

Awareness of Flood Victims in The East-Coast Region of Malaysia Towards the Takaful Flood Policy: A Crosstabulation Analysis Based on Demographic Variables

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to; first, investigate the level of awareness among flood victims in Malaysia towards the takaful policy. Second, to examine differences of demographic background (age, marital status, occupation, education background, and income level) among the victims towards awareness on the takaful. Overall, a total of 536 flood victims located at the east-coast area of Malaysia participated in the survey. Based on the descriptive and crosstabulation analyses, most of the victims were uncertain about the takaful. In terms of background differences, the younger generation were more aware compared to the elders, single victims were more aware than the married, and those with a high level of education (diploma, degree, and PhD holders) were more aware of the existence of takaful and the need to have takaful protection. The findings of this study provide important suggestion to offer an affordable micro-takaful policy for future financial protection for the lower income and most vulnerable flood victims in the country. Various efforts should be done to increase the level of awareness among Malaysians on the importance of participating in the takaful policy.

Keywords: flood victim, awareness, demographics, takaful, Malaysia

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: 28 August 2017

Accepted: 25 April 2018

Available online: 30 April 2018

INTRODUCTION

Takaful has been in existence for almost 40 years in the Malaysian financial market. The achievement of the takaful industry since its inception must be acknowledged as the number of takaful operators has increased with a variety of takaful schemes offered in the market. It is believed that a very positive Islamic financial environment with a strong support from the Malaysian government have been the key factors that made the industry continue its growth parallel with the conventional counterpart. As reported by the Annual Takaful Statistics 2016 published by the Central Bank of Malaysia, the total takaful fund assets comprising of general and family takaful for 2016 was 26,792 million compared to five years back in 2011 which was 16,984.2 million only. The industry has also contributed 2.2 percent of the National Gross Income (Takaful Annual Statistic, 2016).

Given the above successful growth of the takaful industry in Malaysia, to cater for the industry and demand trend, there is still room for the industry to enhance its capability for competition. This can be done via exploring needs and demand of the society towards various types of financial protection that exists caused by changes in ways of living or by other factors like natural disasters. Hence, as an Islamic insurance provider, takaful operators should not only assume profit from the business that makes them similar with the conventional businesses. Thus, they should start to think about offering takaful products that have social value to the public and realizing the axiom of takaful which is mutual-assistance through tabarru' (donation) and instil the spirit of brotherhood in society. This can be done via various ways and approaches. Apart from educating the public towards the mutual donation and assistance concepts of takaful, the operators can also offer social schemes that may create problems faced by society caused by natural disasters like a flood. This research therefore is grounded based on the essence that takaful should serve society. Given that the flood phenomena continuously happen in Malaysia almost yearly, perhaps takaful may offer an option for flood victims to seek protection and help. Hence, there are few operators that have started to offer additional flood coverage to the existing plans, but based on observation, none of them have offered a single takaful plan that merely covers on flood related risks such as house/building, furniture, transport, or income of victims. The offering and demand however should come in parallel terms. The reason why the operators are reluctant to offer a flood-based takaful plan is because the demand is still low due to low awareness among the public towards takaful generally.

This study thus aims to investigate the level of awareness among flood victims towards takaful based on various demographic information of the victims. The remaining parts of the article is structured as follows. The next section provides a review of past literature related to takaful and factors that have influenced takaful awareness, it is followed by methodology adopted in this study, and data analysis (descriptive and crosstabulation analyses). It ends with a conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Awareness on Takaful: Malaysia and other Countries

Studies on Takaful began to surface in the 1990s after few years of the establishment of the first takaful operator in 1984 (STMB) and at an earlier stage, the attention was only on the conceptual and operational basis of takaful. Since the year 2000, most of researchers have attempted to gauge public perception towards Takaful products. Among them are Mohd Amin (2000), Syukriyah (2004), Hakiminhafiz (2004), and Burhanuddin (2004). On the other hand, some researchers were interested to look at the understanding and knowledge of Takaful products among Malaysians, particularly among Muslims. Research on this issue were conducted by Syukriyah (2004), Mohamad and Mohd Sukki (2009), and Noor Hashim (2009). Most of the researchers agree that public understanding towards Takaful products particularly among the Muslims is significantly low.

Hamid and Othman (2009) have further conducted a preliminary study on the level of knowledge and understanding among Muslims in Malaysia towards the concepts, Arabic and Shariah terms in takaful. Their finding shows that most of the respondents do not know and understand about the concept that is practiced in takaful for example al-ujrah (commission) and al-wakalah (agent). In addition, Mohd. Izhar, Tariq Masood and Mohd Saeed Khan (2010), limited understanding on the takaful have influenced the public awareness on the plan. Accordingly, the level of understanding remains low in Malaysia up until the year 2012 as informed by Zuraidah Hanim Ibrahim, the first lady agent from Takaful Ikhlas Sdn Bhd (Daily Express, August 2012). She further discussed that most of the public were not aware of takaful coverage, and often had misconceptions on the differences between the Islamic and the conventional insurance. The low level of awareness has influenced the demand of takaful as only 10 percent of Malaysians have participated in the takaful plan compared to 42 percent who have subscribed to conventional insurance (Zuraidah, 2012).

To date, the penetration rate for family Takaful plans in Malaysia remain low, at 14.61% compared to the conventional counterpart which is 41% (Malaysian Takaful Association Report, 2016 Report). As reported by Utusan Malaysia (December 2016), the CEO of Takaful Ikhlas Bhd. (one of the Takaful operator in Malaysia) Datuk Ab. Latiff Abu Bakar, believes that the low Takaful penetration rate in Malaysia is because of the low level of awareness among the public. He further emphasized that, even though the rate of accidents and high-risk diseases (cancer, critical illness) has tremendously increased recently, the awareness among the public towards future financial preparation on this matter remain low and this need to be changed urgently. This is because takaful or life insurance is not a priority for Malaysians and the younger generation rather spend a lot to buy smart phones or luxury goods (Victor Kho, 2016).

Factors that have Influenced the Awareness towards Takaful

Reviewing past literature on takaful awareness, Yon Bahiya, Siti Zaleha, and Norshahida (2009) have investigated the awareness among the Malays on Takaful plans. Results of their study indicated that the Malays are generally aware of Takaful, but their level of confidence towards the products is still low. This has contributed to Takaful's low penetration rate and the low demand for Takaful products. Meanwhile in 2013, Mohamed, Syed Othman, and Kamaruddin (2013) have found that marketing channels play a significant role in increasing the level of confidence among the public, which in the end will boost Takaful's penetration in the insurance market. Based on comprehensive literature review by Maizaitulaidawati & Asmak (2013), sincere intention, demographic variables, consumer knowledge, situational factors and consumers' levels of religiosity might have some impact on customers' decision to choose Takaful products. This is parallel with the empirical finding by Fitriah and Hanudin (2011) and concluded that attitude, subjective norm, and amount of information can affect the selection of Takaful products among consumers.

From the perspective of micro enterprises, Norashikin, Akmal Aini, Nur Liyana, Syaidatul Zarina, Norsaliza, Mohd Khairul, and Roslina (2013) adopted an in-depth interview approach to examine the extent to which micro enterprises are aware of Takaful and the benefits of its products in Johor. They found that most of the respondents were aware of the existence of insurance and were less aware about takaful. The low level of awareness of takaful is believed to be because of the level of educational background of the respondents. In this context, most of the owners of micro enterprises (respondents) in this study were SPM holders and just finished secondary school. In addition, they were also those who received less income and among the poor group. From this study, it can be concluded, that the low level of awareness has a relationship with educational background as well as individual/business income level.

In addition, in a recent study by Kamarul, Raden and Masilah, (2015), three recommendations have been identified to enhance public awareness which are via media campaigns (television advertisement, hiring famous and well-known celebrities, road show), well trained takaful agents, public education (motivational talk, program), and collaboration with government bodies. Soulhi and Al Shammari (2015) have studied the awareness of takaful among Kuwaitis (640 respondents) of different demographic backgrounds (gender, age, marital status, education, income occupation, and religious background). Relying on descriptive statistics, T-test, ANOVA, and Discriminant analyses, they have found that gender, education background, income, and occupation have significant differences on the level of awareness. Meanwhile, the other variables like marital status and age group were not significantly different to determine the level of awareness.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the research objectives, this research adopted a quantitative research design where a survey based on structured questionnaires was conducted among 536 flood victims located in the east-coast region of Malaysia. The final data after screening was recorded in SPSS and analysed using crosstabulation analysis. Awareness towards Takaful was the dependent variable whereas the demographic variables were treated as independent variable. They are; age group, marital status, level of education, occupation, and monthly income.

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Background of Respondents

Table 1: Background of Respondents

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	253	47.2
	Female	283	52.8
	Total	536	100.0
Age	18-29	243	45.3
	30-39	114	21.3
	40-49	92	17.2
	50-59	50	9.3
	60-69	24	4.5
	Above 70 years old	13	2.4
	Total	536	100.0

Marital Status	Single	244	45.5
	Married	245	45.7
	Divorced	21	3.9
	Widow	26	4.9
	Total	536	100.0
Area	Kelantan	200	37.3
	Pahang	137	25.6
	Terengganu	199	37.0
	Total	536	100.0
Level of Education	Not schooling	39	7.3
	Primary School	37	6.9
	STPM	250	46.6
	Diploma	154	28.7
	Degree and above	56	10.4
	Total	536	100.0
Occupation	Student	154	28.7
	Retiree	30	5.6
	Private Employees	107	20.0
	Government Servant	81	15.1
	Self-employed	108	20.1
	Not working	56	10.4
	Total	536	100.0
	Monthly Income	Less than RM500	85
RM501 – RM1,000		143	26.7
RM1,001 – RM2,000		77	14.3
RM2,001 – RM3,000		34	6.3
More than RM3000		66	12.3
No income		131	24.4
Total		536	100.0

The background of the flood victims who participated in this research is presented in Table 1 above. A total of 536 flood victims participated in the survey covering Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang. From the descriptive analysis, it is observed that the number of female and male respondents were quite well distributed given that the percentage of female is 53 percent and the male respondents is 47 percent. In addition, more than half of the respondents were below 40 years old (67 percent) and the rest (53 percent) were between 40 years old to 69 years old. Nearly half of the respondents were married (46 percent) and unmarried (46 percent) while the rest were divorced and widowed. It is also noted that the majority were from Kelantan and Terengganu provinces including Gua Musang, Pasir Mas, Kota Bharu (37 percent respectively). The remaining 26 percent were victims from Pahang. In this context, it is believed that there should be no bias in terms of the number of respondents for each state or province as all the respondents were flood victims. Meanwhile, based on the survey, it was found that there is a mixture of educational background among

the victims; STPM (47 percent), diploma (29 percent), degree and above (10 percent), and 14 percent of them were either at the primary level or never attended school. In addition, nearly one-third of them were students, followed by private employees and self-employed (20 percent each) and government servant (15 percent). Hence, only 10 percent of the victims were not working. In terms of monthly income, more than half of the victims have an income of less than RM2,000 (57 percent) and only 12 percent of them received an income of more than RM3,000 monthly (131 victims).

Awareness towards Takaful Scheme

Table 2 discloses flood victims' awareness towards Takaful schemes. Basically, five statements were prepared to examine the victims' awareness. Based on mean value (range from 3.50 to 3.63), most of the victims were uncertain about takaful. Overall, the victims were slightly aware on the existence of takaful and there is a need to participate in takaful to protect their life and family. In addition, they were unsure if Takaful is different from the conventional insurance, that takaful scheme may reduce their financial losses because of flood, and on the existence takaful operators in the industry. The average mean value for the level of awareness among the flood victims is 3.567.

Table 2: Awareness on Takaful Scheme

No.	Awareness	Level of Agreement (%)					N	Mean	Std. Deviation
		1	2	3	4	5			
	On the existence of Islamic insurance or called takaful.	6.9	7.1	25.0	39.9	21.1	536	3.612	1.103
	Takaful is different from conventional insurance.	2.8	13.2	31.0	36.6	16.4	536	3.506	1.015
	There are takaful operators that offer protection for flood victims	3.4	10.8	30.2	38.1	17.5	536	3.556	1.017
	Takaful coverage can reduce my financial loss when a flood hits.	3.4	9.5	31.7	41.6	13.8	536	3.530	0.969

Every member in my family should have their own takaful coverage.	2.4	8.6	30.8	39.9	18.3	536	3.631	0.968
Average Mean							3.567	

Different demographic background and awareness towards takaful

As summarized in Table 3, there are five categories of demographic variables used to differentiate the level of awareness among the flood victims under study which are age group, marital status, level of education, and monthly income. Out of five statements that is developed in this research (please refer to Table 2), only three statements of awareness are believed suitable to be tested by crosstabulation analysis as they have recorded the highest mean values.

Age Group

First, among the different age groups of the flood victims (18-29 years old, 30-39 years old, 40-49 years old, 50-59 years old, 60-69 years old, and above 70 years old), the group that have the highest percentage of awareness (combination of aware and really aware) for all the statements was the 18-29 years old group (77 percent of the victims in this group were aware on statement one, 72 percent on statement three, and 61.3 percent on statement two). This group can be considered as the younger generation that has been exposed to current developments in the financial industry especially in Malaysia. Meanwhile, it is noticed that the victims that were in the 70 years old and above age group have the highest percentage of low awareness regarding Takaful (based on the three statements) (seven out of thirteen reported do not aware on statement one and two, and five out of thirteen were not aware of statement three).

Marital Status

Looking at the marital status, between single and married victims, it is noticed that victims who are single had a high percentage of awareness than married victims. 178 out of 243 single victims (72 percent) were aware of the existence of Takaful which is 33.2 percent of the total sample. Hence, 13.1 percent or 32 out of 245 of the married victims were not aware of this statement. In addition, single victims also recorded the highest percentage of awareness for the other two statements, mainly about the difference between Takaful and conventional insurance and need for takaful coverage for the family. These results imply that the married victims were unaware of statement two and three; 15.1 percent and 11.9 percent.

Educational Background

In terms of educational background, it seems that a higher level of education does matter on the awareness towards takaful. In this context, the highest percentage of awareness in an individual group of education, diploma holders have recorded the highest percentage which is 79.9 percent (majority) and followed by degree/phd holders (78.6 percent) mainly for statement one and also for the other statements (please refer to Table 3). Meanwhile, the victims who have not received any education at all were the highest in a group that were unaware about takaful as measured by three statements (33.3 percent for statement one, 43.5 percent for statement two, and 35.9 percent for statement three). These results indicate that the more educated the people are, the higher their understanding of of takaful and it can affect their awareness towards takaful at the same time.

Occupation

Crosstabulation analysis that was conducted on various types of occupation of the flood victims (student, retiree, private employees, government servant, self-employed, not working) towards takaful awareness found that the victims who were government servants recorded the highest percentage of awareness although they were only 15 percent of the total sample (81/536). The majority of them (85.2 percent) were aware of the existence of takaful (69/81) and more than three quarter were aware that takaful is different from conventional insurance (76.6 percent) as well as their family members need to have takaful for financial protection (76.5 percent). The highest percentage of awareness on takaful was also seen among private employees (69.2 percent for statement one, 60.7 percent for statement two, and 64.5 percent for statement three). On the other hand, the highest percentage of occupation group that was unaware regarding takaful is those who were not working. The range of percentage for this group is between 25 percent to 30 percent over the group sample (56 victims).

Monthly Income

Finally, this research captured awareness of takaful among flood victims' various range of monthly income. Based on the analysis, it is found that the highest percentage of awareness was the group which had an income of more than RM3000 for statement one (81.8 percent) and three (75.7 percent). Meanwhile, for statement two (takaful is different from the conventional insurance), the group with a monthly income RM2001-RM3000 was the highest. It is also found that victims that had an income of less than RM500 have a low awareness regarding takaful (31.8 percent were unaware of the existence of takaful and 34.2 percent were unaware that takaful is different from conventional insurance). In addition, the income group between RM501-RM1000 was also found to have less awareness on the need to have takaful protection for their family (11.9 percent).

Table 3: Summary of Crosstabulation Results

No.	Demographic Variables	Statements of Awareness	Aware	Unaware
	Age group	On the existence of Islamic insurance or called takaful.	18 – 29 years old (77% aware, 187/243) (34.9 over total sample)	Above 70 years old (53.9%, 7/13) (1.3 % over total sample)
		Takaful is different from conventional insurance.	18 – 29 years old (61.3%, 149/243 aware) (27.8% over total sample)	Above 70 years old (53.9%, 7/13) (1.3 % over total sample)
		Every member in my family should have their own takaful coverage.	18-29 years old (72%, 175/243) (32.6% over total sample)	Above 70 years old (38.5%, 5/13) (0.9% over total sample)
	Marital status	On the existence of Islamic insurance or called takaful.	Single (73%, 178/243) (33.2% over total sample)	Married (13.1%, 32/245) (6% over total sample)
		Takaful is different from conventional insurance.	Single (58.6%, 143/244) (26.7 over total sample)	Married (15.1%, 37/245) (6.9% over total sample)
		Every member in my family should have their own takaful coverage.	Single (67.6%, 165/244) (30.8 over total sample)	Married (11.9%, 29/245) (5.4% over total sample)
	Level of education	On the existence of Islamic insurance or called takaful.	Diploma holders (79.9%, 123/154) (23% over total sample) Followed by degree/phd holders (78.6%, 44/56)	No education (33.3%, 13/39) (2.4% over total sample) None of degree holders do not aware
		Takaful is different from conventional insurance.	Degree/phd holders (76.8%, 43/56) (8% over total sample) Followed by diploma holders (66.9%, 93/154)	No education (43.5%, 17/39) (3.2% over total sample)
		Every member in my family should have their own takaful coverage.	Diploma holders (78.6%, 121/154) (22.6% over total sample) Followed by degree/phd holders (71.4%), 40/56)	No education (35.9%, 14/39) (2.6% over total sample)
	Occupation	On the existence of Islamic	Government servant (85.2%,	Not working (26.8%, 15/56)

		insurance or called takaful.	69/81) (12.9% over total sample) Followed by private employee (69.2%, 74/107)	(2.8% over total sample) Followed by retirees (20%, 6/30)
		Takaful is different from conventional insurance.	Government servant (76.6%, 62/81) (11.6% over total sample) Followed by private employee (60.7%, 63/107)	Not working (25%, 14/56) (2.7% over total sample)
		Every member in my family should have their own takaful coverage.	Government servant (76.5%, 62/81) (11.6% over total sample) Followed by private employee (64.5%, 69/107)	Not working (30.4%, 17/56) (3.2% over total sample)
	Monthly income	On the existence of Islamic insurance or called takaful.	More than RM3000 (81.8%, 54/66) (10.1% over total sample) Followed by no income respondents (68.7%, 90/131)	Less than RM500 (31.8%, 27/85) (5.1% over total sample)
		Takaful is different from conventional insurance.	RM2001-RM3000 (67.6%, 23/34) (4.3% over total sample) Followed by no income respondents (63.4%, 83/131)	Less than RM500 (34.2%, 29/85) (5.4% over total sample)
		Every member in my family should have their own takaful coverage.	More than RM3000 (75.7%, 50/66) (9.3% over total sample) Followed by income range from RM2001-RM3000 (64.7%, 22/34)	RM501-RM1000 (11.9%, 17/143) (3.1% over total sample)

CONCLUSION

Awareness on takaful although have been explored from various perspectives by previous researchers including Yon Bahiya et al. (2009), Muhammad et al. (2013), Norashikin et al. (2013), Kamarul et al. (2015), and Soulhi and Al-Shammari (2015), and many suggestions have forwarded by the researchers to the market players as well as the authorities, but nothing has changed. It is said to say that the level of awareness on takaful especially in Malaysia remains low (up to the year 2017 where this study is conducted). As the sample of this study is the flood victims most them from the rural areas in the east-coast Malaysia, the scenario is even worse. Overall, on average, they were uncertain on the existence of takaful, difference of takaful with its conventional counterpart, there are takaful operators that offer takaful plans, takaful can cover financial loss caused by flood, and there is need to have takaful protection for the whole family.

Accordingly, looking at various demographic background among the flood victims (age, marital status, education, occupation, and income level) towards takaful awareness for each group, this study found that the younger (age between 18-29 years old) were more aware than the elders (age 70 years old). Moreover, people who were single were more aware than the married victims and a high level of education does matter for takaful awareness compared to the victims that have no education. This is parallel with the findings of study by Norashikin et al. (2013) and Soulhi and Al-Shammari (2015) who have studied from different perspectives. It is also revealed that the victims who were government servants have an awareness of the need for takaful followed by private sector employees and unfortunately, those who are not working have less awareness towards takaful. It is perhaps because of less exposure to the financial market and also because of the environment. Finally, similar with the findings of Soulhi and Al-Shammari (2015), the different level of income does matter for the level of awareness of takaful. In this context, victims with a high income (RM2000 and above) were more aware than those who received an income of RM1000 and less. These results are generally relevant given that takaful is yet to become a priority among Malaysians especially those leaving at rural areas (less exposure) and it requires financial commitment to participate and would be expensive to cover the high-risk exposure like flood. Therefore, only those who have a high income (perhaps high level of education) would be able to afford takaful protection where they will likely search for information related to takaful and later will enhance their awareness. The results of this study give an input to takaful providers (operators) that they should continue enhancing public awareness of takaful regardless of the different demographic background as takaful should serve the whole community, not only the rich and educated segment, but also the poor and needy. Therefore, the operators should think of structuring takaful products that may offer an affordable price (premium/contribution) to the poor and at the same time meet the public needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia for the grant awarded to conduct this research (FRGS15-222-0463).

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