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INVESTIGATING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE: A CASE OF SENTUL EAST, KUALA LUMPUR CITY

BY

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, it is one of the government's initiative to increase the residents' quality of life as part of strategy to develop the country. Therefore, many researches are conducted to measure life satisfaction and how to improve the current life quality of the residents. However, there is a lack of study focusing on the subjective approach which relates to feeling, perceptions, evaluations, and satisfaction of the residents especially in Kuala Lumpur. In order to fill the gap in the previous researches on quality of life, this research is conducted using both objective and subjective approaches as means to measure and understand quality of life as perceived by residence of Sentul, one of the districts in Kuala Lumpur. There are four objectives considered in this research which are - to develop the conceptual framework which related to QOL; to determine the most important component that influence the QOL in urban area; to identify the level of satisfaction towards components for QOL in Sentul neighbourhood; and to propose recommendations in order to improve the QOL in Sentul area. In terms of research methodology, the method used are qualitative method which is site observation and quantitative method for questionnaire survey which included residents from various type of residential units such as Bungalow, terrace, condominium, apartment, flat, quarters, and room. On the other hand, literature review has been used as supporting literature to the findings. Scaling and measurement method like the Likert score from 1 to 5 was adopted in order to extract the finding especially for subjective approach. For data analysis, three types of analysis were applied which are descriptive analysis for categorical variables, correlation analysis used to identify the association between two continuous variables and regression analysis to identifying the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. In carrying out this research, 314 people participated in the survey which took place in certain residential areas in Sentul. The findings show that the residents' are very satisfied with their spiritual life as majority of Malaysians who are diversified in races and religion beliefs are able to live in harmony. The test also revealed indicators that score the least in life satisfactory measure are economic stability and safety. It is recommended for the government intervention in terms of improving those facilities for which the residents have expressed non-satisfaction or lower level of satisfaction.

خلاصة البحث

في ماليزيا، هي واحدة من مبادرات الحكومة لرفع نوعية حياة السكان كجزء من استراتيجية لتطوير و تحسين البلاد .لذلك، يقوم الباحثون بعمل الكثير من الأبحاث لقياس مدى الرضا عن الحياة وكيفية تحسين نوعية الحياة الحالية للسكان. ومع ذلك، يوجد نقص في الدراسات التي تركز على طريقة الحياة الشخصية والتي ترتبط بالشعور, التصورات, التقييمات ورضا السكان وخاصة في كوالا لمبور. لغاية سد الفجوة في الأبحاث السابقة التي أجريت على جودة الحياة ونوعيتها، استخدم في هذا البحث طرق و أساليب موضوعية وذاتية كوسيلة لقياس نوعية الحياة وفهمها كما يراها المقيمون في سنتول، إحدى المناطق الواقعة في كوالالمبور. هناك أربعة أهداف رئيسية قام هذا البحث بتغطيتها وتتمثل في ما يلي: القيام بتطوير إطار المفاهيم المتعلقة بجودة الحياة و نوعيتها, القيام بتحديد المكون الأكثر أهمية والذي بدوره يؤثر على جودة الحياة في المناطق الحضرية, القيام بتحديد مستوى الرضا والقبول تجاه عناصر جودة ونوعية الحياة في حي سنتول و اقتراح بعض التوصيات لتحسبن جودة الحياة في منطقة سنتول. من ناحية منهجية البحث، الطرق المستخدمة هي طريقة البحث النوعي التي تتمثل بملاحظة الموقع وطريقة البحث الكمي المتمثلة بالاستبيان الذي شمل سكان من وحدات سكنية مختلفة مثل جناح صغير، شرفة، عمارة، شقة، أرباع، وغرفة. من ناحية أخرى, استخدمت الدراسات السابقة كداعم للنتائج. تم اعتماد مقياس ليكرت من 1 إلى 5 كطريقة للقياس من أجل استخراج النتائج خاصة لطريقة الحياة الشخصية. تم استخدام 3 أنواع لتحليل البيانات وهي التحليل الوصفي للمتغيرات التي تعتمد على الفئات, ثانيا التحليل الارتباطي لتحديد العلاقة بين متغيرين مستمرين, وأخيرا تحليل الانحدار لتحديد العلاقة بين المتغير التابع ومتغير أو أكثر من المتغيرات المستقلة. أثناء تطبيق هذه الدراسة في بعض المناطق السكنية في سنتول قام 314 شخصا بالمشاركة. وتشير النتائج إلى أن السكان راضون جدا عن حياتهم الروحية كأغلب الماليزيين مختلفي الأعراق والمعتقدات الدينية لديهم القدرة على التعايش بتوافق وانسجام. وأظهر الاختبار أن الاستقرار الاقتصادي والسلامة هي أهم المؤشرات التي سجلت أقل حد من الرضا عن الحياة. وقد أوصت الدراسة بتدخل الحكومة في مجال تحسين وتطوير المرافق التي عبر عنها السكان بعدم الرضا أو انخفاض مستوى الرضا.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning

……..
Mohamed Abdul Mohit
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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I dedicate this masterpiece of mine to my beloved late Abah and my beloved Mama, also to my girls power with their man, my forever liltle brother, the handsome nephews of mine, friends ,and you. Yes, you, you know who you are. Thank you all for your endless support through my ups and downs. I did it Abah, Ibah did it!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one is the starting point of the overall study where it introduces general information about the topic and the flow of the study. The chapter also addresses problem statement identified from the research gap of previous literatures. The aim and objectives give direction for the study which is to measure the quality of life of Sentul residence and provides implications as well as recommendation for future studies.

Quality of life (QOL) is a study on the perception of residents' in one area especially for people living in urban area like Kuala Lumpur. Quality of life from Oxford Dictionary means 'the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group: the things that are needed for a good quality of life'. Additionally, from the researcher's point of view, the QOL is related to the satisfaction or life appreciation of people from what they already have and how they appreciate their life from it. However, Marans (2012) highlighted that QOL is difficult to differentiate between the notion of QOL, well-being, satisfaction, and happiness.

The quality of life study was started by Plato who examine the nature of good-life of an individual or society which affected on the happiness and stronger relationship in the community. However, the objective and subjective approaches of QOL has been introduced by Aristotle since he argued that the attitudes, feelings, and beliefs which fall in the subjective approaches did not form a complete measure of a happy life. Marans (2012) emphasized that many QOL studies have focused on

objective approaches which highlight the human conditions like demographics, mortality and morbidity, and crime rates of the area where these studies were launched during the social indicators movement in 1970s.

Life appreciation is one of subject matter in QOL where it depends on how people value themselves. Massam (2002) stated that 'the lives we lead reflect the choices we make within the bounds of constraints and information (p.142).' As far as the life appreciation and QOL is concern, the parts of the world are moving to a better life which most of them migrate from rural to urban areas. Marans (2012) identified that according to an editorial in the September issue of Scientific American, the cities reached 2.8 billion people by 2000 during the 20th century while the UN predicts that by the year 2050, the number will increase up to 6 billion people. The fact shows that people are intended to achieve a good quality of life time by time.

> The philosopher Kingwell (2000: 207) in his book: The World We Want: virtue, vice and the good citizen, examine the concept of quality life and he reminds us of the unstable relationship that many thoughtful people encounter between success and meaning. "They want to know what it all means, what their personal prosperity is in aid of: fulfillment, virtue, happiness, something. They want a *telos* of some kind, in other words, an end in view that helps to make life worth living" (in Massam, 2002). (p.142)

Unfortunately, the quality of life of the residents' can be different from others since it measured from various aspects like economic conditions, house conditions, environment conditions, safety conditions, social conditions, physical and emotional health, and also spirituality life of oneself. Studies (2006) stressed that the quality of life experience among residents can vary from person to person. The way people treat themselves varies from one another. While several resort to food, vacations, shopping and spending time with family and friends, others may turns to property investment,

and assets in order to be content with their lives. Thus, quantifying a concept as personal as 'quality of life' is a complicated chore.

The variety as well as complexity in identifying indictors of life quality in an area makes the study on the subject worthwhile especially in the outskirt of Kuala Lumpur city such as Sentul where the residence are diversified in many aspects such as economics, income and residency. Therefore, in this study, indicators that contribute to the quality of life of the residents of Sentul will be measured and the positive and negative implications will be drawn in discussion session.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Malaysia, one of the government's initiatives is to develop the country by focusing on both economic and residents' quality of life. The quality of residents' life is not only drawn from the economy aspect but also other factors like physical development, psychology and social including health, safety, housing, education, environment, transportation and working environment. All of these factors are considered as objective approach which analysis are made on secondary data at an aggregate level like neighbourhood, city, or country which not include the subjective approach involving the feeling or satisfaction from the residents'. This kind of approach need the primary data collected at the individual level using social survey methods which hardly used by previous studies that touched the matters on QOL. It is important to measure the feeling and perception of residence since three quarter of the Malaysian will be move to an urban area in 2030. According to Jamaliah (2004), it is hard to know either Malaysian are ready to face the reality of become as an urban country especially for people who stayed in Kuala Lumpur since it is the soul of Malaysia, and this will effect on the QOL of the residence and their appreciation of life.

Besides, the small numbers of research made on neighbourhood in Malaysia especially in Kuala Lumpur open rooms for more researches in QOL to be made on other areas including Sentul which has yet to be studied. Therefore, this research is done in order to evaluate both of objective and subjective approaches on quality of life of residents in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur to reveal the feeling, perceptions, evaluations, and satisfaction of residents' in the area. Similar to other studies on other areas in Kuala Lumpur, this study will benefited the authority as well as the residence while addressing the real problems that they face in upgrading their life in the midst of urbanisation.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is conceptual framework related to QOL study?
2. What is the most important components which influence the QOL in urban area?
3. What is the level of satisfaction among Sentul's residents according to various components in this study?
4. What is the method to improve the QOL in urban area?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to identify the overall satisfaction as perceived by respondents in order to understand which indicators are the most important indicator in achieving good quality of life.

Specifically, the objectives which derived from the research questions are as follow:

1. To develop the conceptual framework which related to QOL study.

2. To determine the most important component that influence the QOL in urban area.
3. To identify the level of satisfaction towards components for QOL study in Sentul neighbourhood.
4. To propose recommendations in order to improve the QOL in Sentul area.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

From this research, the output produced will cover the residents' satisfaction of Sentul, Kuala Lumpur based on the components highlighted in this research. This is to know the level of satisfaction about the area based on the indicators like house conditions, environment conditions, safety conditions, and social conditions. The significance of this study could be achieved in three different aspects which are academic, government, and investor.

1. Academic

This study contributes to the understanding on the quality of life of people in urban area and help to improve the quality of life towards life appreciation among residents in Sentul. Especially for Urban and Regional Planning students who have to meet the communities for better understanding on their needs. Other than that, it also contributes to existing knowledge by explaining how the different indicators in QOL relate to individual perception on life satisfaction and adds beneficial input particularly on district of Sentul since this kind of study has yet to be done in the area.

2. Government

This study will bring some input for government on how to act in order to improve the quality of life in Sentul as part of Kuala Lumpur. Moreover, this study is part of initiative in assisting Government in the process of improving the image of the

country. For example, the Government should know how to treat squatters in Sentul as their existence will create negative image on Kuala Lumpur as the capital city of Malaysia. Besides, the Government can also responses to complaints and suggestions made by the residents as provided by this research.

3. Investor

This research is significant to investors who are interested in investing in the study area. The study area can be develop in order to fulfil the needs of residents' to make sure the quality of life can be achieve. By finding out the preference and expectation of residents gathered from the research, investors will be able to invest in elements that are sought by the residents. For instance, as the residents from lower income such as who live in flats score high in needing safety, investors may focus in investing in providing safety and security services.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

1. This study is limited to one neighbourhood of Kuala Lumpur only which is Sentul as the other areas will be covered by other researchers.
2. The study is focusing on the satisfaction of residents' only without considering non-residents who work in the area. The coverage of the study will only represent the residents' satisfaction and not overall population of Sentul.
3. This study's data collection representation is constricted to October until December 2015 only because the study is conducted during that period.
4. Residents' of Sentul are reluctant to give full cooperation in the survey due to certain reasons like lack of time, busy with housework or plain refusal.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

Every chapter in this dissertation is related to each other starting from the beginning until the end of study. This dissertation is organized into six chapters. The first chapter provides the introductory of the study that includes the research background, a statement of the research problem and; finally, it outlines the objectives of the study. The second chapter provides a review of the literature that has helped to define the research direction by providing a theoretical and methodological understanding of residents' satisfaction and their perceptions towards quality of life focusing on the study area. The literature review also helps to identify the relevant information for research methodology. The third chapter describes the methodology employed for this research. This chapter also focuses on the method of data collection, analysis and results. Chapter four is focusing on the study area where it include the history of the area, existing land use, maps of the area and any related materials for case study. However, Chapter five is the results, findings and discussions from the survey and will related to the method from the methodology used in chapter three. In addition, it presents the analysis of questionnaires as well as visual assessments. Finally, chapter six explained on the interpretation, recommendation and the conclusion of the study.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, chapter one draws a picture on how this research will be expanded. It begins with the basic elements which are the introduction of the topic, the exploration of why this research should be conducted, research questions, research objectives, significance of the research, limitation of research and the structure of the research which can give clear explanation for this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Quality of life study is important in order to achieve Malaysia's target to become an urban country by the year 2030. It is stated in RMK-11 (Eleventh Malaysia Plan), Chapter 10 about Malaysia Beyond 2020 as follow:

> The urbanisation rate will reach 75% in 2020 and is expected to increase to 80% by 2030. The main conurbations of Greater Klang Valley, Georgetown, Johor Bahru, Kuantan, Kuching, and Kota Kinabalu will continue to be the nexus of economic and social activities, housing major global companies and talent. The large middle-class population in these areas will be a huge consumer market for local and global products and services. Demand for modern, integrated infrastructure, efficient urban services, and green spaces will increase.

It shows that Malaysia is ready to become an urban country in 2030. Therefore, this study on quality of life is related to investigate the readiness of the residents in term of the dimensions especially for urban residents like Kuala Lumpur.

In addition, study of quality of life involves three levels (see Figure 2.1) which are overall assessment of well-being, broad domains or dimensions, and lastly components of each domain (Spilker, 1996 in Ferrans, 2004). The top of the level is the overall satisfaction of residents on quality of life, the middle is the domains which will be discussed in the next sub topic, and the bottom is the component of each domain from the middle part of the pyramid.

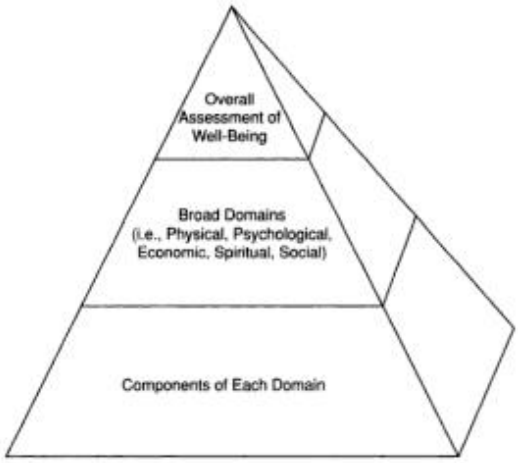

Figure 2.1 Three Levels of Quality of Life
Adopted from: Spilker, B 1996 in (Ferrans, 2004)

2.2 HISTORY OF QUALITY OF LIFE

As highlighted by Mohit (2013), the study of quality of life started a long time ago as early as the era of the popular Greek philosopher like Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC) when philosophers like Aristotle wrote about 'the good life' and 'living well' and how public policy can help to develop it. In 1889, the term quality of life was used by Seth in a statement,

'..we must not regard the mere quantity, but also the quality of the "life" which forms the moral end". (in Smith, 2000) (p.43)

Then, in 1930s, researchers started to show interest in the subject and try to define, investigate, and measure the concept of quality of life (Massam, 2002).

Apart from that, the quality of life also related to politic agenda. Massam (2002) stated that Edgar Hoover, for instance, was behind Ogburns two- volume report on recent social trends. A report that was partially instrumental in a movement dealing with social indicators and quality of life. The researchers would mainly start the study by measuring wealth as an indicator of quality of life. However, a Baltimore