Volunteering and Support Provision to Family Members among Older Singaporeans

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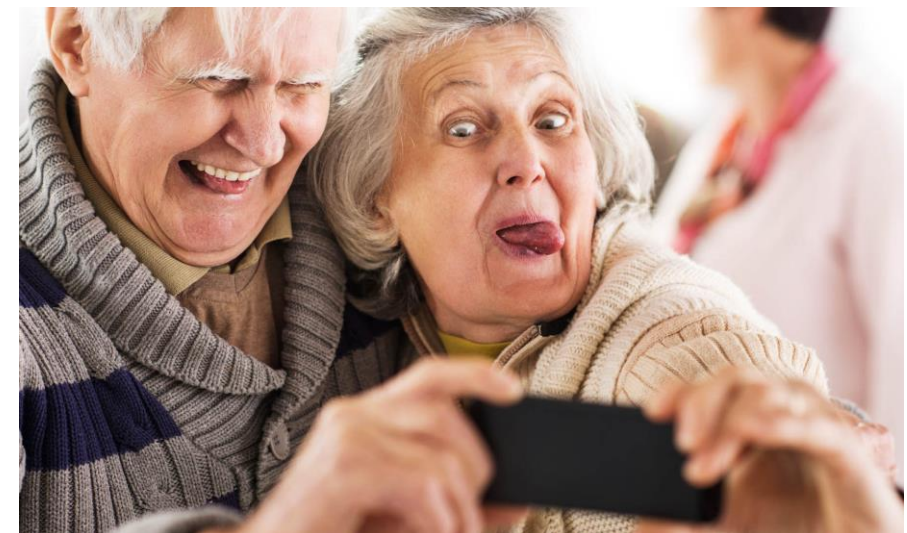
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1

Background

- Aging is a process accompanied by declining health and functioning.

- Nevertheless, older adults are not necessarily passive and inactive.

- Productive Aging!
  - Older adults are often productive
  - Contribution to their family and the society.

Importance of volunteering

- **Economic** benefits for society.

- Influential to **well-being**
  - alleviating loneliness and stimulating cognitive function.

Policy related to volunteering

- Singapore Ministerial Committee on Ageing
    - Action Plan for Successful Ageing
    - 3 billion dollars to encourage older people to take part in contributory activities such as volunteering
    - To recruit an additional 50,000 older volunteers

Importance of family support provision

- Individuals who provide support to their kin may feel valued, significant, independent, and useful.

- One way we can measure family cohesion is by finding out how much financial, housework, emotional support family members provide to one another.

Policy related to family support provision

- SG government promotes strong family ties.
- For the application for public flats, priority is given to the cases in which parents and married child live together or near each other.

Married Child Priority Scheme (MCPS)

This scheme helps a married child and the parents to live with or close to each other for mutual care and support by improving the flat applicants' chances when they ballot for a new flat. Fiancé/Fiancée applicants may also apply for the MCPS.

Objectives

- Collectively, given the government focus on volunteering and family cohesion, we ask:

- Who are more likely to volunteer (Study 1)?

- Who are more likely to provide support to their family members (Study 2)?

Study 1: Volunteering among older Singaporeans

- THE SIGNS Study-I 2016-17 (N=1972)

- Formal volunteering
    - In the last 12 months, how often the participants have given any unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organizations in any of the following ways?
    - 12 acts: (1) raising or handling money/ taking part in sponsored events, (2) leading the group / member of a committee, etc.

- Informal volunteering (not to/ through a formal organization)
    - In the last 12 months, how often the participants have offered any of the following unpaid help to other people including friends, neighbors or someone else, but not relatives?
    - 10 acts: (1) keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about (visiting in person, telephoning or emailing), (2) doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills, etc.

Study 1: Volunteering among older Singaporeans

- **26%:** formal and/ or informal

Formal volunteering, n (%)		
None	1714 (86.9)	
Less than once a month	113 (5.7)	**13%**
At least once a month	145 (7.4)	
Informal volunteering, n (%)		
None	1594 (80.8)	
Less than once a month	229 (11.6)	**19%**
At least once a month	149 (7.6)	

- Data from other regions usually focus on formal volunteering only
  - HK (2014): 60-69: 11%; 70+: 13%
  - US (2015): 55-64: 25%; 65+: 24%
  - UK (2016): 50-64: 36%; 65-74: 42%; 75+: 37%

Study 1: Which older Singaporeans are more likely to be <u>formal</u> volunteers?

Age	Social networks outside household (stronger)
Gender (female)	Attending committee/ community events (e.g., Neighborhood Committee) (yes)
Ethnicity (Chinese vs. Malay, Indian, other)	Attending Senior Activity Center (SAC) activities (yes)
Education level (higher)	Depressive symptoms
Housing type (HDB, private; indicator of SES)	Chronic diseases
Employed	Limitations in activities of daily living (ADL) (e.g., taking a bath)
Married	Limitations in instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (e.g., preparing meals)
Living alone	Reporting having a religion (yes)

Note: Based on multinomial logistic regression

Study 1: Which older Singaporeans are more likely to be <u>informal</u> volunteers?

Age (younger)	Social networks outside household (stronger)
Gender	Attending committee/ community events (e.g., Neighborhood Committee) (yes)
Ethnicity (Chinese vs. Malay, Indian, other)	Attending Senior Activity Center (SAC) activities (yes)
Education level (higher)	Depressive symptoms (fewer)
Housing type (HDB, private; indicator of SES)	Chronic diseases
Employed	Limitations in activities of daily living (ADL) (e.g., taking a bath)
Married	Limitations in instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (e.g., preparing meals)
Living alone	Reporting having a religion

Note: Based on multinomial logistic regression

Study 1: Conclusion

- Overall, factors including education level, social networks, social participation, and mental health (fewer depressive symptoms) are enabling factors of volunteering.

- Suggest how we may further volunteering.

- Education level essentially reflects skills and knowledge.

- Lifelong learning opportunities that promote skills and knowledge (e.g., National Silver Academy) may further volunteering.

- Community Network of Seniors (CNS) programme promotes befriending and networking.

- The resultant social engagement may further volunteering.

- The initiatives which address the well-being of older adults under the Action Plan for Successful Ageing may help further volunteering.

Study 2: Family support provision by older Singaporeans

- THE SIGNS Study-I 2016-17 (N=2008)

- In the past 12 months, have the participants provided help to their family members?

- Compare
  - Informal volunteering: In the last 12 months…. unpaid help to a friend, neighbor or someone else, but not a relative?

Study 2: Family support provision by older Singaporeans

- THE SIGNS Study-I 2016-17:

Provided financial support, n (%)	819	(40.8)
Provided housework support, n (%)	782	(38.9)
Provided emotional support, n (%)	835	(41.6)

- Ref.: Panel on Health and Ageing of Singaporean Elderly (PHASE) (wave 2, 2011)
  - Money: 39%; Material goods: 10%
  - Housework help: 15%
  - Emotional support: 30%

Study 2: Which older Singaporeans are more likely to provide <u>financial</u> support to family members?

Age (younger)	Received financial support from kin (yes)
Gender (Male)	Received housework support from kin (yes)
Ethnicity (Chinese vs. Malay, Indian, other)	Received emotional support from kin (yes)
Education level (higher)	Family networks outside household (stronger)
Housing type (HDB, private; indicator of SES)	Depressive symptoms
Employed (yes)	Chronic diseases
Married (yes)	Limitations in activities of daily living (ADL) (e.g., taking a bath) (fewer)
Living alone (no)	Limitations in instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (e.g., preparing meals)

Note: Based on logistic regression

15

Study 2: Which older Singaporeans are more likely to provide <u>housework</u> support to family members?

Age (younger)	Received financial support from kin (yes)
Gender (Male)	Received housework support from kin (yes)
Ethnicity (Chinese vs. Malay, Indian, other)	Received emotional support from kin (yes)
Education level	Family networks outside household
Housing type (HDB, private; indicator of SES)	Depressive symptoms
Employed	Chronic diseases
Married	Limitations in activities of daily living (ADL) (e.g., taking a bath) (fewer)
Living alone (no)	Limitations in instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (e.g., preparing meals) (fewer)

Note: Based on logistic regression

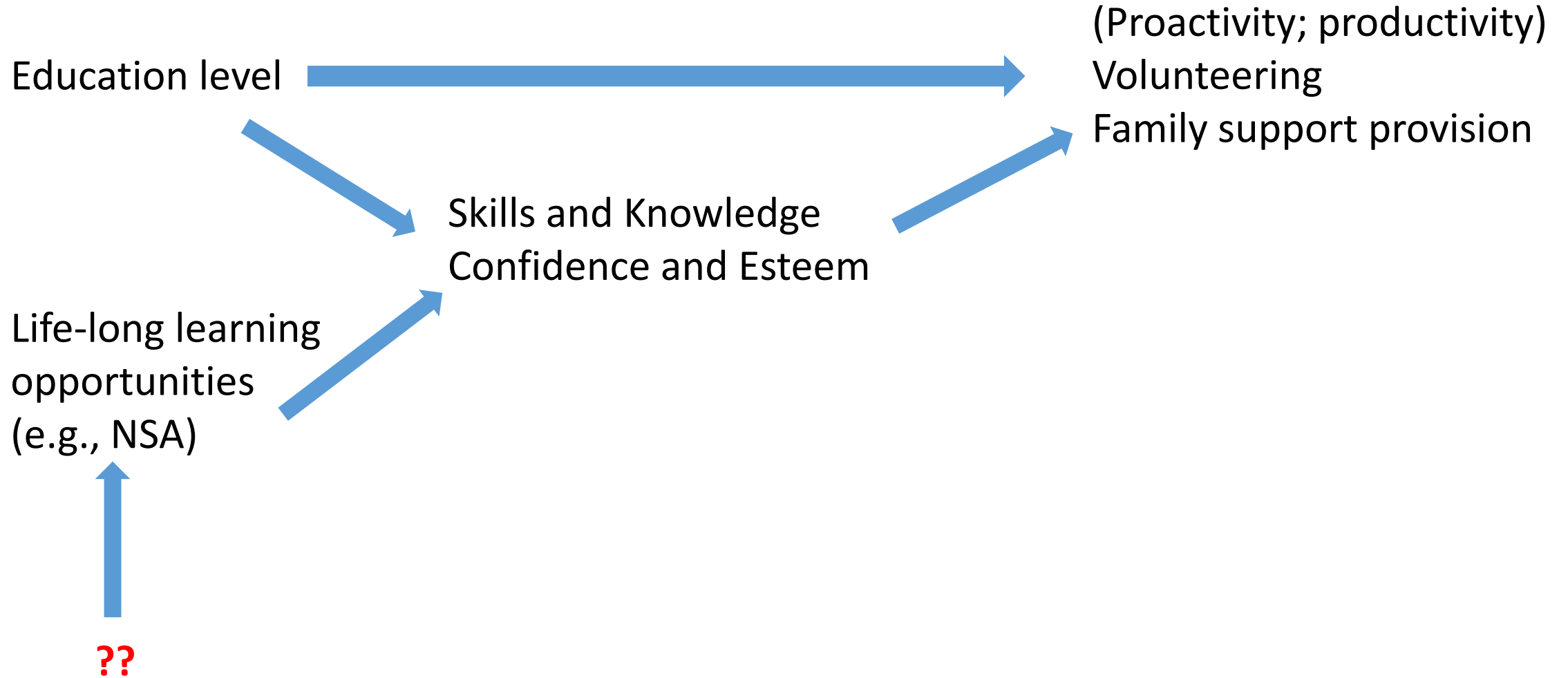# Study 2: Which older Singaporeans are more likely to provide <u>emotional</u> support to family members?

Age (younger)	Received financial support from kin
Gender (Male)	Received housework support from kin (yes)
Ethnicity (Malay > Chinese)	Received emotional support from kin (yes)
Education level (higher)	Family networks outside household
Housing type (HDB, private; indicator of SES)	Depressive symptoms
Employed (yes)	Chronic diseases
Married	Limitations in activities of daily living (ADL) (e.g., taking a bath) (fewer)
Living alone (no)	Limitations in instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (e.g., preparing meals)

Note: Based on logistic regression

Study 2: Conclusion

- Overall, factors including education level, employment, and health (fewer ADL and IADL limitations) are enabling factors of family support provision.

- To increase the likelihood of family support provision
  - Life-long learning opportunities
  - Employment
  - Wellness hubs in the neighborhood that offer health activities and services

General Conclusion

Education level

(Proactivity; productivity)
Volunteering
Family support provision

Skills and Knowledge
Confidence and Esteem

Life-long learning
opportunities
(e.g., NSA)

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Thank you!

Q&A

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