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Quality of Life of Elderly Living in Residential Care Facilities in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: The establishment of policies to enhance the welfare of senior citizens considers the quality of life to be a key indicator of wellbeing. The purpose of this study is to determine the quality of life for senior citizens residing in residential care facilities run by the public, private, and non-profit sectors in Malaysia. 459 people from 12 different locations participated in the survey. After that, the data were examined using the descriptive method of analysis in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Physical, psychological, social, and environmental aspects of quality of life were evaluated. The findings offer a thorough understanding of the elderly and have a number of implications for future study and decision-making.

KEYWORDS: Elderly, Quality of Life, Residential Care Facilities, Older People, Meaningful Leisure, Social Environment, Health

I. INTRODUCTION

The lifespan of the elderly has increased as a result of medical advancements and healthy lifestyle choices. In 2020, there were 727 million people worldwide who were 65 or older. The number of elderly people worldwide is predicted to more than double over the next three decades, reaching over 1.5 billion in 2050. Between 2020 and 2050, the number of older people in every region will rise. The percentage of people in the world who are 65 or older is anticipated to rise from 9.3 percent in 2020 to 16 percent by 2050. (United Nations, 2019). In countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the proportion of people aged 65 and over rose to 17% in 2015 and is projected to reach 28% in 2050. (OECD, 2017). Due to longevity, there is now a need to better care for the elderly in both residential and home settings. The main issue brought up by an ageing population is how to accommodate and care for the elderly in a way that will maximise their quality of life.

The problem of an aging population has come to Malaysia later than it did to most Western countries, but it is coming fast. Malaysia's population is ageing quickly, and according to the most recent statistics, this could start happening as early as 2030. (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). In today's Malaysia society, as extended families living under one roof have given way to smaller and smaller nuclear families, and the traditional value of "raising children to have someone to look after you in your old age" has become outmoded. Further, in the past, women were the primary caregivers in the home, but now most of women hold formal jobs outside the home. Therefore, since the first residential home for elderly was established in Malaysia in 1991, there has been a great increase in the number of long-term care facilities from 58 in 1995 to 867 in 2004 (Social Welfare Department, 2004).

Right in the face of these dramatic changes in the demography, the structure of the families, and the need for long-term care in today's Malaysia society, negative press has begun to emerge. Such sensational incidents have fueled widespread discussion in Malaysia's society about older adults living in long-term care facilities. The significance of the life quality issues in long-term care facilities has been recognized among members of the health care system as well as among policy makers and the public.

Indeed, quality of life is now fast becoming a standard of measure of long-term care in many advanced industrial countries like the United States (Kane, 2001; Kane et al., 2003; Kelley-Gillespie, 2003; Lawton, 2001; Noelker & Harel, 2001) and in Malaysia as well. The quality of life for elderly residents in residential care is crucial because they must adjust to being away from their familiar homes, families, friends, and social networks. On the other hand, they must adapt to living in a new group environment (Joiner, 1991). Residents of residential care facilities are particularly concerned about quality of life because they are among the most vulnerable demographics in society due to their advanced age and high levels of dependency. Poor care delivery will have a significant negative impact on this group's quality of life. Due to cognitive and/or communication impairments, low expectations for the quality of life in residential care, or both, older people in residential settings may be unable or reluctant to complain about subpar care or conditions (Murphy, O'Shea, Cooney, Shiel, & Hodgins, 2006).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Liteature demonstrates that elderly living in residential care report lower quality of life (Loomis & Thomas, 1991). Pearson, Hocking, Mott, and Riggs (1993) stated that the residential care should ideally provide a normal living environment for elderly people, should not only support physical assistance, but their autonomy as well as their social independence. Unfortunately, all too often living in a residential care is associated with declining physical function (Yang, Simms, & Yin, 1998; Yeh, Sehy, & Lin, 2002; Yeh, Lin, & Lo, 2003), loss of home and family environment, a pervasive sense of loss of control, erosion of a sense of autonomy (Caplan, 1990; Abeles, 1991; Kane, 1991; Garmroth, Semradek, & Tomquist, 1995), lack of privacy such as shared rooms and baths (Kane, 1990) and the rigidity of routines of daily life. It is natural to wonder, with all these losses and circumstances, what residents have left to live for and how the elderly residents in residential care facilities can preserve their quality of life.

Although the issue of quality of life has been of increasing importance in the context of research where it is linked to many disciplines, there has been little agreement as to the definition and domains of the concept and how to measure it (Ferrans & Powers, 1985, 1992; Schipper, Clinch, & Powell, 1990; Oleson, 1990b, 1992; Meeberg, 1993; Moore, Newsome, Payne, & Tiansaward, 1993; Farquhar, 1995a; Kane, 2001; Lamb, 2001; Lassey & Lassey, 2001). A variety of meanings and measurements regarding quality of life exist, and the struggle with these issues continues. Franks (1996) has pointed out that "Quality of life is a variable that researchers refer to with great frequency, define with considerably different terminology, and measure with great difficulty" (p. 21). An examination of literature on the concept of quality of life in terms of its conceptual and measurement issues is presented here for the purpose of establishing the conceptual basis for the present study.

Katz and Gurland (1991) propose that the concept of quality of life in older adults especially of those in an institution should be a combination of the person (mind, body and spirit), the person's living and nonliving environment, and their life experiences. Bard (1984) described that the major challenge confronted when conducting quality of life research study hinges on the problem of definition. Many studies have "avoided defining what they purport to measure" (Farquhar, 1995b, p. 1440), which often leaves the reader unclear about what they are referring to. The lack of an explicit definition in a study may lead to inconsistencies in the interpretation of what actually constitutes quality of life (Ferrans & Powers, 1985; Haase & Braden, 2003; King, 2003). In order to conduct a valid quality of life study, a clear definition is required because the term has been applied to mean many different things. Otherwise, research done to investigate quality of life is difficult to carry out when the basis for study is ambiguous.

For the purpose of this study, quality of life as a whole is conceptualized as how the resident evaluates his or her life in various life domains that are salient and important to him or her (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Ferrans & Powers, 1985; Caiman, 1987; Ferrans, 1996). This includes four dimensions: physical environments, social environments, psychological and spirituality. Restriction to these dimensions is admittedly selective, but these dimensions are especially central in assessment of the quality of life of residential care facility residents. This study is concerned with the resident's life, so quality of life is the main focus for this study. Even though literature has not clearly differentiated quality of life and quality of care, issues related to quality of care are seen as a subset of quality of life concerns in this study. Fundamentally, different people value different things. An assumption of this study is that residents are the best judges of their quality of life, which is seen as a multidimensional concept.

III. METHODS

A. Design, Setting and Sampling

In relation to this study, the targated respondents is among the elderly living in residential care facilities provided by Government, NGOs and Privates. These facilities must register with Malaysia Department of Social Welfare (JKM) and The Registry of Society of Malaysia (ROS). According to data and statistics presented by the organization's respective websites, it shows that, up to June 2016, there were 216 residential care facilities around Peninsular Malaysia (Table 1). For the purpose of the survey, the total geographical area of Peninsular Malaysia was grouped into four regions: North, Central, South, and East. The survey employed a multistage stratified sampling procedure, where 12 residential cares were randomly selected within each of the four regions. Based on the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (JKM), 2016 report, the total population of the elderly residing in 216 residential cares provide by government, NGOs and private around peninsular Malaysia are 9, 520.

Table 1: Numbers of Residential Care for Elderly in Malaysia, 2016

State	Government	NGOs	Private	Total
Perlis	1	3	0	4
Kedah	1	2	7	10
Pulau Pinang	0	7	7	14
Perak	3	15	45	63
Pahang	0	0	0	0
Selangor	1	13	35	49
Negeri Sembilan	1	2	7	10

Kuala Lumpur				
Melaka	0	5	7	12
Johor	1	2	9	12
Kelantan	1	4	34	39
Terengganu	1	0	0	1
	0	2	0	2
Total	**10**	**55**	**151**	**216**

Source: Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2016

Table 2: Sampling of Respondents

Facilities Provider	**Sample Respondents**
10 Government Facilities	192
55 NGOs Facilities	181
151 Private Facilities	116
Total	**489**

Source: Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2016

A stratified random sampling has been deemed appropriate to determine sample size for this study. The study population was 9520 from 216 facilities from 3 providers, as shown in Table 3.5. Referring to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), for the population of 1300, a sample of approximately 297 respondents would be the best ratio for conducting the survey, as "sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research" (p. 295).

It has been discovered that the stratified random sampling technique is effective and appropriate for gathering data from different strata (a number of subpopulations) within the population (Sekaran, 2003). This sampling technique involves defining the strata and figuring out how many people from each stratum to include in the sample. There are two typical methods for distributing the sample. First, regardless of the sizes of the strata, equal numbers could be chosen. Second, proportional allocation denotes the addition of a number of members proportional to the size of each stratum to the sample. However, the main goal of using stratified random sampling is to guarantee that participants from all strata are included in the sample and that no stratum is left out (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs ,1994). Since comparisons between groups are possible and all groups are sufficiently sampled, it has advantages over other probability samples (Sekaran, 2003). The inclusion requirements included being at least 60 years old, being able to understand Malay, and providing written consent to participate. The study excluded residents who were younger than 60, unable to communicate, and those whose files in the homes indicated they had cognitive impairment.

B. Study Instruments

In this study, a structured, closed-ended questionnaire was employed. In the first section, there were questions about sociodemographic factors like age, gender, ethnicity, religion, marital status, number of children, education level, previous industry of employment, and length of time spent at home. The validated World Health Organization Quality of Life Instrument-Brief Version was used to assess quality of life (WHOQOL-BREF). It uses 26 items to assess perceived quality of life, which are divided into four categories: the environment domain, the physical domain, and the psychological domain (8 items). The perception of general health and quality of life are assessed using two items. According to a 5-point Likert scale, each item is rated. Higher scores denote a higher standard of living. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data. Malay languages were used to administer the questions. Before the main study began, a pilot study was completed.

C. Data Analysis

In this study, a structured, closed-ended questionnaire was employed. In the first section, there were questions about sociodemographic factors like age, gender, ethnicity, religion, marital status, number of children, education level, previous industry of employment, and length of time spent at home. The validated World Health Organization Quality of Life Instrument-Brief Version was used to assess quality of life (WHOQOL-BREF). It uses 26 items to assess perceived quality of life, which are divided into four categories: the environment domain, the physical domain, and the psychological domain (8 items). The perception of general health and quality of life are assessed using two items. According to a 5-point Likert scale, each item is rated. Higher scores denote a higher standard of living. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data. Malay languages were used to administer the questions. Before the main study began, a pilot study was completed.

Table 3: Result of Internal Consistency Reliability

Measurement	Number of Items	Number of items deleted	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha Value
Quality of Life	26	0	0.928
Physical	7	0	0.720
Psychological	6	0	0.819
Social Relatioship	3	0	0.870
Environment	8	0	0.765

IV. RESULTS

A. Response Rate

The success of a researcher in getting respondents to fill out the questionnaire, according to Babbie (2004), is gauged by the response rate. The questionnaires were hand distributed to the respondents in this study to ensure improved return rates. A personally administered questionnaire, according to Sekaran (2003), encourages respondents to respond honestly. Additionally, it aids in raising the proportion of positive comments from respondents (Dillman, 1978). Fourteen residential care institutions in Peninsular Malaysia received a total of 489 surveys, and all 489 questionnaires were returned for this study.

B. Characteristic of Respondents

The data were obtained from 489 elderly resides in residential care facilities provide by Government (n=192, 39.3%), NGOs (n=181, 37%) and Private (n=116, 23.7%). A summary of the demographic profile of 489 residents are displayed in Table 4.

Of the 489 residents, 280 (57.3%) were females and 209 (42.7%) were males. In this study, the largest proportion of residents was in the youngest old age group, age 60 to 74 years old (n=224, 45.8%) and middle old age group, age 75 to 84 years old (n=216, 44.2%). Both of this age group represents the fastest-growing segment of the elderly population in Malaysia (Department of Health, 2001). Totally, 49 residents (10%) were oldest old, age 85 years and above. United Nations 2001 has classified elderly into three life-stage subgroups which is young-old (60 to 69 years old), old-old (70 to 79 years old) and oldest-old (80 years old and above) (Zainab Ismail, Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad, & Zuria Mahmud, 2007).

With respect to ethnic and religion, half of the residents are Malay and Islam (n=255, 52.1%). For ethnic, its follow by Chinese 37.2 percent and Indian 10.6 percent. Other than Islam, 36.6 percent of the residents are Buddhist, 9.6 percent are Hindu, and 1.6 percent are Christian. In this study, marital status was classified as "never married", "married", and "divorced/separated". The majority of the residents were married (n=293, 59.9%). More men (n=90, 43.1%) than women (n=60, 21.4%) were divorced/separated and 9.4% (n=46) of the residents were never married (Table 5).

Most of the residents in this study does not received education (n=187, 38.2%). The reason behind this is, at their age, most of them are from the baby boomer's era where at that time, educational opportunities are limited. Approximately 30.9 percent (n=151) completed primary school, 20.4 percent (n=100) completed secondary school and 10.4 percent (n=51) of the respondent graduated from college. Before entering the residential care facilities, the residents were predominantly self-employed (n=203, 41.5%) and unemployed (n=160, 32.7%). About 16.6 percent (n=81) of the residents in this study previously worked as government servant and 9.2 percent (n=45) declared they work in private sector. Referring to their income, 65.8 percent (n=322) of the residents get monthly income below RM1,000 before they have retired while 34.2 percent (n=167) are above RM1,000.

Table 4: Characteristics of the Respondents (n=489)

Variable	Number	Percent
Facilities Provider		
Governments	192	39.3
NGOs	181	37.0
Private	116	23.7
Gender		
Male	209	42.7
Female	280	57.3
Age		
Youngest old	224	45.8
Middle old	216	44.2
Oldest old	49	10
Ethnic		
Malay	255	52.1
Chinese	182	37.2
Indian	52	10.6

Religion		
Islam	255	52.1
Buddhist	179	36.6
Hindu	47	9.6
Christianity	8	1.6
Marital status		
Never Married	46	9.4
Married	293	59.9
Divorced/Separated	150	30.7
Number of Children		
None	46	9.4
1 – 3 persons	226	46.2
4 – 6 persons	181	37
7 person and above	36	7.4
Education		
No Education	187	38.2
Primary School	151	30.9
Secondary School	100	20.4
College	51	10.4
Occupations		
Government	81	16.6
Self-employed	203	41.5
Private	45	9.2
Unemployed	160	32.7
Income		
Below RM1,000	322	65.8
Above RM1,000	167	34.2
Years of Staying		
1 to 5 years	291	59.5
6 to 9 years	189	38.7
10 years and above	9	1.8

Looking at the years of staying, 59.5 percent (n=291) of the residents stayed less than five years. 189 residents or 38.7 percent of the elderly already living there six to nine years and 9 of the residents living there more than ten years. 226 of them (46.2%) have one to three children. 181 (37%) have four to six children, 9.4 percent (n=46) of them have no children and 7.4 percent (n=36) have seven or more children.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Gender and Marital Status

Variable	**Gender**		**Total**
	Male	**Female**	
Marital Status			
Never Married	12 (5.7%)	34 (12.1%)	46 (9.4%)
Married	107 (51.2%)	186 (66.4%)	293 (59.9%)
Divorced/Separated	90 (43.1%)	60 (21.4%)	150 (30.7%)
Total	209 (100%)	280 (100%)	489 (100%)

C. Descriptive Analysis

The discussion starts with the findings regarding the respondents' opinions on four quality of life determinants from the physical, psychological, social relationship, and environment

Physical Domain: Referring to Table 6, the respondents have various views regarding physical domain. Regarding the physical pain that prevents them from doing what they need to do, and they really enjoy what they have in life, 3.3 percent and 1.6 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 60.1 percent of the respondents agreed that their ability to move from one place to another are very good and 59.1 percent of the respondents agreed that they have enough energy for their daily

life. 31.9 percent of the respondents are satisfied with their sleep, 32.7 percent of them satisfied with their ability to to perform daily life activities and 32.1 percent of the respondents agreed with their ability to work.

Table 6: The Distribution of Respondents' Feedbacks on Physical Domain

Physical Domain	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
	n	n	n	n	n	
	%	%	%	%	%	
Physical pain prevents me from doing what I need to do	0	157	151	165	16	3.08
	0	32.1	30.9	33.7	3.3	
I really enjoy what I have in my life	0	97	89	295	8	3.44
	0	19.8	18.2	60.3	1.6	
I have enough energy for my daily life	0	96	104	289	0	3.39
	0	19.6	21.3	59.1	0	
My ability to move from one place to another are very good	0	89	106	294	0	3.42
	0	18.2	21.7	60.1	0	
I am very satisfied with my sleep	0	181	152	156	0	2.95
	0	37	31.1	31.9	0	
I am very satisfied with my ability to perform my daily life activities	0	183	146	160	0	2.95
	0	37.4	29.9	32.7	0	
I am satisfied with my ability to work	0	184	148	157	0	2.94
	0	37.6	30.3	32.1	0	

*SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Psychological Domain: Referring to Table 7, the respondents have various views regarding psychological need. 21.7 percent and 1.4 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that they can focus so well, and their life is so meaningful. 61.8 percent of them agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with myself". 58.9 percent agreed that they have a good appearance and nice body while 56.2 percent agreed that they always have negative feelings, such as sadness, frustration, anxiety or depression. 33.5 percent of the, agreed that they need medical treatment to function in their daily life.

Table 7: The Distribution of Respondents' Feedbacks on Psychological Domain

Psychological Domain	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
	n	n	n	n	n	
	%	%	%	%	%	
My life is so meaningful	0	105	86	291	7	3.41
	0	21.5	17.6	59.5	1.4	
I need medical treatment to function in my daily life	0	174	151	164	0	2.98
	0	35.6	30.9	33.5	0	
I can focus so well	0	145	90	148	106	3.44
	0	29.7	18.4	30.3	21.7	
I have a good appearance and nice body	0	96	105	288	0	3.39
	0	19.6	21.5	58.9	0	
I am satisfied with myself	0	108	79	302	0	3.40
	0	22.1	16.2	61.8	0	
I always have negative feelings, such as sadness, frustration, anxiety or depression	0	132	82	275	0	3.29
	0	27	16.8	56.2	0	

*SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Social Relationship Domain: Table 8 shows the respondents' views on social relation in relation to quality of life. Approximately 60.3 percent of them agreed that they satisfied with their personal relationship. 60.1 percent agreed that they satisfied with the support they get from their friends and 56 percent of the respondents agreed that they satisfied with the support they get from their family.

Table 8: The Distribution of Respondents' Feedbacks on Social Relationship Domain

Social Relationship Domain	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
	n	n	n	n	n	
	%	%	%	%	%	
I am satisfied with my personal relationship	0	106	88	295	0	3.39
	0	21.7	18	60.3	0	
I am satisfied with the support I get from my family	0	125	90	274	0	3.30
	0	25.6	18.4	56	0	
I am satisfied with the support I get from my friends	0	106	89	294	0	3.38
	0	21.7	18.2	60.1	0	

*SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Environment Domain: Referring to Table 9, the respondents have various views regarding environment domain. 24.9 percent strongly agreed that their physical environment is healthy. 63.6 percent agreed that they satisfied with their living conditions and the convenience of getting health services. 33.5 percent of them agreed that they have enough money to meet their needs and the information they need is easy to get. 50.9 percent agreed that they satisfied with the transportation, and 54.4 percent agreed with the statement "I always feel safe". Only 12.1 percent of the respondents agreed that they have a lot of opportunities for leisure activities.

Table 9: The Distribution of Respondents' Feedbacks on Environment Domain

Environment Domain	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
	n	n	n	n	n	
	%	%	%	%	%	
I always feel safe	0	139	84	266	0	3.26
	0	28.4	17.2	54.4	0	
My physical environment is healthy	0	1	49	317	122	4.15
	0	0.2	10	64.8	24.9	
I have enough money to meet my needs	0	174	151	164	0	2.98
	0	35.6	30.9	33.5	0	
It is easy for me to get all the information that I need.	0	174	151	164	0	2.98
	0	35.6	30.9	33.5	0	
I have a lot of opportunities for leisure activities	0	268	162	59	0	2.57
	0	54.8	33.1	12.1	0	
I am satisfied with my living conditions	0	102	76	311	0	3.43
	0	20.9	15.5	63.6	0	
I am satisfied with the convenience of getting health services	0	102	76	311	0	3.43
	0	20.9	15.5	63.6	0	
I am satisfied with the transportation here	0	103	137	249	0	3.30
	0	21.1	28	50.9	0	

*SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

V. DISCUSSION

The degree to which a person appreciates the significant opportunities presented by life has been referred to as quality of life. More focus has been placed on older adults' daily lives as they have aged over time.

Participating in leisure activities is a job that can benefit an individual in a meaningful and positive way. It can also be used as a form of distraction to ease negative emotions and stress. A prior study found a negative correlation between leisure activity and stress and depressive symptoms. (Iso-ahola & Park, 1996; Dergance et al., 2003; Lu, 2011) Additionally, leisure time activities can significantly impact one's level of health. The older people's interpretation of their happiness and pleasure in engaging in leisure activities may be due to a variety of factors. According to Leitner & Leitner (2012), leisure activities are carried out for personal enjoyment because they bring about happiness and satisfaction for the individual. As an illustration, social interaction while engaging in leisure activity can benefit a person psychologically. The creation of a mutual relationship and sense of belonging to one another occurs when the activity is conducted in a group or necessitates social interaction. The results were consistent with the earlier study. Studies have shown that social interaction can lead to the emergence of new social bonds

(Rudman et al.,1997; Dergance et al., 2003). It is also supported by a longitudinal cross-sectional study by Newall et al. (2009) that discovered that an increase in social engagement will lead to a reduction in older people's loneliness.

The majority of the institution's activities call for physical aptitude. Exercise, crafting, walking, and solitary activity are activities that are frequently used in the facility. For the activity that depends more heavily on physical fitness, it may aid in enhancing physical fitness, promoting blood circulation, and preventing disease. In contrast, a task that requires less physical skill may require more mental effort, which would hone those abilities and impart new information. A variety of benefits of leisure activity were linked to improved health, according to a previous study. For instance, participation in leisure activity will increase cardiopulmonary fitness, as mentioned by Fratiglioni et al. (2004). Two years later, Cheung & Martin (2007) discovered that engaging in recreational activities promotes health and acts as a barrier against the onset of disease. Verghese et al. found in 2009 that cognitive activity can lower the risk of dementia and other forms of vascular cognitive impairment (VCI). A study conducted in the same year by Juan (2009) found that engaging in recreational activities improves health requirements in terms of enhancing blood circulation, enhancing physical fitness, and preventing disease in order to live a healthy life. Depending on the activities they engage in, leisure participation has a variety of advantages.

VI. CONCLUSION

According to earlier studies, engaging in leisure activities promotes health and wellbeing. Elderly residents of institutions should be encouraged to engage in or resume meaningful, valuable, and unique leisure activities by health care professionals and the management team. The engagement will give people a sense of continuity between the past and the present, as well as a sense of their current purpose and future direction, all of which will help to improve their quality of life. The health care industry and policy makers can benefit from the information provided by this study. The older people should be re-engaged in leisure activities that are meaningful, valued, and individualised by providing adequate facilities.

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