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Do socioeconomic factor affect on the quality of life of Malaysian fishermen?

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Abstract

This study is written to propose new indicators for measuring the quality of life and examine socioeconomic factor, and government policy could be improving the living standard of fishermen. This study designed using quantitative and qualitative approaches through cross-sectional study. The result of this study showed that socioeconomic factor has significant for improving the quality of life of Malaysian fishermen. In conclusion, religious programs should also be enhanced in the fishing community, especially to the second generation of fishermen.

Keywords: Socioeconomic, Government policies, Quality of life.

¿El factor socioeconómico afecta la calidad de vida de los pescadores de Malasia?

Resumen

Este estudio está escrito para proponer nuevos indicadores para medir la calidad de vida y examinar el factor socioeconómico y la política del gobierno podría mejorar el nivel de vida de los pescadores. Este estudio se diseñó utilizando enfoques cuantitativos y cualitativos a través de un estudio transversal. El resultado de este estudio mostró que el factor socioeconómico es significativo para mejorar la calidad de vida de los pescadores de Malasia. En conclusión, los programas religiosos también deben mejorarse en la comunidad pesquera, especialmente a la segunda generación de pescadores.

Palabras clave: socioeconómicas, políticas de gobierno, calidad de vida.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of quality of life is being an important matter that faced by the Malaysian government which is tasked with improving the standard of living of local communities especially fishermen. The government adopts various techniques to measure the quality of life of fishermen (Prescott, 2001). Among such tools is the Quality of Life Index (QOL), which consists of nine major factors including the material wealth, health, political stability and security, family life, community life, climate and geography, work safety, political freedom and gender equality. Besides that, Malaysia also uses the Gross National Happiness Index of Bhutan (GNHIB) to measure the stages of the population as a whole about their quality of life.

The index also uses nine main domains as benchmarks for a country's measurement such as psychological well-being, time spent, social life, culture, health, education, environmental diversity, living standards and governance (URA et al., 2012). Zhang et al. (1997) state that there the number of components or indicators for measuring the quality of life constantly increases. This is because of the ever-changing social and environmental changes based on the needs of the nation and society. In pursuit of current technology flows and socio-economic changes in 2013, IKHM (Malaysian Quality of Life Index) has been re-molded into a more well-defined concept of living wellness and takes into account many aspects of living well-being.

Further, Dusuki and Abdullah (2005) added religious and spiritual elements in the quality of life measurement. They used the five main elements of the Maqasid al-Shariah, namely maintaining common sense, safeguarding religion, safeguarding property, safeguarding life and safeguarding lineage. For Malaysia, the fishery sector contributes significantly to the economy. Nazery (2011) revealed that Malaysia is located strategically along international trade routes such as the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. Similar findings stated by Zulkarnaen et al. (2018) that found that the majority of people are living in the location of natural resources such as coastal areas actually trapped in poverty. Sadly, Malaysia should lead the country to run a maritime-based industry. The fishery sector only contributed as much as 10.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is categorized as small. Based on the data obtained from the Department of Fisheries Malaysia in 2015, it shows that the number of

fishermen working on licensed fishing vessels was 102,337. Sabah has the highest number of fishermen with 23,428, followed by Sarawak with 13,376.

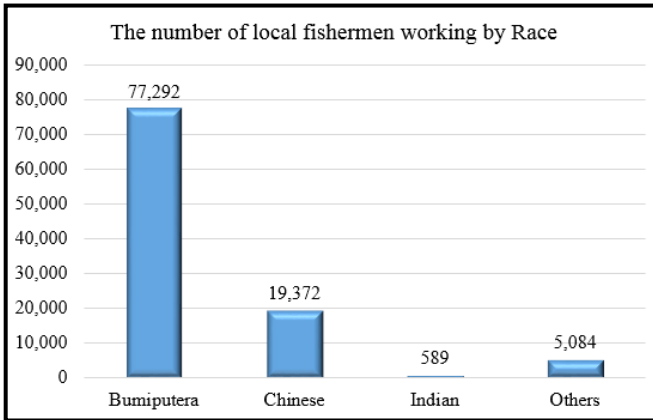


Figure 1: Local fishermen working on licensed fishing vessels throughout Malaysia

The role of the government is to assist fishermen, farmers and breeders to be competitive with other sectors, thus helping to increase household income. The People's Welfare Development Scheme (SPKR) and several other programs are specially designed to diversify their income sources. Although the fisheries sector has undergone significant technological changes, the economic status of most of the fishing communities is still low (Berkes, 2006). The government is committed to ensuring the best quality of life in urban and rural areas in line with Malaysia's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2020. Apart from the government's support for efforts to increase the income of fishermen, the impact of development around residential areas has also affected the change in the well-being of the fishermen.

Development of tourism and industrial sectors also helps fishermen to enhance their quality of life (Ahmed, 1992).

Through the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry, the government has appointed the Department of Fisheries Malaysia to focus on the fishery industry in Malaysia. Among the major missions of the Fisheries Department is the development of the fishery industry, managing the nation's fisheries resources and boosting the delivery system. Apart from the Department of Fisheries, the government has also established an organization that manages the affairs of fishermen namely the Malaysian Fisheries Development Authority. The establishment of such an organization has made the fishing industry and fishing community part of the country's development plan. The government strives to safeguard the welfare of all people regardless of their rank and status. As mentioned, the quality of a fisherman's changes should be seen from various viewpoints namely physical, mental and spiritual. Consequently, this study is written to propose new indicators for measuring the quality of life and examine do socioeconomic factor and government policy effect on the quality of life of Malaysian fishermen.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The quality of life is the individual's perception of the position of living in the cultural context and value of the system in which they live. It also determines the relationship between goals, expectations,

and anxiety. It is a broad concept involving individual health, psychological state, level of liberty, social relations, trust and relationships between individuals and the environment. Quality of life does not only involve material but includes all things that can affect the level of human satisfaction. The better the level of community satisfaction, the more comfortable and effective the quality of their lives (Ghani et al., 2010). Numerous researchers have studied the quality of life. Ghani (2003) examined the quality of life of the people in Redang and Perhentian Islands, Terengganu analyzing how socio-economic and socio-cultural factors affect the quality of life of the island's population. Overall, the quality of life for both island residents regarding occupation, health, and education, is still moderate. However, from the perspective of housing quality, it is still low. This affects the quality of life of the island population.

Further, Zain et al. (2018) analyzed the determinants of the well-being of coastal fishermen in Kuala Terengganu; Hussin (2007) studied social, and urbanization quality in Malaysia; Affizal (2008) identified the importance of education in the development of a quality of life where education has a huge impact on opportunities to acquire and sustain the quality of life. Education can explain the capabilities of an individual in managing quality of life due to economic and social factors depending on the education received. Quality education is very effective in fighting poverty, building democracy and forming a prosperous society.

In addition, Wahid (2012) studied the religious dimension to the quality of life indicators and concluded that it was crucial in the growth and improvement of the quality of life of a society. Religion plays an important role as it affects mental health, transforming individual attitudes towards a more positive life and ultimately transforming the lifestyle and the economy of the individual over a long period. Haryati and Sharifah (2012) stated that physical comfort is one of the important factors in influencing well-being and quality of life. Emotional factors are also taken into account in evaluating the quality of life. Emotional stress such as discomfort and misery will affect the overall quality of life. Apart from financial stability and income, the level of comfort can also be used to measure the quality of life.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a cross-sectional study through the quantitative and qualitative methods with the primary. The primary data were obtained through self-questionnaire administered for the sampled population and selected respondents as informants would be interviewed. The data collected using clustered purposive sampling. A total of 510 respondents were involved in the collection of research data.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the analysis, this study indicated that the measuring indicators used to measure fishermen in Malaysia's quality of life are different than the quality of life indices used by the local government. There are seven indicators were developed that suited for measuring the quality of life of Malaysian fishermen which consist of Religion, Government Policies, Housing, Earning/ Income, Expenses, Ownership, and Savings. The good and comfortable housing areas, as well as consistent income and the ability to sustain their lives, is indispensable. Apart from housing, past studies also showed that earning is the main theme discussed by researchers.

Housing Ghani (2003), Ghani et al. (2010) is a major factor in the quality of life of fishermen in Redang and Perhentian Islands. Haryati & Shafii (2012) showed that physical comfort is one of the important factors in influencing the well-being and quality of life of fishermen. Besides that, past studies also showed that the education indicator is among the determinants of improving the fishermen's quality of life. Zain et al. (2018) analyzed the determinants of the well-being of coastal fishermen in Kuala Terengganu. Affizal in his study (2008) considered the importance of education in the development of a prosperous quality of life where education has a huge impact on opportunities to acquire and sustain a quality life. Most respondents admit that education is very important in improving fishermen's quality of life.

Having that, people’s quality of life in Malaysia is measured using the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (IKHM). IKHM comprises 11 components, namely education, transportation and communication, housing, culture and leisure, income and distribution, public safety, health, social participation, environment, family life, and working environment.

By using primary data through qualitative analysis with in-depth interviews on 3 informants, the researchers found that seven indicators of quality of life that are appropriate to the actual needs of the fishing community, namely religion, government policies, housing, earning/income, expenses, ownership and savings. Additionally, by using secondary data through literary readings such as books and journals, the researchers found that the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (IKHM) used by the Malaysian government to measure the quality of life of the people was inappropriate. This is because the measurements did not represent the needs of the fishing communities in improving their quality of life.

Table 1: Malaysian quality of life index indicator and proposed fishermen communities’ new quality of life index indicators

No.	IKHM Indicators	No.	Proposed Indicators
1.	Education	1.	Religion
2.	Transportation and Communication	2.	Government Policies
3.	Housing	3.	Housing
4.	Culture and Leisure	4.	Earning/ Income
5.	Earning/Income and Distribution	5.	Expenses
6.	Public Safety	6.	Ownership
7.	Health	7.	Savings

8. Social Participation
 9. Environment
 10. Family Life
 11. Work Environment
-

In addition, to determine the capability of life quality indicators proposed by researchers, the Pearson Correlation test has been used to study the relationship between the indicators and the quality of life. Referring to Table 2, this study found that six indicators have significant relationships with the quality of life - income, expenses, savings, ownership, housing, and religion. Whereas, government policy indicators were found to have no significant relationship with the quality of life. Furthermore, based on data analysis, the researchers found that the correlation coefficient of the housing indicator was 0.715 or 71.5%. This means that housing indicators are closely related to the quality of life where the fishermen need comfortable homes. Furthermore, through interviews with ten informants, the majority stated fishermen need comfortable housing areas from the government.

Table 2: The correlation test using Pearson Correlations

Factor (s)	Indicator	Quality of Life (QoL)
Socioeconomic	Earning / Income	0.597 ^{**}
	Expenses	0.656 ^{**}
	Saving	0.269 ^{**}
	Ownership	0.591 ^{**}
	Housing	0.715 ^{**}
	Religion	0.263 ^{**}
Government Policies	Policies of Government	0.072

**. Significant at 0.01 (1%)

*. Significant at 0.05 (5%)

Table 2 shows the testing of the recommended quality of life indicators. Based on the seven proposed indicators through qualitative analysis and past readings, researchers have suggested seven indicators, namely income, expenses, savings, ownership, housing, religion, and government policies. From the seven indicators, the government policy indicator has no correlation with the quality of life. Furthermore, multiple linear regression methods have been used to verify the most important indicators in influencing the quality of life of the fishermen in Malaysia. Through multi-linear regression analysis, the study found five significant indicators affecting the quality of life of fishermen in Malaysia, namely housing, expenses, income, ownership, and religion (Refer to Table 3).

Table 3: Hypothesis testing - the quality of fishermen life in Malaysia

Factor (s)	Proposed-Indicators	Unstandardised Coefficients		t-stat	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
Constant		0.369	0.303	1.216	0.225
Socioeconomic	Income	0.191	0.033	5.862	0.000
	Expenses	0.330	0.040	8.314	0.000
	Saving	-0.059	0.026	-2.239	0.026
	Ownership	0.112	0.031	3.598	0.000
	Housing	0.420	0.029	14.434	0.000
	Religion	0.200	0.036	5.621	0.000
Government Policies	Policies of Government	-0.029	0.031	-0.934	0.351
R Square		0.673a		F-stat.	161.613
Adjusted R Square		0.669		df.	6
Std. error of the Estimate		0.951		Sig.	0.000b

a. Variables: (Constant), Religion, Saving, Housing, Expenses, Ownership, Income

b. Dependent Variable: Quality of Life

Table 3 above displays the quality of life indicators proposed in this study can explain its impact on the quality of life of the fishing community in Malaysia by 67.3%. The remaining 32.7% was contributed by other indicators not included in the study. In addition to the information regarding variable contributions, this study found that the proposed indicators significantly affect the quality of fishermen's life in Malaysia with the coefficient of F statistical = 161,613 and significant at the 1 percent level.

In line with the objectives of this study, the study found that the most dominant indicator affecting the quality of life of the fishermen community in Malaysia is the housing indicator. Based on the results of the data analysis, the study obtained a regression coefficient value for the housing indicator of 0.420 with the value of 14.434 and significance at the 1% level. This suggests that with the assumption of housing indicators rising by 1%, the quality of life of the fishing community in Malaysia will increase by 42%. Next is the expenses indicator with a coefficient value of 0.330 or 33%, religion indicator of 0.200 or 20%, and an income indicator of 0.191 or 19.1%, While the indicator of ownership only contributes about 11.2% of the quality of life.

5. CONCLUSION

The following result and discussions in the previous section, the conclusions are reached. (i) The quality of life indicators according to

the actual needs of the fishing community are different from those used by the government to measure their quality of life. These seven indicators are consisting of Religion, Government Policies, Housing, Earning /Income, Expenses, Ownership, and Savings. (ii) The socioeconomic factors i.e. Earning/Income, Expenses, Savings, Ownership, Housing, and Religion indicators have a significant correlation with the quality of life of the fishing community in Malaysia, meanwhile, the government policies have no significant correlation with the quality of life of fishermen.

(iii) The socioeconomic factor has significant for improving the quality of life of Malaysian fishermen. However, government policies do not significantly influence the quality of life of fishermen. (iv) The housing is the most dominant indicator of the quality of life of the fishing community in Malaysia. (v) The religion indicator has been successfully proposed to measure the quality of life and is found to be a significant indicator affecting the quality of life of Malaysian fishermen. Therefore, this study suggests the Malaysian government needs to be providing good and comfortable housing to its fishing community. Further, religious programs should also be enhanced in the fishing community, especially to the second generation of fishermen.

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