

Quality Of Life In Malaysian Small Town: Antecedent of The Major Determinants

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to discuss the findings based on the survey on the relationship between determinants that reflected their influence on the quality of life among the residents living in a small town nearby one of the largest oil based manufacturing industries in Malaysia. Samples of the study were represented among those residents from the teenagers up to the old population categories. For ensuring an appropriate representation and adequate generalization, 306 questionnaires were distributed in urban and rural area. While analyzing the relationship as well as its impact, the study also examined possibility of differences between several selected profiles with the quality of life. In order to get more generalization from the pool of respondents, the further study may do deeper analysis such as focus in sub group respondents, besides observing samples in a much larger group from other town or cities in Malaysia.

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1. Introduction

Reviewing the previous discussion quality of life is reported as the degree of prosperity that is felt or enjoyed by an individual or a group of people at all levels in a society [1]. The domain associated with Quality of life varies from a person with another. It is all depending on an individual's perception of satisfaction on a certain situation and the environment, the relative acceptance or harmonization of family, the favorable view of the employment, friends, income, and neighborhoods of residence [2]. However, quality of life cannot be measure easily due to the subjective concept for developing policies and action or even perception that can be associated with the quality of life. [3] consider that education for so long always act as an important predictors to a country's social and economic life because most of low-income countries usually have huge gap behind high-income countries based on education achievement. The economic cosines can be measure in term of income inequality, perceived income adequacy and income poverty line [4]. [5a] proposed the utilization of the sea, natural resource availability, and tropical location as fixed and instructive variables to generate income and wealth of a country. The need to understand and undermining perception is essential as the ways individual interpreted based on their personal attribute, experience or lifestyle. With those bases, they give their effort and work hard in order to improve their life satisfaction and eventually push up the quality of life in a much better dimensions.

2. Problem Statement

The need to measure improvement in the quality of life although seems to differ from one group or nation with another. But as one continuously move on to sustain their living, quality of life become inseparable. [6] stated that people has the tendency to increase their awareness about the quality of life. Generally peoples defined that the quality of life is differently. There are connection between several main factors of quality of life and economic growth found to be establishing systematically significant relationship with the quality of life [7]. Then, improving quality of life is one of main goal to every individual whether they life in urban area or rural area.

[8] had determined that environments can be improved through open developing economies. Terengganu is one of the state that fast growing in term of socio economic and environmental development. Because of this rapid changes, it make people concern about their quality of life. Among several factors should be taken in order to associate its contribution to the quality of life could elements such as health staus, education achievement and job stability. Most people were made to believe that by spending on education and health sectors considerably act as investment in human development which will eventually improve the quality of life and economic growth [9,10] This is worth to spend in these sectors because it will increase the efficiency in resource utilization follow by higher output and income levels in economics production.

3. Significant of Study

The result from this investigation will provide evidence that can be used by the local authority as well as the state government to have better understanding about the comfortableness or the difficulties experiencing by the society in sustaining their living. The observation may further reflect whether with the development of nearby oil and gas related industries is a real challenge due to the increasing cost of living within the neighboring areas.

4. Objectives Of The Study

This study aims to determine the relationship between important factors involved such as health status, job stability and education achievement toward the quality of life. The specific objectives are shown below:

- To explore profile, the level of Quality of life, health status, education achievement, and job stability of the respondent.
- To investigate the relationship between health status, education achievement, and job stability with the quality of life.

5. Scope Of Study

Only few variables were selected for observing the relationship, hoping that with such a focus may provide a much better insight for explaining their impact on the society quality of life. A good representation of sample is made permissible with the total sample size of 300 covering various age group within the urban and rural communities.

6. Literature Review

Quality of life

Quality is known as something that is affordable to gain and hold for long time period where it is giving a good value for costs [11]. Several effort done by women in the state of Terengganu, reflecting that they need to be involved in business for the purpose of improving the quality of

living [12]. The need to improve the quality of living is very much essential as it can burn them to be more energetic in getting high standard of living.

[13] define that quality of life is not only about the well-being but it is a wider category. [14] defines Quality of Life (QoL) as measuring the individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in the area they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It further suggested that elements of multidynamic aspects such as physical, psychological, level of independence, social and other relationships can reflect the person's quality of life.

The quality of life is important because it will help people and the country also to be more developed. Moreover, if there is the high quality standard in a country, this will show to the world that the country known to be stable and become more develop from time to time.

Health status

Health and well-being of life can be defined as a physical and psychological aspect in a person is in a better condition in any working environment [15]. [16] mentioned that the most causes of reduction of deaths from the diseases like typhoid, influenza and diphtheria are because of people did not execution of injections or do a medical cures but rather improvements in their life conditions.

Mostly parents who have a child with disabilities problem where able to perceive lower quality of life based on their psychological well-being and physical health [17]. Compared to the parents who had a normal child or non-disabled are having high quality of life due to the increasing in care demands [18]. Moreover, it will become more disaster and stressful when the parents has problem in the economic situation or any material resources due to the payment needed in medical to their disabilities child [19].

Based on a thorough literature review, [20] has classified that people get problem in health due to the impact of poverty. The lower income group will be exposed to poor health since these people did not have enough money to treat themselves from any illness. It is needed to be informed the need of healthy life at the right time [11b] but it is not easy to get them acquainted due to their low income earning. It gives a special meaning to a patient in continuing their life with their beloved family [21]. [22] also support that health can give a good perception in patient's life where it will react as a treatment on their life. The statement was further supported by [23] in which the social factors especially social support from the people environment is important for maintaining good physical and mental health in the individual life.

Education achievement

[24] state that an education is considered as a first step in human activity in this era of globalization and technological revolution where it is being a vital role in this development country which give an opportunities to people in improving their better living condition [25].

[26] mentioned that the quality of education has a various meaning from culture to culture. As mention by [11c] behavior of an individual is strongly depends on the level of education that they learn to conduct the way of their future life, economic, financial literacy and overall of standard of living for themselves.

People who was early school leavers will mostly facing higher risk of social problem and poverty and they also not interested to participate in the civic life and political affairs of their society [27]. The education level actually can help in enhances people to more understanding of the world they live in, and hence the perception of their ability to influence it especially to the world today where education and knowledge is important at anywhere. It is important for the sake of knowledge itself in preparing people for employment and citizenship [28].

[29] argues that the low level of quality of life give a negative effect on the academic performance of students because the basic needs of students like stationaries and learning materials remain unfulfilled and hence they do not perform better academically at school or university. The low quality of life status causes environmental deficits which results in low self-esteem of students.

Education can be one of the important factors in the life of a disabled person. With education, the disabled person can improve and change their lives to become much better. They can prove to the public that they can still stand on their own feet even though they are not perfect. This statement has been support by [30] where they said that education is important to a student with disabilities as self-determination for their future where they can establish their own life.

Income stability

[31] stated that in economic analysis, income distribution is defined in two principal ways where there are the functional distribution of income and size distribution of income. While [11d] interpreted income more on individuals, household, and firms.

People need to consider on using their income for the purpose satisfying physiological need, safety need, social need, as well as for the long run period according to the evolution of property rights across the future generations [31] so that living could be a fun rather then becoming miserable. And people also consider on the number of child that they want to have in the futures by considering the situation and income that they have after all the necessary expenses been calculated, while aiming to have a reasonable QoL [32].

As mentioned by Ahmed [33] and [34], the implementation of zakat can help and recover the micro financing to the poor where it can give them a litter shine in improving the life. With the money that they gain from zakat, it can help to increase their capability to purchasing that is one of the most important components in calculating Gross Domestic Product (GDP) [35]. From the study by [36] they find out that zakat can give good impact in terms of consumption variable and investment variable where poor people able to use that money for purchasing and saving activities where it will help them in getting better future life. [37] was explained that zakat shows a main role in reducing the poverty and income redistribution of the Muslim people.

7. Research Methodology

Research framework and hypotheses

The dependent variable is quality of life focusing on Dungun Area, which is variable of primary interest, in which the variance is attempted to be explained by the independent variable of health, education level and income distribution.



Figure 1: The conceptual model of research

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between health status and quality of life.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between education achievement and quality of life.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between income stability and quality of life.

Sampling procedure

[38] the total population for the state of Terengganu in urban and rural areas totalled to be approximately 1,011,363 peoples. Of the total 166,688 were those living in the district of Dungun. Following the suggestion by [39] a total samples of 306 were selected for the observation. The procedure of cluster sampling was the option taken to collect respondents from the various areas by dividing it into urban versus rural; dividing the district into “mukim”, and dividing it further into respective villages. Then, we need to define and list all cluster in the population. Through this research, we divide the population by the area that respondent live which is rural area and urban area. At the final stage of the execution, the respondents were selected purposively, thus ensuring the data that was captured has the chance of providing generalization for the entire population.

Research instrument

All the required information were collected by using personally-administered questionnaire. Part of the items measuring each concept were adapted from the previous work done by [11e]. There were 10 items were constructed to measure all the variables that had been earlier formulated as depicted in the research framework as displayed in figure 1.

8. Data Analysis and Findings

Reliability Analysis

For ensuring all the items measuring each variables able to have adequate confident in terms of stability and consistency, the procedure of observing reliability was performed by using reliability analysis. From this analysis the cronbach alpha value were further interpreted as in table 1 below.

Table 1: Evaluation of the reliability measuring items for investigated variables.

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Quality of life	10	.866
Health	10	.851
Educational level	10	.798
Job	10	.887

For all dependent and independent variables shows that the questions for each variable are reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha presents that all dependent and independent variable are above 0.70. It means that all the questions in the questionnaire can be used for further analysis.

Frequency Analysis

Table 2: Profile of the sample distribution

	F	%		Frequency	%
GENDER			PLACE		
Male	169	55.2	Rural	68	22.2
Female	137	44.8	Urban	238	77.8
AGE			SALARY		
18-25	100	32.7	0-1000	95	31.0
26-35	59	19.3	1001-2000	52	17.0
36-45	35	11.4	2001-3000	49	16.0
46-55	53	17.3	3001-4000	29	9.5
55 and above	59	19.3	4001-5000	40	13.1
			>5000	41	13.4
Item	Frequency			%	

JOB		
Government	59	19.3
Private	81	26.5
Own job	94	30.7
Not employed	33	10.8
Student	39	12.7
EDUCATION LEVEL		
PMR/SRP	23	7.5
SPM	85	27.8
STPM	12	3.9
STAM	2	0.7
Certificate	20	6.5
Diploma	59	19.3
Degree	70	22.9
Master	7	2.3
PHD	4	1.3
No Education	24	7.8

The table above shows the profile of respondents involved in the research investigation. As for gender, the representation of the male is a little bit higher than female as the chances of getting them was much easier as compared to female counterpart. The composition of the age group displayed that most of the respondents were those belonging to the age group of 18 to 25 years old, while the other age groups made up between about 11% to 19%. Of the observed samples about one-third of them earned an income of less than RM 1,000. There were others between RM 1001 or even up to more than RM 5000. The respondents involved in the study were represented from various academic backgrounds, varying those with PMR/SRP (7.5%) moving along even up to the degree level (70%). The participated respondents were selected from two broad area which was rural that made up 22%, while those from urban area were 77.8% represented.

Means Analysis

This analyzing procedure was performed for the purpose of exploring the population of the study in terms of the level for each variable that had been attached to the society in the area of investigation.

Table 3: Means analysis on Quality of life, health, education, job

Variables	No. Respondents	Mean	Min	Max
Quality of life	306	3.88	1	5
Health	306	3.97	1	5
Education	306	3.95	3	5
Job	306	2.97	1	5

The result from the analysis in table 3 indicated that the quality of life of the society in the investigated area was closed to the satisfaction level as displayed by the mean value of 3.88. Similarly the same outcome can be observed on the findings related to the educational achievement as well as the level of health based on the calculated mean value of 3.95 and 3.97 respectively. Upon reviewing on the findings related to job opportunities, the result indicated that the finding can be concluded as moderately satisfactory as displayed by the mean value of 2.97.

Correlations

Table 4: Correlation between dependent variable (quality of life) and independent variables (health, educational level and job)

	QOL	HEALTH	EDUCATION	JOB
Quality of life Pearson Correlation (QoL) Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.354** .000	.170** .003	.596** .000
Health Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		1	.378** .000	.102** .075
Education Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)			1	.212** .000
Job Person Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)				1

Table 4 displayed the result of analysis for addressing objective 2 of the study. The result indicated that there was a moderate relationship between health status and the Quality of life. As regard to the matters concerning the relationship between education and quality of life, the findings revealed that there was a weak relationship based on pearson value of 0.170. however it is interestingly to be noted that there was a high moderate relationship between job opportunities and the Quality of life at the value of 0.596. Regardless of the strength of relationship between the above observation, but

still the analysis demonstrated that all the identifiable variables were significantly correlated with the Quality of life.

9. Discussion And Recommendation

The finding of the study suggested that there were significant relationship between all the identifiable variables as represented by health status, academic achievement, and job stability as to the Quality of life within the society in the district of Dungun. The fact that although the distribution of education for the study was widespread covering the lower level up to the university level revealed a very weak relationship, provide us with an interesting evidence. In another analysis of observing the possibility of differences through Kruskal-wallish procedure (not shown in this paper), it seems that most of the locals in the district of Dungun, despite of having university education at diploma and degree levels, they found it very difficult to get the job within the district of Dungun. The situation had been occurring for so long due to the fact that, there are not many industries are in operation, except for oil and gas related industries, where everyone from the nation are competing for the job. Similarly, there were not so much job opportunities were made available in the public sector due to the economic development in the district. With such a scenario the locals are left with two alternatives: one is to go out from the district hunting for jobs; or starting their own business locally if they were to stay in the same district.

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