



## THE LIFE MEANING OF THE ELDERLY LIVING IN NURSING HOME

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**Abstract:** This article contains an analysis of the life meaning of the elderly living in a nursing home. The life meaning is obtained from a theoretical literature review about the life meaning (the results of research from 2009-2020). Based on the theory, the elderly are classified into 4 groups, namely: middle age which is between 45-59 years old, elderly which is between 60-74 years old, old which is between 75-90 years old, and very old which is over 90 years old. The steps in this literature review are identifying key research topics; read abstract of relevant research results; record the reading results by making a literature map (literature map) in sequence; pouring a general view of the research topic based on existing literature, then explaining the originality and importance of the research topic to be carried out in comparison with the existing literature. The study results of this article are useful for guiding the implementation of guidance and counseling for the life meaning of the elderly's life.

**Keywords:** life meaning, elderly, nursing home

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world which is divided into two groups namely: majority groups and minority groups. (Kusumohamidojo in (Lestari, 2016; Suparlan, 2005)). Multicultural society grows beginning with the awareness of the pluralistic human life in a society and culture. (Shofa, 2016; Suparlan, 2005).

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So humans must have life goals that must be achieved, when life goals are achieved people will feel their lives are more meaningful. The life meaning is an individual's belief to make his life more valuable following his life goals. (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964; Frankl, 2003; Bastaman, 2007).

Likewise, the elderly living in nursing home experience various life problems that affect them physically and psychologically such as the problem of loneliness which harms the elderly's psychology (Winningham & Pike, 2007), adjustment of the elderly as expressed by (Rybash et al., n.d.) that about 15% of the elderly experience difficulties in adjustment. Elderly people are disliked and being ostracized in nursing home indirectly make them feel unworthy, lonely, and inferior (Bandiyah, 2009). In the various problem that arises in the elderly, it can affect the life meaning for the elderly.

If the life meaning is found and fulfilled successfully, it will cause life to be meaningful and valuable which in turn will lead the happiness and individuals who are unhappy in living their lives more vulnerable to stress. (Deeg & van Zonneveld, 1989) The search for the unique life meaning is a motive inherent in every human being and the solution of meaningful life always implies decision making and does not follow the principles of homeostasis such as satisfaction with needs (Batubara, n.d.)

According to the Central Statistic Agency (BPS) The magnitude of the index of each dimension of the compilation of the Indonesian Happiness Index, namely: (1) Life Satisfaction Dimension Index of 71.07 (Personal Life Satisfaction Subdimension Index of 65.98 and Social Life Satisfaction Subdimension Index of 76.16); (2) Feeling Dimension Index of 68.59; and (3) Life Meaning Dimension Index of 72.23. The 2017 Happiness Index presents data and information related to the level of happiness of Indonesian people. The happiness index increase from 2014 to 2017 occurred in the majority of provinces in Indonesia which experienced the highest increase, namely: North Maluku, Gorontalo, Papua, Bangka Belitung Islands, West Sumatra, and Aceh.

Although more provinces have experienced an increase in happiness Index, six provinces have experienced a Happiness Index decline,

namely Jambi, South Kalimantan, Riau Islands, North Sumatra, Central Kalimantan, and Lampung (Central Bureau of statistics, No. 04310.1701, 5 December 2017). Based on this data each province has a diverse index of happiness.

### **Literature Review**

Life-meaning has been tested from various perspectives, both conceptually and empirically. The trend of research into the life meaning in the last 10 years has a variety of different studies, including the life meaning correlated with attitudes towards ageing, self-acceptance, self-concept, welfare and social support. Empirical evidence over the past decade shows variations in the development of life meaning.

Description of the meaning of life that is correlated with various variables and the dynamics of the development of the life meaning over the past decade can be seen in table 1.

Research into the life meaning in the last 10 years shows the importance of the life meaning for further research, 2009-2011 range. (Luger et al., 2009) states that life meaning can be a productive way to improve well-being, this is also supported by (Herero & Extrema, 2010) about the subjective well-being of older adults. This means life meaning is an important component in improving welfare, social relationships and life satisfaction.

The research range for 2012-2014, there are various results of research on the life meaning. (Ju et al., 2013) explains that optimism has a positive correlation with life meaning and well-being, this is consistent with previous research (Herero & Extremera, 2010; Luger et al., 2009). (Shao et al., 2014) also examines the role of the life meaning as a mediator for the relationship of physical function, social support, and optimism with well-being. Another research conducted by (Pratomo et al., 2018) shows that the attitude of acceptance with the full awareness that age has gotten older and that it attitude of acceptance with the full awareness that age has gotten older and that it can affect the welfare of life, this research is also associated with cultural values that also affect the life meaning of the elderly. Research on the effectiveness of life meaning training conducted by (Trisnapati et al., 2012) that life meaning training is a short-term educational process that uses systematic and organized procedures to help individuals to achieve and fulfil life goals to reduce the level of depression leading to a higher quality of life and happiness.

The range of 2015-2020 research on the life meaning is presented as follows, (Fatmawati, 2018) research that uses experiential learning methods in increasing the life meaning of the elderly life through family gratitude and affection, the results of this study aim to find out whether there is an increase in the life-meaning after this method is given in the elderly. The same study was also carried out by (Hanifah, 2018) who used experiential learning methods to increase the life meaning in the elderly through reflection and searching for the meaning of past experiences. This method is expected to change the level of the life meaning of one's life from a meaningless life into a meaningful life.

In the 2015-2020 time frame, research on life meaning correlates with self-acceptance, self-concept, social support. The intervention used to improve the life meaning using experiential learning methods through gratitude, family love, reflection and experience.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Based on the results of research in the last few years, the following things must be considered when realizing the life meaning of the elderly living in a nursing home.

### **A. Reason**

Every elderly has their reason for choosing to live in a nursing home. Counseling an elderly who is willing to live in a nursing home is different from an elderly who is forced to live in a nursing home. So that, it can be divided into two factors that cause elderly living in nursing homes, namely internal factor and external factor. Internal factor is such as the elderly want to live independently in their old age. So, it does not bother their children and looks for a new atmosphere outside the family, while external factor is such as divorce, a problem with children, do not get love and become a burden for the family (Sari, 2014; Dubey et al., 2011).

The identification is not only an initial step in mapping the problems faced by the elderly but also become a reference in determining the next service model. Knowing the background of the elderly choosing to live in a nursing home helps in determining guidelines for elderly counseling to find the life meaning.

## B. Elderly Type

The level of old age has implications for the type and frequency of the problem faced. The problems faced by middle-aged type is between 45-59 years old, certainly not the same as elderly that is between 60-74 years old. Likewise with the old type is between 75-90 years old and very old that is above 90 years old (Aspiani, 2014).

The life-meaning over 60 years old, has found a clear purpose in life, is responsible for himself and has found something valuable (Rohmah, 2011), while the life meaning for the 71 years old and above requires social support so that elderly feel valuable and special attention to find a positive meaning in life in his old age (Bahkruddiansyah, 2016). The results of the two previous studies illustrate that the type of the elderly is assumed to have implications for the counseling guidelines provided.

## C. Belief

The life-meaning of every belief has a difference for example the life meaning for Muslims is not just thinking about reality and not just striving to preserve life but more than that it gives enlightenment and belief that life is not once but a sustainable life, a life that exceeds the age limit man on earth, life must be accounted for in the presence of *God/Kholik* (Ningsih, 2017) while the life meaning for atheists is that there is no God, no destiny, only what has been and can be achieved by the subject to give meaning for life. That way the subject can feel his life intact, full, and happy (Sulistiadi, 2012).

## D. Ethnic Group

The life-meaning in Javanese ethnics consists of some indicators, namely social environment interaction, self, science, education, and experience; and health (Pratomo et al., 2018). The results of the two studies above show that the indicators of the life meaning of the elderly differ from one ethnic group to another. If the indicators of the life meaning of the Javanese elderly with *Betawi*, who live on the Java islands, are different. Then, it is assumed that the opportunity for greater differences in the elderly in Java island and Sumatra island and so on.

**Table 1. The Dynamics of The Development of The Life Meaning Over The Past Decade**

No	Aspect	Year Range		
		2009-2011	2012-2014	2015-2020
1.	Object	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship between the attitude to ageing and the life meaning for elderly.</li> <li>Description of the life meaning for elderly who live in the Social Rehabilitation Unit.</li> <li>Social relationships and life satisfaction in older adults</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effectiveness of life meaning training in reducing the level of depression of the elderly in a nursing home.</li> <li>The description of the life meaning and subjective well-being for elderly with Javanese ethnicity.</li> <li>Relationship between self-concept and the life meaning of the elderly living in Semarang.</li> <li>The relationship between optimism and welfare for the elderly community.</li> <li>The welfare of elderly stroke sufferers in the Chinese community: mediation effect of the life meaning.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship of self-acceptance and the life meaning for elderly.</li> <li>The life meaning and the meaning of happiness for the elderly at the Werdha Home.</li> <li>The relationship between social support and the life meaning for elderly at the Werdha Home.</li> <li>The life-meaning of Muslim scavengers in the Final Disposal Site.</li> <li>The effectiveness of logotherapy in improving self-concept and the ability to interpret life for the elderly.</li> <li>Increasing the life meaning of the elderly old life through experiential learning methods of gratitude and family affection.</li> <li>The influence of logotherapy and spiritual activities on the meaning of the elderly life.</li> <li>Experience-based learning methods (experiential learning) to improve the life meaning of the elderly life.</li> <li>Picture the life meaning in Working Elderly.</li> </ol>
2.	Method	Correlation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiment</li> <li>Survey</li> <li>Correlation</li> <li>Descriptive</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correlation</li> <li>Descriptive</li> <li>Experiment</li> </ol>
3.	Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The more positive attitude of an elderly person towards ageing, the better he will interpret his life.</li> <li>The elderly have found life meaning, but sometimes still lose direction, purpose in life and feel empty.</li> <li>Pessimism is associated with lower social support and higher social pressure. Besides, pessimism is mediated by social support related to life's satisfaction.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The life-meaning training is effective in reducing depression rates for the elderly at Werdha Home.</li> <li>There is a link between life meaning and subjective well-being.</li> <li>There is a relationship between self-concept and the life meaning of the elderly living in Semarang.</li> <li>Demonstrate that a healthy physique, a happy life, a pleasant thing, acceptance of death, and a close relationship with God are important and the life meaning of the elderly.</li> <li>Structural equation modelling reveals that meaning in life fully mediates the relationship of physical functions, social support, and optimism with subjective well-being.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The higher the self-acceptance, the higher the life meaning.</li> <li>The Elderly has a positive life meaning that can lead him to find the meaning of happiness in living his life at the orphanage.</li> <li>A very significant positive relationship between social support and life meaning Elderly scavengers accept the state of their work as scavengers in their old age.</li> <li>Logotherapy is effective for improving self-concept.</li> <li>And the life meaning in the elderly at the Elderly Services Institution.</li> <li>There is a significant correlation between the level of life meaning with depression for the elderly at Posyandu Seniors.</li> <li>Logotherapy and spiritual activities in the treatment group were more effective in their effect on increasing the life meaning of the elderly than in the control group who only received logotherapy.</li> <li>The elderly who work have life goals and there are efforts to achieve life goals.</li> <li>The higher the tendency for depression in the elderly, the lower the life meaning</li> </ol>

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of the study show things that must be considered related to the life meaning of the elderly living in a nursing home. Reason considers that the causes of elderly living in a nursing home are classified into two factors, namely internal factors such as the elderly wanting to live independently in their old age and look for a different atmosphere outside the family, while external factors such as divorce or problems with children; the type of elderly is assumed to have implications for the type of problem and treatment provided; belief views the meaningful orientation of life have differences depending on the beliefs held. The ethnic group views the indicators of the life meaning differ between one ethnic group to another.

The limitations in this article are: First, this article only discusses the life meaning of the elderly life. This condition directs further research to discuss the life meaning of some groups such as teenagers and children. Second, this article still needs to be strengthened by qualitative data in the form of studies of practical perspective in various dimensions of life and their implications for life meaning.

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