



Acceptance Death as Part of Life: Spouse in Malaysia

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Abstract. In Malaysia, deaths are increasing due to various factors such as chronic diseases, road accidents, the Covid-19 epidemic and others. The year 2020 to 2022 shows a decrease in life expectancy due to the increase in excess deaths during the Covid-19 pandemic. The increase in mortality is increasing but the acceptance of facing the death of a partner still needs to be studied extensively. Acceptance of the death of a partner research needs to be carried out in depth because existing studies focus on socio-economics after the death of a partner. This study examines the death of couples aged 35 to 65 years. Ten respondents were interviewed about their partner's acceptance of death using phenomenological methods. After coding the interviews, three themes emerged: (1) relationship before death, (2) coping, and (3) anxiety. The implications of this study for psychology and the medical field in understanding the emotional intensity of couples involving women and men.

Keywords: acceptance · death · malaysia

1 Introduction

Malaysia is one of the developing countries in Southeast Asian with high death such as chronic disease, accident, Pandemic COVID-19 and others. Acceptance of spouse death focuses on readiness for death. The death of a spouse has a considerable impact on life. The death of a partner is more traumatic than the self-death. A high percentage of 52% of women have anxiety about the death of their partner compared to men. Prolonged anxiety results in the impact of prolonged trauma affecting mortality, health, psychological, physical, social, economic, and spiritual of the surviving partner [8, 19]. The trauma of the death of a spouse negative health impact. This is because chronic diseases are often associated with the death of a spouse.

Chronic diseases increase the risk of prolonged depression that affects physical and psychological changes in individuals. The risk of chronic diseases increases the mortality rate for the death of a partner [17]. Based on previous studies, the risk of a spouse's sudden death is unexpected and affects the life expectancy of the spouse's [17]. Sudden death causes depression that affects physical and mental health. Social support is very importance in influencing physical and mental health in life. Social support and

Table 1. 2020 Malaysian Position.

<i>Factor death in Malaysia</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Ischaemic heart diseases	16.6%
Ischaemic heart diseases	16.0%
Transport accidents	3.2%

social isolation are often associated with partner death [14]. Social isolation in the death of a spouse impacts decision-making in the socio-economy. This is because, based on study, women who die of a spouse will experience social isolation in the socio-economy that affects the well-being of children. Therefore, counseling services are importance to those who have lost their spouse.

[19] suggests that counselling Services are needed to deal with the grief process. The loss of a partner affects the individual's physical changes. Changes in getting thinner and quality sleep spouse cause prolonged and depression. Counselling Services benefit the process of reducing depression and leading to suicide. Grief facing the death of a spouse will increase long-term depression that affects mental health. Mental health is a serious issue in Malaysia. Mental health impacts quality and well-being on psychopathology. The Covid-19 pandemic factors increased deaths and mental health in Malaysia. The issue of mental health is a global issue that affects the quality of life and well-being of individuals and communities. Thanatophobia affects health care and preparation for individual death. Patients and caregivers of patients discussing the final moments of death will face stress and anxiety. Most individuals are more readiness death than the death of others.

Spiritual well-being and religion are interrelated in influencing death anxiety. This statement was supported by a study in Iran that the fear of facing death is influenced by religious, spiritual, and health aspects. Religious and spiritual aspects are important aspects that help the final preparation to face the death of patients and family members. The role of spirituality and religion is a motivation to face illness at the last moment of death. Spiritual aspects are important to help reduce trauma. Islam emphasizes life before and after death. Discusses emotional preparation including attitudes, perceptions about death to religious factors, culture, karmic law, life cycle, and rebirth. Whereas Hinduism death is temporary and birth happens after death. Religious understanding is important in accepting and preparing for death.

This study aims to determine the acceptance about death in spouse. This study focused about before and after death.

1.1 Literature Review

Spiritual well-being and religion were interrelated in influencing death anxiety. This statement were supported by a study in Iran that the fear of facing death are influenced by religious, spiritual, and health aspects. Religious and spiritual aspects are importance aspects that help the final preparation to face the death of patients and family members. The role of spirituality and religion is a motivation to face illness at the last moment

Table 2. Gender Demographics.

<i>No</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Relative lost</i>	<i>Cause of Death</i>	<i>Age of deceased at the time of death</i>	<i>Religious belief</i>
1	Male	42	Diploma	Wife	Covid-19	47	Islam
2	Male	40	Degree	Wife	Cancer	35	Islam
3	Male	42	Degree	Wife	Covid-19	32	Islam
4	Female	50	Degree	Husband	Cancer	53	Islam
5	Female	39	Sijil Pelajaran Malayasia	Husband	Accident	43	Islam
6	Female	50	Degree	Husband	Sudden death	51	Islam
7	Female	48	Degree	Husband	Cancer	50	Islam
8	Female	50	Degree	Husband	Chronic kidney disease	53	Islam
9	Female	52	Degree	Husband	Heart Disease	55	Islam
10	Female	40	Sijil Pelajaran Malayasia	Husband	Cancer	45	Islam
11	Female	63	Sijil Pelajaran Malayasia	Husband	Accident	55	Budha

of death. Spiritual aspects are important to help reduce trauma. Islam emphasizes life before and after death. Buddhism also discusses emotional preparation include attitudes, perceptions about death to religious factors, culture, karmic law, life cycle, and rebirth. Whereas Hinduism death is temporary and birth happens after death. Religious understanding is importance in accepting and preparing for death.

1.2 Unexpected/Sudden Death

The Covid-19 pandemic shows an unexpected increase in deaths involving family members and spouses [21]. In addition, heart attack death is also an unexpected and concern cause of death involving 90% of deaths [9]. Death affects long-term trauma and grief to spouses and family members that involve different reactions [19]. The sudden death of a partner has an emotional impact of grief that takes a long time to accept well [15].

Lack of social support after a death involving 48 h will increase concern anxiety symptoms. Anxiety symptoms impact chronic disease increasing heart attacks [7].

1.3 A Constant Bond

The relationship before the spouse's death affects the love relationship between the spouse after the death. [3], the bad experience passed before the death of a partner will give freedom to engage in community social activities. The partner's perception of the relationship is importance. The duration of the spouse's death after six months will affect daily activities such as work [3]. The five-year post-death period is a higher phase of grief [12]. Dreams are one of the ways to connect with a partner through a bond of love. Relationships for couples gift the effect of sadness due to the bond of love between couples [4]. Cancer patients who face the death of a partner affect their quality of health with hospitalization for less than a year and death [1].

1.4 Spousal Death Protective Factor Aspects - Aspects

- Affecting Acceptance of Spouse's Death

Loneliness is the biggest challenge to the death of spouses, especially women in social isolation. Social isolation consists of the inability of the elderly to manage daily activities [18]. The death of a spouse causes depression for both women and men. The death of a spouse also affects social isolation example involvement in socio-economic activities.

The negative social stigma towards the death of a spouse mainly involves women. This causes stress and isolation from engaging in social activities. Society's stigma against the death of a partner due to AIDS also affects self-isolation. A percentage 35.3% of couples whose spouses died due to AIDS experienced grief over a long period [2].

- Spiritual

Loneliness is the biggest challenge to the death of spouses, especially women in social isolation. Social isolation consists of the inability of the elderly to manage daily activities [18]. The death of a spouse causes depression for both women and men. The death of a spouse also affects social isolation such as involvement in socio-economic activities. The negative social stigma towards the death of a spouse mainly involves women. That causes stress and isolation from engaging in social activities. Society's stigma against the death of a spouse due to AIDS also affects self-isolation. A percentage of 35.3% of couples whose spouses died due to AIDS experienced grief over a long period [2].

- Social support

Social support from family, friends, and the community helps cope with anxiety and grief after death. A study in the Netherlands of elderly's people is often associated with loneliness and anxiety after the death of a partner. The support of family members and social workers should focus on elderly's people whose spouse dies unexpectedly within six months. That is because support from family can reduce the problem of anxiety and

loneliness [11]. Therefore support plays an importance role in improving the well-being and quality of life among the elderly.

- Psychology

Some individuals do not think about their death but think more about the process of death and the impact on those left behind, such as children, spouses, families, and a peaceful death. Losing a family member due to illness, accident, suicide, and perinatal death will affect the psychological aspects of self-blame and regret. Research-based on psychology influences personal attitudes to life and death based on a unique perspective on death and the dying process. Despite the increased awareness of death, increased fear and anxiety can also contribute to meaning and trauma [22]. In a study readiness for death was also impacted by anxiety about death, fear, pain, loneliness, distraction, loss of control, fear of happening after death, and fear of death.

Warnings about death are increasing due to the increase in deaths due to the covid-19 pandemic. Based on the report (APA, 2020) of deaths involving the covid-19 pandemic which happened quickly and involved feelings of anxiety, anger, and guilt. This feeling was + caused by the inability to be with your partner and family due to the covid-19 pandemic. Based on a study in Malaysia on the death of a spouse among the elderly, women have a higher level of anxiety than the elderly in men.

- Health

Single fathers have a high -risk death compared to single mothers. Preparedness care of a family member and illness affects awareness of death. The number of deaths among men is higher than among women which consists of chronic diseases such as heart disease, HIV, road accidents, and self-harm.

1.5 Phenomenology

- Sample/Data

This study focuses on a qualitative study using a phenomenological approach to understand the experience of a partner's death. Phenomenology research is suitable for studying the human experience in the research conducted [2]. Phenomenology understands the experience of the death of a partner among men and women. Study methodology phenomenological to explain the acceptance of spousal death. Psychological phenomenological research began in the 1960s. In this study, methodology phenomenology is about events, experiences, and situations.

Data analysis was based on telephone, google meet, and face -to-face interviews with an average of 40 to 60 min. The interview method used in this study is explained to the participants, and chosen the platform that suits them. Although there is a disadvantage of using online without a face will limit the trust, and expression of the heart is due based on Google Meet online and phone. However, the method used does not affect the study. The interviews method research are conducted made it easier for them to express their feelings more openly and related to sensitive issues. This method describes the respondent's experience through the perspective of the world through the perspective of

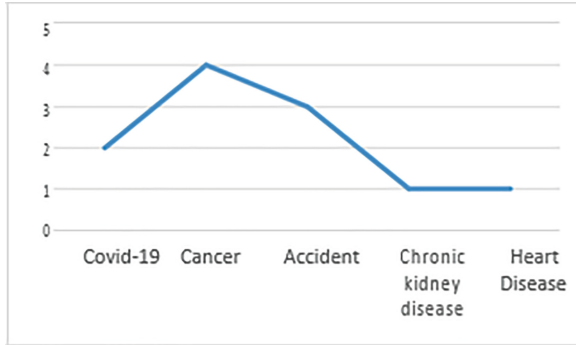


Fig.1 Mortality Factor

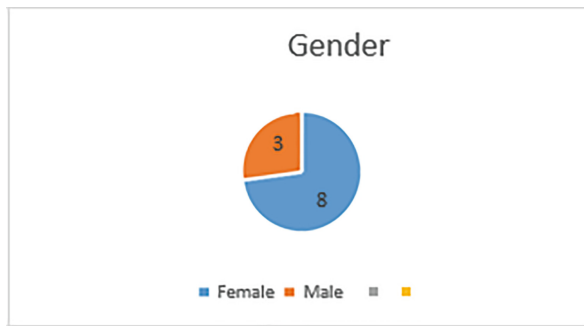


Fig. 2 Gender Demographics

others. Interviews more deeply at the relationship and experience of the partner's death. Phenomenology aims to study experienced that affect human consciousness.

In this study, we understand the acceptance of the death of a spouse for men and women aged 35 to 65 years based on (see Table 1). The age of 35 to 65 years was chosen and suitable for this study because death occurs with predictable conditions. This study includes 11 Muslim respondents and one Buddha (Table 2).

Figure 1 shows the factors of death based on studies in Malaysia. Based on the diagram above, chronic diseases are the main cause of death, namely cancer and chronic diseases, kidney disease and heart disease are the lowest

Based on Fig. 2 showing the demographics of male and female genders. The majority of the study participants were 8 women and 3 men.

2 Results

From the eleven interviews, several themes emerged using analytical interpretive phenomenology. From several themes, the researchers found that there are three themes which are relationships before death, coping with death, concerns faced after the death of a partner. The researcher interviewed and discussed relationships before of spousal

death. The results of each theme are discussed in this study based on interviews with 11 participants.

2.1 Relationship Before Death

In this study, participants talked about their relationship with their partner before death. Participants discuss the happiness and character of their deceased husband/wife. In addition, the participants talked about acceptance, the process of grieving death of spousal.

2.2 Relationship Satisfaction

The majority of participants make statement that their relationship with their partner is harmonious based on their attitude and personality. Throughout the interview period, the participants expressed the attitude of the couple respecting each other, giving support, and helping in managing household affairs. From a psychological point of view, which is emotional, the majority of participants said they had a good and compatible relationship with their partner. From the point of view of communication, the majority of participants stated that they had good communication with their partners. In addition, the participants discussed their relationship with their husbands in a friendly manner and gave support to their partners. Based on the participants that there was happiness in their relationship before the death of the partner. Based on one of the respondents gave a reaction stating that: We are a married couple who have a harmonious relationship and always need each other. A good personality and attitude in relationships is the main reason for my happiness throughout the marriage relationship.

Some respondents say that they have a good relationship even though there are shortcomings in the couple where they need each other and are responsible. However, the established household is harmonious.

The household harmony factor is influenced by the resolution of household conflicts well. The resolution of domestic conflicts with a partner increases a closer loving relationship. Based on some respondents who stated that: Every couple will have conflicts and fights, but how to overcome in improving the relationship between couples. One of the spouses needs to be more patient in overcoming marital conflict by remembering religious teachings.

2.3 Coping After Spousal Death

Based on this study, the death of spouse occurs suddenly and is also readiness from the beginning due to health problems. The death of a spouse have problem of grief after the death of a spouse.

2.4 Spirituality

The majority of participants have faith and depend on God after the death of their spouse. Faith in God helps in strengthening the spirit of raising children who still need family

love. A relationship with God will increase more positive emotions by accepting the death of a partner. Based on the participants' statements: I get closer to the creator and often express my sadness to Him. The death of a spouse brings closer the relationship with God in overcoming prolonged sadness. Get closer to God by increasing prayer, reading the Quran, and giving alms. These practices are done for self-death and family.

Based on the participants' statements: I believe my religion is Buddhism after the death of my husband he will go to the other world and all suffering will be gone. I will do rituals to bring myself closer to my husband. I still keep my husband's ashes.

2.5 Concerns After Spousal Death

The majority of participants involved in the study also faced emotional problems in adjusting after the death of a partner. The interviews with several participants were emotional and felt lost with the death of spouses. The feeling of guilt that will trouble others makes them more willing to find their solution to reducing the problems of depression and grieving. Social and emotional isolation.

After the death of my wife, I became more isolated and isolated from society. My life comes home from work and sits at home. Before my wife's death, I often met with friends, but now I prefer to do activities on my own. Some participants stated: "I have concerns for my children who are still in school due to the death of my husband. The children are not very enthusiastic about their studies and often grieve over the death of their father".

The problem of social isolation is the challenge of widows facing social isolation or lack of social support. Based on interviews with participants who stated that: "After the death of my spouse and holding the status of a widow, the negative perception from society made me uncomfortable. I care more about my children and am not involved in community activities. In addition, I do two jobs, i.e. when I come home from work, I don't have time to do other activities except on weekends involved in exercise classes".

The opinion of other respondents who stated that: "After the death of my partner, I felt loneliness and high depression. I prefer to stay at home even though my friends often invite me to spend time together. The depression problem I had adopted. My marriage with a partner is not blessed with children".

2.6 Loss of Emotional Support

The majority of interviewees stated that their partner provided good emotional support. After the death of a partner, we face problems with social support and express grief after losing an outlet. Although we get social support from family members and the community, we still feel lonely without a partner. "I get emotional support from family members, friends and neighbors. However, I still feel empty when I am alone. When I am with them I am entertained but not for a long time.

Health and physical The majority of participants had no health problems and no physical changes. However, some respondents stated that there are physical changes due to eating and sleeping patterns. "After the death of my partner, I experienced a slight change in eating and sleeping patterns. My body has decreased so much that some scold

me for being too thin. I noticed a change in my face which is dark circles under my eyes because I don't get enough sleep". Some respondents stated that: "The change in sleeping and eating is due to me doing extra work to earn money to raise my children who are still in school. Due to not enough rest, eating, and sleeping my body dropped suddenly".

2.7 Unmet Expectations

Some participants expressed their feelings because they did not have time to be together in achieving their dreams. "My partner and I have collected money to perform Hajj together. However, the wish to perform Hajj with a partner was not fulfilled". There were participants who expressed feelings about unfulfilled wishes. "My wife and I have planned to travel abroad. My partner and I have been planning to go abroad with the children for a long time, but it didn't happen".

2.8 Independent

There are participants who experience problems in terms of independence. This is due to the couple completing daily needs and paying bills at home. "I have problems from the aspect of managing daily life due to my husband who provides all the household equipment and bill payments. Participants also expressed their feelings: "After the death of my wife, my duties and responsibilities have increased with the provision of food and equipment for the children who are still in school. I am the mother and father of my children who still need emotional support and so on".

2.9 Financial

The majority of participants stated that there were no financial problems due to the fact that most couples worked for the government and had pensions. However, there are some participants who have financial problems. "I had to do side work due to financial problems. My children are still in school and I also get donations from the government and the village head". The statement by the respondent states: Throughout the tahlil ceremony I was given financial facilities by family members, neighbors and village leaders. There are always people who send basic aid such as rice, milk, sugar and others after my husband's death.

2.10 Culture

In this study there are Chinese participants. The culture of the race differs according to religion. Society in Malaysia is harmonious with various races. The statement of one of the respondents stated: Even though my customs and culture are different from my neighbors who have different cultural customs, the majority of the Malays respect my family very much. When my husband died they visited the house asking about me and what was needed during my husband's death ceremony.

2.11 Social Support

The majority of respondents stated that social support from family, neighbors and friends. Social support is very important to the death of a partner in continuing life more positively. Based on participants stating that: Even though I have a different religion, my neighbors always come to visit me. I was very moved to be given attention with my neighbors. In addition to my strength, the family of the local community also helped me financially, food and so on. This life needs to help each other and we will be given more sustenance.

Based on the participant's statement stating: "Throughout the tahlil ceremony, the food given to the guests was all prepared by the village neighbors. When the late husband died, the body was well taken care of with the help of the neighbors. I was always visited after the death of my husband. I am also a person who always participates in activities in my village. I am always grateful for what the creator has given us so that we can always be grateful and not always complain".

3 Discussion

The results studied show that the majority had a good and harmonious relationship before the death of their partner. The death of a partner takes a long period of grieving and suffering in losing the bond with the partner [13]. Based on phenomenological methods among the elderly, found that there are participants who practice rituals to communicate with their deceased spouse. The relationship with the partner will be mutually continuous, and will still feel the presence of the spouse even if the partner has died.

In this study, it was found that some participants experienced depression after the death of a spouse. This is due to the higher rate of depression among the elderly within six months [11]. In a study by [10], depression occurs over a long period of up to four years. Depression also affects health problems among the elderly [5]. The high risk of depression after the death of a spouse is due to the factor of living alone [11]. However, a study by [20] found that as many as 90.6% of the elderly showed a positive reaction compared to 9.4% who experienced a negative reaction. Physical activity can reduce the problem of depression, better quality sleep, and better health and quality of life for those who have lost a spouse.

In this study, it was founded that the majority of participants did not have financial problems after the death of their spouse because they had a pension and a job. This is due to socio-economic factors leading to death. However, this study also found that there were study participants who experienced financial problems after the death of their spouse. This is due to poverty occurring in Malaysia, especially among women whose spouses have died and who have support for their children [24]. Financial problems faced by the death of a spouse also affect children's education and social problems among teenagers. The death of a family member, especially involving the death of a parent, is a serious problem among adolescents that affect mental health and suicide. The death of a family member has a profound effect on teenagers because they need support and take a long time to deal with grief.

This study found that the majority of participants did not have health problems or physical changes after the death of their spouse. This is due to chronic diseases being

the main cause of death such as heart disease, and stroke, and increasing the mortality rate [16]. However, in this study, it was found that the majority of respondents did not have health problems and physical changes after the death of their spouse. A study by [6], studies Norway increased mortality for the death of spouses in chronic diseases consisting of respiratory-related diseases, namely pneumonia, with a middle age of 55 to 64 years.

Some participants have a demographic of high educational background facing depression after the death of their wife. This is because men whose spouses have died experience depression and social isolation by 50% compared to women by 40% [14]. However, in this study, it was found that the participants did not have depression problems. Demographic factors such as education influence the acceptance of death [23]. This is because death affects psychology such as depression, especially involving the death of a spouse. Knowledge through education about death is not yet widespread due to the stigma of society in Malaysia regarding the issue of death. Experts in the field of mental health suggest young people get involved in quality death preparedness education programs. Education and health are interconnected to promote a positive attitude toward end-of-life preparation in improving the quality of life.

Research findings by [11], found that the death of a spouse increases the risk of depression and death. This is due to the period of death within 6 months causing depression that affects their daily activities. In addition, the risk of getting chronic diseases is high such as heart disease and so on. Death of a spouse also affects mental health. The study found that the death of a spouse affects their children's learning. This is because students facing the death of their parents need the support of friends and family. Limitations and future directions.

Although this study has some strengths compared to the existing literature on accepting the death of a partner, there are still some weaknesses in this study, which involve gender demographics. In this study there were 7 women and 3 men as participants in the death of a partner. In addition, this study was conducted with a line that does not show emotions in depth. This study also still has face-to-face interviews but not all respondents are comfortable with face-to-face. Therefore in this study choose according to the comfort of the participants in discussing the acceptance of the death of a partner.

Other sociocultural variables have a tendency towards the dominant culture. For example, the majority are Malays, but one of the respondents is Chinese, an elderly group. Although this is a lower percentage than some studies examining the same population, having more racial and ethnic diversity would allow for a better understanding of acceptance of the death of a spouse. This study has a weakness in the number of respondents based on the race of the participants.

4 Implications

This study has several significant implications for individuals, couples, and families. The spouse's death involves accepting the spouse's death involves grief for oneself and also for the family. Grief facing the death of a partner depends on the strength, relationship with the partner and family in continuing life. Community support for those who die needs to be given because it helps them not to feel marginalized and lose motivation

in life. Hi, this is because the death of a spouse causes sadness and sad things impact psychological aspects. Mental health problems are an important issue in Malaysia and globally.

The death of a spouse requires counseling to help them express their feelings and cry. The crying method is a way to express feelings and help individuals be more positive in life. For those bereaved, maintaining a healthy ongoing bond with the deceased partner helps the grieving process to be more positive. For Muslims, it is more important to practice almsgiving, praying, circumcision prayers, reading the Quran to help draw closer to God and also give rewards to deceased spouses. In addition, there are individuals who practice rituals to get closer to their deceased spouse. These methods are healing for couples according to their beliefs, traditions and religion.

Family support is also a very important aspect in helping to accept the death of a partner. Family support in terms of emotional, physical and motivation is important to individuals who have given up on continuing life after the death of a spouse. This is due to the fact that family factors greatly influence and help in reducing grief after the death of a partner. Family ties are closer and they are more secure and comfortable in expressing their feelings after the death of their spouse.

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