, restrictions, and obligations. The position and role of elderly people in family and society is determined by the culture owned by family and society (Fitriani, 2009). The elderly who live in the home can be calm and peaceful (the function of protection), more free, more satisfied, more comfortable (the function of the physical and mental welfare), can arrange and control the house because the place belongs to the elderly, feel happier because they do not bother other people and/or children and feel comfortable (Barnaba, 2013).

Selection of elderly home is influenced by the satisfaction of life that became the purpose of their life. Sometimes, families who are expected to help to find or meet the satisfaction of the elderly turn out to be too demanding by always imposing their own will, without finding out what the elderly wanted at the end of their life. Life satisfaction is a measure of individual happiness. Happiness is a general term that indicates pleasure or satisfaction in the well-being, enjoyment, or fulfilment of desires. Diener (in Sirgy, 2002: 7) states that life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment process that depends on the ratio of one's state to what is generally accepted.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Elderly**

The Ministry of Health (1991) defines the elderly as an advanced phase or the final phase of the journey of a living being. Some other terms are often used and have the same meaning:

- a. Elderly (Law on Principal Health No. 9 year 1960)
- b. Senior Citizen (Law No 4 year 1965)
- c. MANULA (Elder People)
- d. Wredawan
- e. Adi Yuswo.

There are some definitions of this category of age according to experts who can be used as a reference. For example, according to Smith (1999) the elderly can be divided into three categories, namely young old (65-74 years) middle old (75-84 years old) and old old (over 85 years old). There is also a definition of elderly according to Setyonegoro who argues that they are people aged over 65 years. It is further divided into 70-75 years (young old); 75-80 years old (old); and more than 80 years (very old). Understanding the terms "elderly" according to Law no. 13 Year 1998 About Elderly Welfare states the elderly is someone who reaches the age of 60 years and above. This limit is similar to the old age limit according to WHO covering, middle age that is between 45 until 59 years old, elderly between 60 to 74 years old, old age 76 to 90 years old, and very old age i.e. age above 90 years (The Ministry of Health, 2002).

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia makes a classification as follows: 1) Mid-Age Group: age group in the period of vertility or the age of elderly preparation that demonstrates physical strength and mental maturity (45-54 years). 2) Elderly Age Group: the group in the prasenium period is the group that started to enter the elderly (55-64 years). 3) Elderly groups: groups in the senium period (65-74) 4) High-Risk Elderly Groups: groups older than 75 years or more, isolated, having acute disease or defect.

In addition to the chronological age limit, the elderly sense is also associated with changes in physical aspects, psychological aspects and socio-cultural aspects. Atchley (1977) states old age is a broad concept, not only covering the physical changes of the body after passing through adult life, but also including psychological changes in spirit or memory and in mental abilities and social changes in life. Biologically, the elderly are the people who undergo the ageing process continuously, characterized by decreased physical endurance and more susceptible condition to a disease that can cause death. This is due to changes in the structure and function of cells, tissues and organ systems. Economically, the elderly population is commonly seen as a burden rather than a resource.

A social aspect review suggests that the elderly are a social group of their own who experiences a shift the social position to be grandfather and grandmother. The definition of the concept of the elderly does not merely concern the chronological age, but also the circle of life that has reached the old stage. In addition, the concept of elderly is different from the concept of the decreipt. The definition of the elderly is more related to the chronological age, while the concept of decreipt refers more to physical disability although they may be relatively young.

## **2.2. Life Satisfaction on Elderly**

Life satisfaction is a satisfying living condition. The self-esteem makes one more effective and more attractive to the world. Life satisfaction is characterized by the ability to achieve something and respect others (Roizen and Mehmet, 2005: 30). Life satisfaction (life satisfaction)

is a comfortable feeling that is free from loneliness and avoid depression (Gunarsa, 2004: 419). Life satisfaction from each individual is varied. It is the result of the right actions and steps taken by the individual and is related to how individuals keep their promise according to their conscience (Yudantara, 2008). It is defined as a reflection of the individual's feelings about the past, present and future. Purnama (2009) states that explicitly satisfaction describes a condition that is typical of individuals who have the spirit of life and have the ability to adjust in a variety of changes occurring in both oneself and environmental conditions. Life satisfaction is a measure of individual happiness. Happiness is a general term that indicates pleasure or satisfaction in the well-being, enjoyment, or fulfillment of desires. Diener (in Sirgy, 2002) states that life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment process that depends on the ratio of one's state to what is generally accepted. Based on the description is known that the satisfaction of life is one measure of one's happiness arising from the fulfillment of needs or expectations so as to accept themselves and the environment positively and free from loneliness and avoid depression. According Purnama (2009) life satisfaction in the elderly is a condition that includes several aspects namely:

- a. Feeling happy with the activities that are done every day. Being happy with daily activities can be regarded as a human reaction to the situation in everyday life. In society, often individuals perform daily activities because of obligations, not because they feel happy to do so, which thus individuals may feel forced to do activities that they actually do not like at all.
- b. Considering life as meaningful and feeling sincere to accept the life conditions. Individuals will always be happy if that person sees life as meaningful. In contrary, individuals who feel that his/her life is meaningless tend to be unhappy with all aspects of his life. Individuals are very vulnerable to feel anxious, often find it more difficult to concentrate, feel guilty of fear for no apparent reason, often cry, and feel desperate. Great self-acceptance will have a positive impact by considering life meaningful and can sincerely accept life.
- c. Feeling that he/she has achieved his goals or most of his life goals. Happiness is the achievement of ideals and success in what it wants. In Javanese culture, especially in more than a century ago, only marriages were ideals for what girls could wish. Women should not go to school, may not work outside the house, may not hold positions in the community.
- d. Sticking to a positive self-image. If the individual or the elderly has a strong and positive lifestyle and principle, then the elderly will have a strong and positive self-esteem. Elderly life satisfaction is shown in a positive self-concept that reflects the appropriateness between past ideals and the present condition of life experienced. It also shows the spirit of life and a positive mood.
- e. Have an optimistic attitude and different mood. Individuals who are optimistic in themselves in looking at something, always think positively, enthusiasm towards all changes, oriented to the outside world (future), being open, spirited, honest and frank. An optimistic individual is an individual who never gives up hope.

Not much different from what Neugarten (in Hikmawati and Akhmad, 2008: 85) states that the measure of life satisfaction in the elderly at least includes five aspects, namely:

- a. Feel happy with the activities that are done every day.
- b. Consider life meaningful and sincerely accept the conditions of his life.
- c. Feel that she/he has achieved his/her goals or most of his/her life goals.
- d. Stick to the positive picture of yourself.
- e. Have an optimistic attitude and a happy mood.

Based on the description, it is known that the aspects of life satisfaction are to feel happy with the activities undertaken daily, consider his/her life meaningful and sincerely accept the conditions of life, felt to have succeeded in achieving the ideals or most of the purpose of life, cling to the image of self which is positive, and has an optimistic attitude and a different mood.

### 3. METHOD OF RESEARCH

This research is a qualitative research using qualitative ethnography approach. Qualitative research seeks to explain facts or social realities in-depth, to understand the social realities as they are based on the native's point of view structure. It captures the meanings encountered in the subjects or subjects being studied, learning from the people, not just learning about the people (Sirojuzilam *et al.*, 2016 & Azlina *et al.*, 2017). An important aspect of the excavation of the "meaning of the structure of the subject experience" is what characterizes the qualitative research closely to the subject under study, studying in its natural context that seeks to understand or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that human beings attach to them (Muda *et al.*, 2018). Qualitative research includes the use of the subject studied and the collection of empirical data-case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life journeys, interviews, observation, history, interactional and visual texts describing the meaning and problematic moments in daily life of someone. Correspondingly qualitative researchers apply various interrelated methods. This method encourages to observe, to engage in subjects' (participatory) events to yield proper interpretation until it comes to the meanings until the proposition. (Creswell. 2009).

The subject of this study is an elderly family in Lingga Village, whether it is family whose the elderly live with family, or the elderly who do not live with family or that is said to live alone. In determining informants who will be interviewed in depth, the researcher uses purposive sampling, by trying to get a variant of the elderly. In addition to the informants interviewed, to get the elderly depiction in Lingga Village, researchers also distributed questionnaires to 100 respondents. The distribution of questionnaires was done from house to house that there were elderly.

To collect data in this research, the method as follows:

1. Questionnaire: by making a closed and semi-open question which is guided by the researcher or enumerator. The purpose of using this questionnaire is to obtain the percentage of descriptions from the elderly in the site of the study. Distribution of questionnaires as the first step in primary data collection (Badaruddin *et al.*, 2017; Lubis *et al.*, 2017; Sirojuzilam *et al.*, 2017 & Muda *et al.*, 2018). Questionnaires are distributed based on the number of samples that have been set as many as 100 respondents.
2. Observation: namely data collection by observing directly to the activities occurred in the village of Lingga so that in this study obtained a description of the condition of the object of research.  
The expected data from this observation is to strengthen the results of the data obtained, by observation, researchers can see firsthand the elderly family's activities and the elderly.
3. In-depth interviews, is an effort to dig up information by conducting a question and answer verbally and to individuals who will be answered with oral answers as well. This interview was conducted for elderly and elderly families in order to better understand the meaning of the visible activity.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Result

#### 4.1.1. Karo Tradition

One of the things that drew the attention of thinkers about the identity of the Karo people was that the rapid economic changes of the last few decades had not been followed by the rapid social changes that one of the theories of social change had predicted. This explanation may be sought from the unique kinship system and the philosophy of life adopted. One of the things is the handle of Karo's life derived by the ancestors is a letter ukat 2) whose contents NDI-NTA which means to give first then requesting which is the opposite of "take and give". *Ndi-Nta* pointed out that for Karo community, the social aspect is prior to the economic aspect. This is also reinforced by one of the philosophy of life that is the dream of Karo, "*Tuah sangap mejuah-juah*". *Tuah* is the expression of completeness of family life, have *anak beru*, *senina* and *kalimbubu*. *Tuah* which is followed by the *sangap* which is an economic success and is equipped with *mejuah-juah* which means healthy physically and mentally so that it can be *cawir metua* or to live long.

Many Karo customs show communality and unity and there are scholars who have said that one of the differences of Karo society with other Batak people he sees is the projection of *Merga Silima*, which is not glorifying undividual clan. In Karo culture, a high value in karo society if parents die in the family of boys. Boys are considered the most responsible for the circumstances of his parents. All needs must be prepared by the boys. There are also parents who choose to live with girls, but it is still the responsibility of the boys.

1. *Merga Silima*, which means clan of five. In Karo Society only has 5 big clans, namely Karo-Karo, Ginting, Tarigan, Sembiring and Perangin-Angin. Each of these clans then has its branches.

**Table 1. Merga Silima and its Branches**

<b>Karo-Karo</b>	<b>Ginting</b>	<b>Tarigan</b>	<b>Sembiring</b>	<b>Perangin-Angin</b>
1. Karo Sekali	1. Ajartambun	1. Tua	1. Kembaren	1. Bangun
2. Barus	2. Babo	2. Gana-Gana	2. Sinulaki	2. Banjerang
3. Surbakti	3. Capah	3. Gerneng	3. Keloko	3. Kacinabun
4. Guru Singa	4. Garamata	4. Sibero	4. Sinupayung	4. Keliat
5. Kaban	5. Gurupatih	5. Jampang	5. Tekang	5. Sukatendel
6. Sinukaban	6. Jadibata	6. Pekan	6. Colia	6. Laksa Bangun
7. Bukit	7. Jawak	7. Silangit	7. Berahmana	7. Mano
8. Kacaribu	8. Manik	8. Tambak	8. Bunuhaji	8. Pinem
9. Kemit	9. Pase	9. Tegor	9. Busok	9. Singarimbun
10. Purba	10. Seragih	10. Bondong	10. Depari	10. Uwir
11. Samura	11. Sugihen	11. Gersang	11. Gurukinayan	11. Tanjung
12. Ketaren	12. Sinusinga	12. Tambun	12. Keling	12. Ulun Jandi
13. Sinuhaji	13. Suka	13. Tendang	13. Pandia	13. Sinurat
14. Sinulingga	14. Munthe		14. Pandebayang	14. Namohaji

15. Sinuraya	15. Pelawi	15. Pencawan
16. Sitepu	16. Kapour	16. Teger
17. Sinubulan	17. Muham	17. Sebayang
18. Jung	18. Meliala	

Karo-Karo clan has 18 branches of clan, Ginting clan has 14 clan branches, Tarigan clan has 13 branches of clan, Sembiring clan has 18 branches of clan and Parangin-Angin clan has 17 clan branch. In the Karo people, the son is the father's clan, called the clan. While in women called by beru. So, everyone Karo will have a clan.

## 2. *Tutur Siwaluh*

*Tutur Siwaluh* is the concept of kinship Karo tribe people associated with kinship or family relationships between one with another such as whether the relationship of kinship because siblings, brother semerga, nephew and so forth.

### 1. *Sembuyak* (Same Family)

It is a sibling because it shares the same father and mother, thus called *Sembuyak* (one buyak / intestine). In a kinship relationship also called *Sembuyak* because of their father's siblings.

### 2. *Kalimbubu*

It is the most respected or so-called *Dibata ni idah* (or visible God) and therefore should not be denied. *Kalimbubu* is a group of the virgin givers to the *Anak Beru* (the recipient of the virgin), whether we are a brother, father, brother our mother, grandfather then this *Kalimbubu* group is also automatically be our *Kalimbubu*.

### 3. *Puang Kalimbubu*

It is the most respected or so-called *Dibata ni idah* (or visible God) and therefore should not be denied. This group is the highest level in the traditional structure of the Karo tribe.

### 4. *Kalimbubu singalo perbibin*

### 5. *Kalimbubu singalo perninin*

### 6. *Senina* (*Se klan*)

Is a brother because one grandfather called *Senina* (one grandfather), can also because his grandfather brothers then all the offspring in a kinship called *Senina*.

## 3. *Rakut Si Telu*

Another important point in Karo's society is *rakut si telu atau daliken si telu* (means metaphorically is a furnace of three), which means a knot of three. The meaning of *rakut sitelu* is *sangkep nggeluh* (completeness of life) for the Karo people. Completeness in question is a social institution contained within the Karo community consisting of three groups

### 1. *Kalimbubu*

### 2. *Simbuyak*

### 3. *Anak beru*

### 3.1.2. Essential Life Satisfactory of Karo Elderly

Life satisfaction is a satisfying living condition. The self-esteem makes one more effective and more attractive to the world. Life satisfaction is characterized by the ability to achieve



something and respect others (Roizen and Mehmet, 2005: 30). Life satisfaction is a comfortable feeling which is free from loneliness and avoids depression (Gunarsa, 2004: 419).

Seligman in his book entitled *Authentic Happiness*, expresses a concept of happiness. In happiness there are positive emotions as well as positive activities and is divided into three that is aimed at the past, the future and the present. Past happiness includes satisfaction, fulfillment and peace. Two important concepts for achieving past happiness are gratitude and forgiveness. Both concepts can change the understanding and the appreciation of bad pasts to be better. (Seligman. 2002).

The happiness of the present, especially in the elderly is characterized by the activity of leisure time. True real happiness can be achieved by doing as much as possible more gratifying activities than pleasure. Gratification is an activity that someone likes to do and the activity which can attract someone to keep doing it as if the time stop, while pleasure is a temporary pleasure. The happiness of the future is characterized by positive emotions such as trust, confidence, hope, and optimism. Seligman emphasizes the importance of the value of optimism and one's hope for achieving happiness in the future. (Seligman. 2002).

Elderly life satisfaction is quite simple, that all of the children get married and live on easy street. Therefore, in custom rites, a phrase which is always told is “*nggalari utang adat man kalimbubu*”. People who have accomplish the custom standard are assumed to have:

*Selesai tugas-tugasnya* (all of the tasks finished)

*Sangap ertuak bayak* (many children who live on easy street)

*Sangkep nggeluh* (great family)

By conducting such custom rites, an elder can be entitled as **cawir metua**. *Cawir metua* custom in Karo is an obligation if a person has reached the age of 60 years old, which can be accomplished by having all of the children get married and have successful job and family.

## 4.2. Discussions

*Cawir metua* custom will be better if it is conducted while the elderly is still alive. Nevertheless, this custom may still be carried even after the elderly has already passed away, if all of the children get married and have successful job and family. If a parent is still alive, sometimes the custom is his/her request due to their old age and that the time to carry out this party. However sometimes the children make the initiative for the parents and most of this event is indeed at the initiative of the children's parents.

*Cawir metua* is a basic satisfaction of Karo society. Becoming *cawir metua* is a long series. Elderly will never be happy if they have not educated their children and their children do not become great people. For elderly Karo, the satisfaction is at the end of a long effort. This is very different from what Seligman said with the stages or the division of satisfaction by time, which is the time when a child was being forged in the past, the current time and the time that will come. For elderly Karo, while not yet reached *Cawir Metua*, have not felt satisfaction. So, there is no satisfaction of the past, present and future. In this case there is a final satisfaction when the elderly have come to *cawir metua* and celebrate it. If so, then, complete is the satisfaction. After reaching the *cawir metua*, everything has been finished, including all the activities which are the responsibilities in the family.

## 5. Conclusion

Culture as the guideline of life explains that what humans do is a series of ideas and actions recognized by the community as a guideline of human life in society. Therefore, what is done by individuals in family life has been lined up in the culture that has occurred from generation to generation. (Koentjaraningrat, 1986). It is also the family's handling of the act of treating the elderly as one of the family members. Society and its culture will determine the pattern of their activities, attitudes, restrictions, and obligations. The position and role of the elderly in achieving life satisfaction is determined by the culture owned by family and society.

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