

The Influence of Location on Quality of Life of Older Persons in Indonesia

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Abstract

Older person is increasing in most parts of the world. East Java province is one of the most populated provinces of older persons in Indonesia, and Kota Batu District occupied most of the older persons in the province. Due to the fact that older persons are growing, quality of life has become a popular topic of discussion among academicians in Indonesia in recent years. This study is aim at measuring the level of quality of life of older persons aged 60 years and older. Following the increasing of older person, the present study took place in Kota Batu District, East Java province. Using a simple random sampling technique, a total of 300 older persons aged 60 years and older was selected. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews using a questionnaire form and analyzed descriptively. Result of the study show the majority of older persons in the study area has a moderate level of quality of life, and there was a significant difference exist in quality of life of old persons across villages of the study.

Keywords: Older person; Population; Quality of life; Well-being; Happiness

1. Introduction

The discussion on the quality of life of older persons in Indonesian context is a new endeavor. This is because, among other things, besides the concept itself is a very vague concept, most of the local scholars have been concentrating research on other aspects of population such as fertility, mortality, migration, and the interaction of these aspects with the national development. Besides, the concept of older person also has been a new concept among local scholars. The main purpose of the present article is to explore the quality of life of older population living in family in rural areas in East Java, Indonesia. Older population has been growing in Indonesia. In recent years, East Java has been one of the provinces in Indonesia that has a large number of older populations. At the global level, the growing number of older population in society has attracted attention not only of demographers and gerontologists, but of scholars interested in older population as well. One of the main themes in gerontological research concerns the quality of life (QoL) of older population. One type of concern, which is the focus of this paper, is to explore the level of quality of life at the household level. During the last several decades, Indonesia has experienced profound demographic changes at household level, particularly in terms of rapid transition from high to low fertility and increasing in life expectancy. As a result of these changes the population is ageing and the size and the proportion of older population has increased substantially (Wan Ibrahim and Komang Astina, 2013).

With the growing number of population aged 60 years and older in recent years, quality of life research will be an important research agenda in the near future. Literature suggests that the quality of life reflects both macro-societal and socio-demographic influences on people and the personal characteristics and concerns of individuals (Zahava Gabriel and Ann Bowling). Following the growing pressure on social, economic resources and health facing quality of life of older persons, mapping and measuring the quality of this category of population will be an urgent need. This is particularly true as the number of older persons increase, the demand for the provision of welfare service will be increased as well. Despite there have been a growing number of studies to explore the daily life of older persons in Indonesia in recent years, the nature of their quality of life are still relatively unexamined. Very little information about the quality of life of older people is available. Thus, many questions regarding the quality of life of older people remain unexplored. We do not know for sure why certain older people have a high quality of life, while others tend to have a low level of quality of life. In an attempt to fill the gap, therefore, this paper aims to analyze the quality of life of older people in Indonesia with specific reference to older person living in rural areas in Kota Batu district, East Java province, Indonesia. The older population in this article is defined as persons aged 60 years and above.

2. Objective

Quality of life has been a broad concept that can be assessed through various approaches. The present paper explores the impact of geographical location on the quality of life of older persons in Indonesia. Quality of life, a multi-dimensional concept, is associated with a variety of determinants. This article presents the results of a cross-sectional survey on quality of life of older persons living in community with their family members in rural

areas in East Java, Indonesia. It presents a small portion of the larger study on quality of life in three villages in Kota Batu District, East Java province, particularly in terms of differential level of quality of life across all three villages studied. In particular, the main purpose of the present article is (1) to describe the background of the village, (2) to explore the quality of life of older population across villages in Kota Batu District, East Java, Indonesia, and (3) to discuss the differences between mean quality of life of the villages. This particular aspect is important to analyze since through empirical observation, geographical location placed certain impact on the quality of life. Although quality of life has become a popular topic of discussion, not many researches on this aspect of older persons has been conducted. Understanding the quality of life of older persons is essential not only for the family of the older persons, but also for the government itself. As such research on the quality of life of this category of population is an urgent need in Indonesia.

3. Literature Review

Most of the population in developing countries are living in rural areas and depending on agriculture. Some 3.1 billion, or 55 percent of the total population of developing countries live in rural areas (IFAD, 2010). Despite massive progress in reducing poverty in some parts of the world over the past couples of decades, there are still about 1.4 billion people living on less than US\$1.25 a day, and 70 percent of the world's very poor people are rural (IFAD, 2010). Several studies show that participating in rural non-farm activities is seen as an important route out of poverty. As such, promoting the development of this sector should be given prioritized by policymakers in developing countries as a source of poverty reduction of rural poor and at the same time to uplift the quality of life of the rural poor.

Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad (1999) in his study on well-being of elderly persons in rural Malaysia stated that well-being of elderly persons varies according to geographical location. The closer the community to the urban center, he finds that the higher the level of well-being of elderly person in his study. The closer look at this phenomenon, it is related to the resources needed by elderly persons. The community which is located closer to urban center has various resources needed for older person's life. Resources are materials found in the community that the villagers use for food, clothing, or shelter. People require all these resources to survive, and these particular resources do not distributed evenly across villages. Knapp, Ross and McCrae (1989) in their book entitled *challenge of the economic environment* state that the quality of life depends not only on competition for space, but also on the opportunity to earn a reasonable income. In many parts of the world, the opportunity to this is easier in urban setting compared to rural areas. Thus, communities with abundant of resources people desires will have a bigger number of population. This is especially true as environmental determinism, that is basic speculations centered on the influence of natural environment on human social progress, or the relationship between humans and their environments, became the main focus in human geography since the discipline early appeared in German as a field of advanced study (Harries and Norries, 1986). In other words, human behavior, in some extent, is determined by the earth environment.

Quality of life, a relatively new concept in academic literature, is now widely used, both in academic writing and everyday life (Bond and Corner, 2004). As the number of older people in society is growing, it has attracted policy makers to give special attention to this category of population, and now quality of life of older persons has become a widely trendy debate. Shin and Johnson (1978) as cited in Gilhooly, Gilhooly and Bowling (2005) defined quality of life as the possession of resources necessary to the satisfaction of individual need, wants and desires, participation in activities enabling personal development and self-actualization and satisfactory comparison between oneself and others. In recent years quality of life has attracted an increasing awareness by many quarters. As a multi-dimensional concept, it has been very much related to the meaning in life, particularly person's happiness and well-being.

From this perspective, a person who has a high quality of life is a person who has enjoyed his life as compared with other people. The absolute and relative number of older persons in Indonesia is increasing. Wan Ibrahim, Asyraf, I Komang Astina and Budiyanto (2013) who review this phenomenon in Indonesia found that Indonesia has recently experiencing rapid growth of her older population. The growth of older person is undoubtedly has been very much related to the success of development programs of any nations. Growing old is generally associated with a period of declining physical capacity and increased health risks and multiple psychosocial losses (Schilling, 2006). Quality of life, thus, has been related to human potential and the possibility to live a long, healthy and happy life, and it is also evident that quality of life is strongly related to social characteristics (Schilling, 2006).

In developing countries, the growth of older persons is not necessarily accompanied by improved health facilities of older persons. This is particularly true because in much of the developing countries, the growth of older persons is taking place in the period where the public health and nutritional consciousness are low. Furthermore, towards the end of life aging is perceived as a time of co-morbidity and general disability, and even if it is true that additional gains in life expectancy is possible, added years to life will not be necessarily a healthy one (Jariah, Sharifah and Tengku Aizan, 2006). Older persons not only have the risk of suffering from a

chronic disease, but they also have the risk of suffering from multiple ailments (Quadagno, 1999). As older person has always related to deteriorated health status, health problem is a major problem for the maintaining the quality of life of older persons, and all these circumstances effects quality of life of older persons.

4. Materials and Method

The present paper presents the results of a survey conducted at household level to examine the quality of life of older persons in three villages in Kota Batu District, East Java, Indonesia. Sumberrejo and Mojorejo, and Gunungsari are three villages that were purposely selected as the study area. They were selected because of the huge number of older persons and their physical environments, resources available, and economics activity as well. The materials from which this paper is written came from a larger study conducted on older persons at household level in Kota Batu District, East Java province, Indonesia. Three villages were purposely chosen for the study. The main objective of that study was to investigate the factors associated with the level of quality of life of older persons living in community with their family members.

Relevant to this paper are variables related to the level of quality of life across some socio-demographic profiles. Kota Batu District is very popular with the traditional home industries such as *krepek* industry (cracker), handy craft and the like. The economy of the district is basically based on agriculture with vegetables, flowers and apples are being main cash crops. A pilot study was conducted in all three villages to determine the population. From the pilot study, sampling frame for every village was set up. Using a simple random sampling technique, a total of 300 older persons aged 60 years and older was selected. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews using a questionnaire form. Quality of life was assessed through a scale which was consisted of 11-items. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each item was applicable to them using a four-point scale. Data were analyzed using t-test, and ANOVA.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1: Background of the Villages

In Indonesia, although steady economic growth that taking place in recent years, that has led to a gradual reduction in overall poverty in the country, the percentage of rural poor is still remains a big problem to Indonesia. A huge number of rural population still lives below the poverty line. All the three villages studied have their own characteristics. Physical environments, resources available, and economics activity in these three villages are quite different, and these differences have profound impacts on the quality of life of the people. Gunungsari has been a fertile and a producer of vigitables and flower. The majority of the population, including older persons are able to be absorved in the farms, while it is not to be the case in other two villages. In Sumberrejo and Mojorejo, as the opportunity to work is limited, not many older persons has the opportunity to be absorved in the labor force. In every parts of the world, older persons generally seek employment in the same labor markets as all other workers of all ages. As such older person has to compete with younger person to get job, and employer normally likely to accept the young. Thus, the older persons do not have much opportunity to get a suitable job.

The settlement in Gunungsari which is clustered, helps its population for the protection and for cooperation. The people in Gunungsari also has many social advantages in living close together in which it may influence older population and the villagers to have a higher quality of life. Agricultural activity in Gunungsari, particularly flower farms that allows more labor absorved, has resulted in income of older persons better. These products have been sent to various cities in Java Island. Because most of older persons have their own income, it is eventually results in quality of life of older persons higher.

5.2: Quality of Life Accros Locations

Based on everyday observation, quality of life differs greatly across locations. This is true because the world resources is not distributed evenly by geographic regions, and the way resources are distributed on the space of the earth has a profound impact of the life of the people, and thus affects the quality of life of a people. It is reasonable to suggest that the quality of life of the elderly people will be influenced by characteristics of the particular villages. This is because each characteristic may affect how elderly people relate to one another socially and economically, and the more affluent villages will have higher number of people with high quality of life as compared to less affluent villages. Result shows the majority of older persons in study area have a moderate level of quality of life, and the quality of life of older persons varies according to villages. In all villages, quality of life of older persons is slightly difference in terms of its number and percentage. Quality of life of older persons in three villages is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Level of Quality of Life Across Villages

Villages	Level of Quality of Life			Mean
	Low	Moderate	High	
Gunungsari	11 (10.7)	57 (55.3)	35 (34.0)	32.2
Sumberrejo	21 (17.1)	90 (73.1)	12 (9.8)	30.1
Mojorejo	4 (4.2)	78 (81.2)	14 (14.6)	30.7

Gunungsari has a higher number of older persons who have a high level of quality of life as compared to two other villages. Older persons who reported as having a high level of quality of life in this village are 35 older persons (34.0%). Both Sumberrejo and Mojorejo have the same number and percentage of older persons who have a high quality of life, which are 12 (9.8%) and 14 (14.6%) respectively. It means that Gunungsari has a higher number of villagers who have a high level of quality of life. In terms of moderate level, analysis shows that Sumberrejo has a higher number of villagers who have a moderate level of quality of life, i.e. 90 persons (73.1%) as compared to 78 (81.2%) in Mojorejo, and 57 (55.3%) in Gunungsari. Analysis shows that Sumberrejo has a highest number of villagers who have a low level of quality of life, i.e. 21 persons (17.1%) as compared to 11 (10.7%) in Gunungsari, and 4 (4.2%) in Mojorejo. Whilst Gunungsari is reported to have a highest number of a high level of quality of life, Gunungsari also appeared to be the village that has smallest number of older persons who reported as having a moderate level of quality of life compared to other two villages. At a glance, this may be a sign that this village is more developed with a wide range of economic activities that helped older people live on their own lives. Thus, in Gunungsari we find abundant of resources people desire. This is in accordance to what Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad (1999) and Knapp, Ross and McCrae (1989) who found that the level of well-being of elderly person is related to resources needed, particularly the opportunity to earn a reasonable income.

5.3: Differences between Mean Quality of Life

All the three villages studied have almost the same mean of quality of life, with Gunungsari is reported to have slightly higher. Mean quality of life of old persons in Gunungsari is 32.2, and mean for Mojorejo is 30.7, while mean quality of life for Sumberrejo is 30.1. Therefore, in terms of mean differences, Gunungsari, particularly has the higher quality of life, while older persons in Sumberrejo have a lower quality of life. To detect whether there exists a significant difference in the level of quality of life across villages, data have been analyzed using ANOVA, and the result showed that differences exist in the level of quality of life of old persons across villages, $F(2, 319) = 7.506, p < 0.05$.

Analysis of Post Hoc Tests showed the quality of life of old persons differ significantly according to the village, which is the older persons in Gunungsari have a higher mean quality of life as compared to Sumberrejo ($p < 0.05$), and Mojorejo ($p < 0.05$), whereas the quality of life of older persons in Mojorejo did not differ significantly with the older persons in Sumberrejo ($p > 0.05$). Therefore what could be concluded is that quality of life of older persons in Gunungsari is higher as compared to the quality of life of older persons in Mojorejo and Sumberrejo. These differences, among other things, due to the differences in terms of physical environment, resources available, as well as economic activities run by the villagers in these three villages. Village with abundant of resources people desire which offers various economic activities will have a bigger number of population who has a higher level of quality of life as environmental determinism postulated that human behavior, in some extent, is determined by the earth environment.

With its fertile soil, Gunungsari is a producer of vegetables and flowers, primarily roses, and absorbing older persons as its labor where a lot of elderly persons are engaged in this sector, while the other two villages have smaller labor absorption power, and older persons are being forced to compete with a younger one to get job (Salladien, 2009). These two villages are lacks of employment opportunities, the villagers are facing difficulties in accessing employment and are likely to live in poverty result in quality of life of older persons in these two villages is rather low.

From the discussion, it is clear that geographic location has its impact on the quality of life of older person. The more developed the village, the more older persons who have higher level of quality of life. With the development, the villages will have a wide range of economic activities that prevent older people from depended their lives on other people.

6. Conclusion

Due to the fact that the older person is growing in number, issue of quality of life of older persons has been an interesting issue to be discussed. Quality of life research, particularly quality of life of older persons is not yet developed in Indonesia. Quality of life is especially related to the welfare of older persons as a whole. Indonesia is still left behind compared to developed countries in terms of the welfare of the older persons. This paper presents a small portion of the larger study on quality of life in three villages in Kota Batu District, East Java province. From that study, a wide range of data has been collected, and among other things is data related to

factor related to the quality of life of these older persons in study area. This paper has discussed the influence of geographical location on the quality of life of older persons in Kota Batu District, East Java province, Indonesia. Result of this study reveals that location is particularly important to the quality of life of older persons. Resource is not distributed evenly on the surface of the world, and location has always been related to resources needed in everyday life. Village which has abundant of resources needed by elder persons has a higher number of older people possesses a high level of quality of life. Least developed village has higher number of older person possesses a low level of quality of life. Information from unstructured interviews with respondents as well as with several informants during the study found that in the more developed village there were a lot of job opportunities enabling older persons to have their own income, and older person that has their own income will has the opportunity to own resources necessary to fulfill his need, enabling personal development and satisfactory in older persons, and eventually affects the quality of life.

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