

Benchmarking Standards of Future Islamic Elderly Care Centers

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OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What makes an elderly care centers 'Islamic'?



2. What are the standards of care required?

3. What kind of training and certification do caregtakers need?

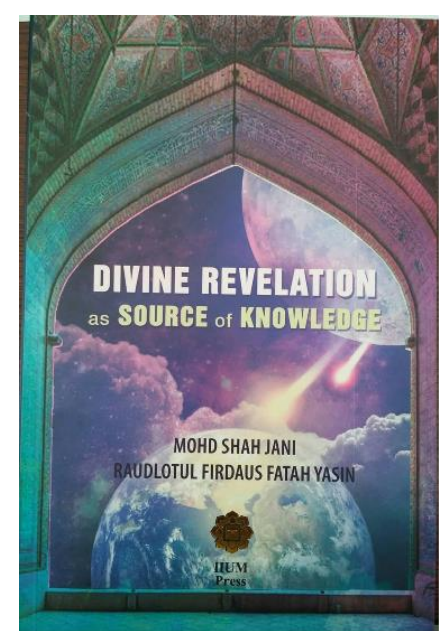


STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Malaysia, as reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, will be an ageing nation by 2035. Yet, the rapid increasing population of the elderly in tandem with the decreasing fertility and morbidity rate causes imbalance in the society's structure. The elderly is often perceived negatively because of the stereotype, and it affects their physical and mental health. This study is an attempt to provide the conceptual framework as a guidelines to improve the standard of elderly care centers as well as its hospitality. This research hypothesized that the current caretaking system is progressing, but more drastic initiatives is needed to achieve a wholesome objective for elderly well-being from Islamic perspective.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

1. Several field studies and conceptual framework were conducted by over 500 students between the years of 2013 until 2021.
2. Interviews, observations and social works were conducted with more than 30 elderly care centers throughout peninsular Malaysia.
3. This is part of assignment requirements for the subject of Revelation as source of Knowledge under the Department of Quran and Sunnah Studies, AHAS Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences International Islamic University Malaysia.
4. Five Masters student's dissertation on the management of elderly and care centers in Malaysia and Indonesia including Semarang and Sumatera were completed.
5. Semi standardized questions has been designed and semi structured interviews have been conducted focusing on the care centers' management and the residents.



OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTERS

- All the care centers are governed by either private or government. **Each of the centers has its own strengths and weaknesses. In government-based center, free medical checkup and physical facilities provided accordingly. There are centers that lead by Muslims and have Islamic based management and mission but there are also centers that established by non-Muslims with its missionary agenda. In general, the centers have their own bases including religious belief, welfare, physical emphasizes and to some extent seems to be a dumping area by the residents' children. Generally, almost all the centers were established based on good mission in which to provide cares for the elderly.**
- There is certain allocation of money for those care centers under government funding basically around RM6,500,000 to 700,0000 per year. Various sources contributed to the amount such as 30,000 from Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, 45,000 from Zakat Centre, per month. In addition, there are Non-governmental Organization who also contributed by sponsoring meals etc especially to private centers. Most of the centers are dealing with the issue of small number of staff due to financial constrain. Realistically, it is not enough to entertain the all residents.



ADD A FOOTER

When it fulfils the spiritual and physical needs of the elderly, an OBSERVATION

6

WHAT MAKES AN ELDERLY CARE CENTERS 'ISLAMIC'?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

❁ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ ﴿٥٤﴾

It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, then developed 'your' weakness into strength, then developed 'your' strength into weakness and old age.¹ He creates whatever He wills. For He is the All-Knowing, Most Capable.

— Dr. Mustafa Khattab, the Clear Quran

Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent.

— Saheeh International

Holistic Improvement of Concept in Elderly Caretaking System

In order to offer a holistic approach to improve the caretaking system and to fulfil the required standard that Islam highlights, this study suggests three important concepts to be applied in every area within three domains: the perspective of family, society and stakeholders.

The three key-concept that is crucial to be instilled in all initiatives and services are:

- (1) *al-Ihsān* (الإحسان) that focuses on quality performance and qualified personnels,
- (2) *al-Hikmah* (الحكمة) which prioritize compatibility in services offered,
- (3) *al-Tadarruj* (التدرج) as a gradual yet efficient process on implementation of policies in elderly caretaking.

Source: Halal hospitality for senior citizens in Malaysia: An analytical study from Islamic perspective

1. Spiritual needs to attain *Husnul Khatimah*



- Older people are always associated with last stage of life.
- Spiritual aspect comes into being and preparation toward *Husnul Khatimah* to ensure a successful ending is needed.
- OBSERVATION:
 - There are numbers of residents of elderly care centers who neglect their prayers. Many of them are unaware of the prayers' time especially *fajr* prayer. Residents need to be guided and reminded because they might not aware and realized the important of the '*ibadah*' due to their religious knowledge and lack of motivation to struggle for *husnul khatimah*.
 - There are cases where the image of the idols and Quranic verses are both pasted on the same wall of the centers which indirectly affect the mind of the residents and lead to faith confusion. Some of them take for granted their '*aurah*', while unIslamic entertainment is being constantly provided such as singing and dancing with opposite gender. This activity might be replaced with spiritually enhancing entertainment such as observation of the creation of Allah within the universe to ponder upon His power or recitation of *selawat* etc.

a. Quranic and Fardu 'Ayn classes

- Quranic and Fardu 'Ayn classes is very essential to promote spiritual enhancement, healthy lifestyle and peaceful Islamic environment as well as spiritual ecstasy in performing '*ibadah* and to consistently strive for *Husnul Khatimah*.
- OBSERVATION:
 1. It is found that there are some religious classes conducted at several Muslims centers, however among the challenges faced are that the teachers cannot commit to that classes regularly because of other commitments, the speakers appointed do not have the adequate communication skills with the elderly, no proper training to deliver an effective input and knowledge to senior citizens etc.
 2. Lack of basic knowledge on *fiqh ibadah* and *taharah* which are suggested to be given to elderly people as it will ease them in practicing religion and performing their basic duties as a slave of Allah.
 3. There were cases where some residents who asked to be guided to pray realizing their death is approaching were not entertained by the care takers as they do not see it as part of their duty.

b. Congregational and Friday prayers

- Friday prayer is obligatory for every male individual (*Fardu 'ayn*), *mukallaf*, and capable of attending the mosque regardless of their age as a mean to attain the mercy and forgiveness of Allah in the Here After and thus becoming the members of the Jannah.
- OBSERVATION:
 - In one of center that was managed by Christian's organization, an event called Sunday mass in the church is managed on weekly basis. This is for the purpose of exposing the residents to the Christian environment as it is open to public. Unfortunately, in most of the Muslims elderly centers, very little focus given to Jumu'ah prayer even for male residents.
 - While on every Wednesday, there is an activity of reading bible and it's obligated to the residents despite their belief. These activities are basically to fulfill spiritual needs of the residents. In addition, another activity like playing games during leisure time also provided but none of the games related to the Islamic elements and spiritual enhancement.
 - In some of the Muslims residents' centres especially one that was established in an abandoned mosque, congregational prayers were conducted five times a day with the imam selected from among the residents and the owner of the place. Based on the interview, it helps in enhancing the spiritual ecstasy to perform the solat among the residents.



2. Physical and health concern- good treatment to the elderly

The concept of caretaking elderly might take into consideration at the physical and biological aspect of human. This can be seen from some of Quranic verses :

- “ *And he said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?" The angel said, "Such is Allah ; He does what He wills."* (Ali ‘Imran, 3 :40) “
- “*And when he came to the well of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women driving back [their flocks]. He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the shepherds dispatch [their flocks]; and our father is an old man."* (Sad, 28 : 23)



- The former is concerned on biological aspect where it refers to wife of Prophet Zakariah who is loss of biological potency and the latter is about prophet Shuaib who was an old person who has inability to perform hard work and need the help of her water. Thus, it is suggested that incapability of physical actions and inability of taking care of themselves can be categorized as old. Besides, taking care of older parents, physically assisting them, Islam also urges to be kind to all elderly regardless whether they are our own parents or not. This is mentioned in one hadith:

- “ *Have taqwa whenever you are, and follow an evil deeds with a good one to wipe it and treat the old people with good behavior.* “
- Thus, this hadith suggest that the good behavior and kindness are applied to all muslims at all ages.

3. Intra-Family and Intergenerational Relationship

- A significant number of problems have been identified among the residents at elderly care centres including children's refusal to take care of their elderly parents because of their limited abilities, time constraint, financial and health problems as well as responsibility in negligence. These problems are closely related to the intra-family relationship and have been identified as one of the contributing factors in the mistreatment of some elderly residents admitted to these centres.
- A positive Intergenerational relationship between the elderly and their children, grand children and peers are among the contributing factors to the happiness of the senior citizens which will ensure a sustainable psychological well being as well as physical health.
- INTRA-FAMILY RELATIONS OF THE RESIDENTS OF PERTUBUHAN KEBAJIKAN WARGA TUA NURUL SAADAH, TERENGGANU: GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM THE QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVE
- GBSE 2(4), 1-11 (July 2016): [http://gbse.com.my/isiokt16/GBSE%202\(4\),%201-11%20\(July%202016\).pdf](http://gbse.com.my/isiokt16/GBSE%202(4),%201-11%20(July%202016).pdf)





WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF CARE REQUIRED? “RESEARCHER’S OBSERVATION”

The Obligation of Providing Good Services



*“The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: **“Let that man be disgraced and disgraced again and let him be disgraced even more.”** The people inquired : “O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) who is that man?” The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: **“I refer to the man who finds his parents old in age – both of them or one of them – and yet did not earn entitlement to Paradise by rendering good service to them.”** [Muslim]*

- In relation to this hadith, taking care of parents during their old ages might need struggle and strength as it is an entitlement to Paradise. Ideally, taking care of older parents is seen as an easy task however, practically it is hard.

1. Facilities (observation)



- The structure of the building: distance of one place toward the other in which it has been noticed where the residents have difficulties to walk from a room to the clinic. There are wheelchairs provided however most of the residents prefer to walk from one place to another place.
- The location of the building: Some of the residents do complain that the mosque is far away from the residency area. This makes them difficult to attend congregational and Jumuah prayer.
- No separation and segregation between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as male from female. Muslim residents have to cover the 'aurah at all time. Some activities conducted involved mixing between Muslims and non-Muslims regardless of gender.
- An interesting model of building has been seen in one elderly care center lead by Christian's people. That place which has been equipped with specially designed lift, dining room, television room, physiotherapy, medical room, air conditioner and kitchen which enable them to cook . Meals also been served four time a day and they have caring laundry space. Wheelchairs provided every wehere and those who can walk can opt to use the lift or the stairs.

2. Security Aspect (observation)

- In some of the places, there is dog that basically for the security reasons however, sometimes it disturbs the visitors especially Muslims.
- There are centers located at a majority non-Muslims neighborhood where wild and tame dogs were found to be wandering around, and according to Mazhab Shafie, it is among *mughallazah najasah*. Some of the elders and visitors were not to comfortable with the existence of those dogs.
- Many centers do not have proper security system including safety gates, alarms and proper main doors to avoid intruders etc. However, due to the minimum thief cases reported, only some centers provide a highly secured gates.



3. Cleanliness (observation)

- Cleanliness is a very important aspect that needs to be taken care at the elderly care centers. In most of the private centers observed, the level of hygiene are in need of serious management. Among the problems that have been founded in the care centers are leaking blood on the floor or leaking diapers with urine and will not be cleaned until the schedule of cleaning come.
- Pungent smell coming from toilets had spread throughout the rooms.
- Praying rooms can be entered with shoes. This is can be seen when the visitors have been asked to wear shoes while the residents were praying.
- Smelly and stingy bedrooms with the issue of not having enough workers to look after as well as the uncontrolled mosquitos flying around may lead to further disease for the elderly.



Image Credit: istockphoto.com/vectormart

4. Health (observation)

- On the aspect of health, it is acknowledged that most of the residents in the elderly care center have variety of disease like hypertension, diabetes and others. Some of the care centers with expensive fees has their own pharmacy centers, personal medical doctors and nurses in order to control and advice on the residents' health issues.
- Food nutritious is very important as it is a need to provide them healthy and adequate daily intake for breakfast, lunch and dinner. However, many non-governmental centers relied on the food supplies and sponsors by public hence the ingredients of the food are not fully controlled, and the due date of the food is expiring.
- There are centers that do not provide healthy food intake due to financial constrain. The caretakers admitted that they did not give balanced food including fruit or vegetable and sometimes, the food were not served on time. The meals were given irregularly and sometimes, they skip the meal.





ADD A FOOTER

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION DO CAREGIVERS NEED?

Elderly period as a predetermined cycle requires various pattern of social interaction



- Men seem to disregard their preparation in handling this stage of life. While the Prophet pbuh has already emphasized on the importance of giving attention to the elderly, saying:

“No young person who honors an elder due to his age, except that Allah appoints for him one who will honor him at that age”.

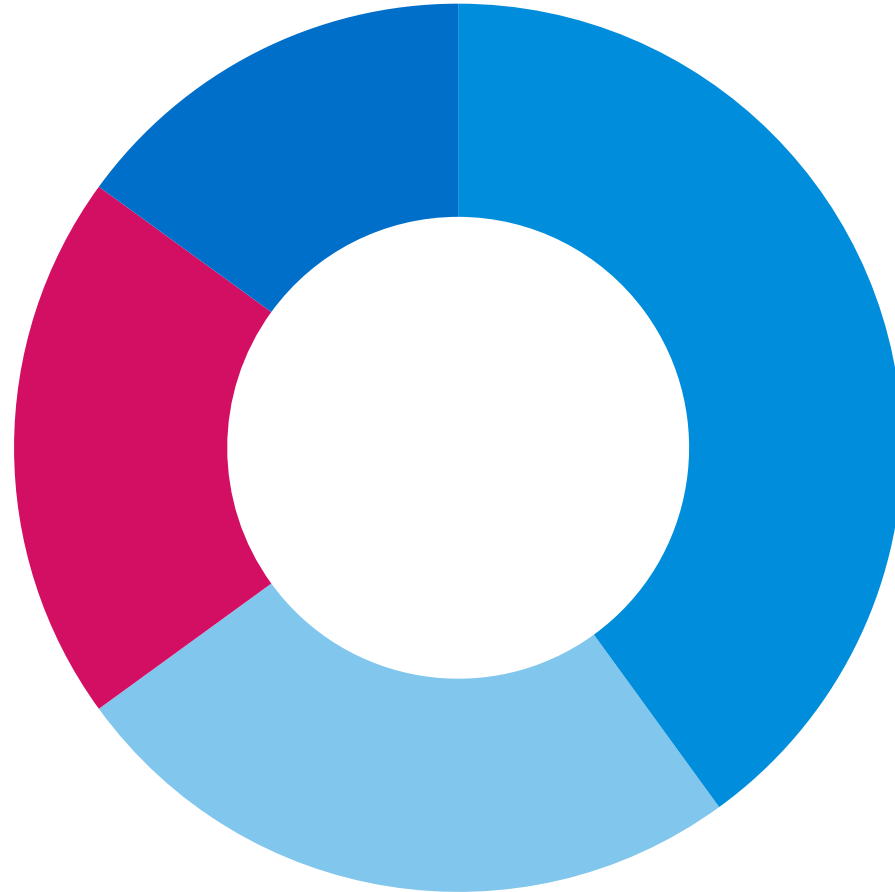
- (Al-Tirmidhī, Sunan, *ḥadith* no: 2022)

Basic training requirements:

- 1. Revealed knowledge integration with human sciences training
- 2. Administrative and Human Management Training
- 3. Physical and Health Training
- 4. Hygiene and security enforcement training



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRAINING NEEDED



Division based on percentage from the highest necessity to the lowest



40%

Revealed knowledge
integration with human
sciences training



25%

Physical and Biological
Health Training



20%

Administrative and Human
Management Training



15%

Hygiene and security
enforcement training

CONCLUSION

Elderly care center has the residents from different kind of religious background, and this should be taken as an advantage to spread the message of Islam for the whole community. A good starting point might be to develop a good Islamic environment which can be a motivating factor to make them feel that the environment is comfortable and good such as how Islam is really concern with the health and welfare of older people. In elderly care center, a helpful and highly motivated caretakers are very crucial in helping them to manage their daily needs and activities such as their urine management, bath, performing '*ibadah*' and even their food intake.

However, it is suggested that those who wants to open and be in the care centre should have some proper qualification and if not, they should be given the training in order to enhance some of the skills mentioned earlier.

It is suggested that various activities that could develop mutual understanding and enhance the feeling of happiness between residents and staff should be provided. This is to strengthen their relationship and to make them feel pleasure being in elderly care centers in addition of the above-mentioned suggestions.

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THANK YOU!

