

An innovative model of quality of life in inmates community: evidence from Malaysian prison

Un modelo innovador de calidad de vida en la comunidad penitenciaria: evidencia de la prisión de Malasia

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to model quality of life (QoL) among inmates' community imprisoning in Malaysian prison using quantitative study. A total of 451 inmates were selected and the validation model using confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the unidimensionality, validity and reliability of the construct. The study found QoL Maqasid al-Sharia approach, consists of five constructs namely "religion", "life", "mind", "lineage" and "property", may be useful for strategies that could enhance QoL of these inmates' communities.

Key words: Quality of Life, Inmates, Measurement Model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

RESUMEN

El objetivo principal de este estudio es modelar la calidad de vida (QoL) de la comunidad de reclusos en la prisión de Malasia utilizando un estudio cuantitativo. Se seleccionó a un total de 451 reclusos y el modelo de validación mediante análisis factorial confirmatorio confirmó la unidimensionalidad, validez y confiabilidad del constructo. El estudio encontró que el enfoque de QoL Maqasid al-Sharia consiste en cinco construcciones, a saber, "religión", "vida", "mente", "linaje" y "propiedad", podrían ser estrategias útiles para mejorar la calidad de vida de las comunidades de estos internos.

Palabras clave: Calidad de Vida, Reclusos, Modelo de Medición, Análisis Factorial Confirmatorio (CFA)

1. Introduction

Improving the quality of life (QoL) of Malaysia citizens has always been the focus of the Malaysian government. The emphasis on improving QoL is based on the view that a country is not rated as developed by its economic achievements and rapid progress of development alone, but economic growth is meaningful with an equivalent growth in the QoL and well-being of its people. One of the biggest challenges for the Malaysian government to realize their aim is to ensure that no gap exists in QoL between various groups and communities, in particular between general and inmates' communities. Inmates' communities such as drug-abuse inmates have lower QoL as compared to general communities. Their challenges arise as they live isolated in prison and are especially vulnerable to outside people. Therefore, the government needs to ensure that these inmates' communities have

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a QoL comparable to their general counterparts, measuring QoL to understand people's overall satisfaction with their existence. Assessments of QoL offer researchers data pertaining to factors that would influence the social, environmental and economic aspects of a community (Uysal & Sirgy, 2019).

Measuring QoL is not an easy task, as it has hundreds of dimensions. Indeed, within the Malaysian scope alone, a number of studies have been conducted to measure QoL at a national and urban level (Norliza *et al.*, 2014; Mohamad, Awang & Ali, 2017; Mohamad, Karim & Ali, 2017). Although these studies have successfully measured the QoL in Malaysia, few studies were done with regard to the QoL of inmates' communities, particularly drug-abuse inmates. This brought forth the present study's main objective, to investigate the QoL of inmates in Malaysian prisons.

This study is significant in several ways. First, it contributes to the body of knowledge pertaining to inmate communities' QoL since they will be part of the society once they are released from imprisonment and their contribution to the nation's economic growth will also be important. Previous studies on QoL in Malaysia were prone to objective measurements; this study however interposes new knowledge as it proffers subjective measurement of QoL which is based on the inmates' perception. In this case, QoL is measured based on Maqasid al-Sharia approach which consists of five elements such as religion, life, mind, lineage and property (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014). Using Maqasid al-Sharia approach allows assessment based on individuals' perspectives on their lives. Furthermore, QoL based on Maqasid al-Sharia incorporates all aspect of life that are interconnected and in harmony (Wajdi & Dianawati, 2007).

Second, most of the previous studies on QoL among drug-abuse inmates covered evaluation of health and medication which were solely clinically based. Evidence has shown that between the years 2000 to 2013, there were almost 109 articles related to drug-abuse QoL study in Malaysia limited to methadone maintenance treatment only (Norliza *et al.*, 2014). The treatment programs which are solely clinical may not be entirely effective to improve QoL if patient's experiences are not addressed. Precisely, QoL of drug-abuse inmates is a potential parameter of measuring not only for health, but also for the overall good life of a person so that he/she is capable of becoming a productive human resource.

Third, the contribution to policy making as findings from the study could disclose facts on strengths and weaknesses regarding marginalized communities' QoL, which eventually could assist relevant parties in constructing the best strategies to enhance marginalized communities' QoL.

1.1. Drug-abuse inmates

As a professional correctional entity, the Malaysian Prisons Department is responsible in providing a safe detention centre for inmates upon court's order and also rehabilitation programmes for inmates during their imprisonment (Omar, 2001). However, the biggest challenge is prison overcrowding (Baybutt *et al.*, 2014). Overcrowding occurs when a prison operates at or above official capacity in one or more parts of their operations (Krishnan, 2013). Overcrowding affects the day-to-day prison operation and inmates' QoL as it is difficult for the prison management to implement reformative and rehabilitative measures effectively with the number of inmates exceeding the facilities' capacity. For example, the lack of space facilities, resources and technical equipment have hindered the prison department to provide inmates with a full range of training, work and educational opportunities because they have too many inmates to cater for properly (Omar, 2001; Ali *et al.*, 2016). Overcrowding could lead to problems like fighting among inmates, rises of the risk of getting infectious diseases, lack of sleeping space, and lack of proper monitoring by the authorities (Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, 2016).

Moreover, Omar (2001) also noted that one of the reasons that contributed to the overcrowding in prison was due to the increase in drug-related offenses. Prisons in Malaysia are holding more than 52,929 inmates, while

the maximum capacity is only for 52,350 inmates nationwide (Muhamad, 2017). Thus, the prison population in 2015 is 1.01% above the comfortable size. These imbalances started with the increasing number of drug-abuse inmates. For instance, in 2013, out of total 42,259 prison population, there were 8,190 drug-abuse inmates; by 2016, this number had more than quadrupled to 33,500 (out of 59,600) and represented almost the 60% of total inmates (Ali *et al.*, 2017). Despite that, the increase in the number of drug-abuse inmates' population resulted in many of unproductive human resources which affect the social and economic performance of the country.

1.2. Dimension of quality of life

Today, concepts of QoL are discussed widely in different fields. Researchers suggest different sets of QoL dimensions depending on the perspectives and purpose of their studies. However, it is widely accepted by previous researchers that QoL is a multidimensional concept and it is used in many different ways. Raphael (1996) suggested QoL encompasses three domains, namely "being", "belonging" and "becoming". The "being" domain is described as the basic aspects of an individual, "one who is", and has three sub-domains which are physical, psychological and spiritual beings. On the other hand, the "belonging" domain reflects the person's connection with the environment, which is determined by three sub-dimensions which are physical, social and community belongings. While the "becoming" domain denotes what a person "wishes for", it is related to several activities undertaken by an individual to achieve personal goals hopes, and aspirations; the sub-dimensions of becoming are practical, leisure and growth becomings.

Most of the literature includes "being" domain in their study as compared to "belonging" and "becoming" domains, as proposed by Raphael (1996). There are three authors (Flanagan, 1978; Felce & Perry, 1995; Ferrell, Dow & Grant, 1997), famously discussed on QoL dimensions, who have similarities and overlap with the one suggested by Raphael (1996). However, in contrast, Mohamad *et al.* (2016) suggested five dimensions of QoL based on Maqasid al-Sharia approach. Their study claimed that the Maqasid al-Sharia QoL elements consist of religion, life, mind, lineage and property. As supported by Rosifah, Nuryakin & Handalusia (2019), Mohamad *et al.* (2016) claimed Islamic economists address well-being as *maslahah*, an encompassing concept that covers all individual and collective aspects of life. The similarities and differences amongst dimension by the authors are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
Similarities and differences in QoL dimensions according to different authors.

Flanagan (1978)	Felce & Perry (1995)	Raphael (1996)	Ferrell, Dow & Grant (1997)	Mohamad <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Dimension
Physical well-being	Physical well-being	Physical well-being	Physical well-being	Life	Refers to individual needs for health, safety and fitness.
Material well-being	Material well-being	NA	NA	Property	Refers to individual needs for managing, producing and distributing wealth.
Relations with other people	Social well-being	NA	Social well-being	Lineage	Related to individual needs for interpersonal relationships with family and friends.
Social, community and civic activities	Productive well-being	NA	NA	Lineage	Related to individual needs for social activities.

Flanagan (1978)	Felce & Perry (1995)	Raphael (1996)	Ferrell, Dow & Grant (1997)	Mohamad <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Dimension
Personal development and fulfilment	Emotional well-being	Psychological well-being	Psychological well-being	Mind	Concern about happiness, self-acceptance and autonomy.
Recreation	NA	NA	NA	Life	Refers to individual needs for recreational activities.
NA	Civic well-being	NA	NA	Lineage	Concern about roles and responsibilities.
NA	NA	Spiritual well-being	Spiritual well-being	Religion	Concern about religiosity and spiritual beliefs.

NA: Not Applicable

1.3. Maqasid al-Sharia QoL (MSQoL) model

Maqasid refers to purpose, objective, principle, intent, goal or purposes behind Islamic laws (Monzur-E-Elahi, 2012; Abdullah *et al.*, 2019). The Maqasid al-Sharia consists of five elements namely religion, life, mind, lineage and property (Asnaf, 2014; Mohamad *et al.*, 2014; Zakaria, Ahmad & Malek, 2014); Mohamad *et al.* (2018) formulated a model based on these five basic elements as needs for QoL. Firstly, they identified religion as the important basic need of humans in Muslims’ context. The need is inclusive of commitment to carry out religious obligations such as performing daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan, paying zakat and performing hajj. Those who are unable to complete the required basic needs are classified as spiritually poor. The second basic need is life, which refers to the daily needs of humans such as healthcare and nutrition, quality of dwelling or living place, amenities, utilities as well as clothing and transportation. In general, humans strive to ensure that they meet these basic physical needs. Apart from that, all of the humans’ actions are to protect themselves and their families. Furthermore, they would not commit any harm that might jeopardise themselves and other parties.

Mind refers to the need to develop one’s intellectual levels and skills. This need is inclusive of psychological factors such as stress management, education attainment and participation in social activities. Thus, humans need to work hard by acquiring knowledge and use their intellectuality for the benefit of themselves, family and society. The fourth basic need is lineage. People need family, besides possessing parenting skills as well as nurturing knowledge of skills in children. Also, humans should protect the pride and dignity of the family as well as their ancestors. Indeed, this need is essential in the current socio-economic settings. Lastly, property refers to humans’ need to possess fixed assets and durable goods. They also need to have the ability to generate income or revenue from economic activities. Furthermore, the property is also spent on food and non-durable goods. In fact, humans can possess property and assets as much as they can, as long as it is not against what have been set up in Sharia. Based on the above discussion, Maqasid al-Sharia quality of life approach measures QoL holistically from five aspects of life.

2. Methodology

This research required several levels of approvals from prison management before it could be executed. The approval procedures, that took almost two months before the research began, were approved by the head of prison headquarters. There were nine prisons located in Peninsular Malaysia approved to be visited namely Pokok Sena, Sungai Petani, Seberang Perai, Kluang, Simpang Renggam, Tapah, Kajang, Seremban and Jelebu. Based on sampling frame, the study was able to gain an appropriate sample number using Random Sample of

Cases. Random Sample of Cases refers to the process of obtaining number of samples at random selection using SPSS. To answer the objectives, path analysis was performed using structural equation modelling (SEM) method. Universally-accepted statistical indexes such as Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) were used to assess the goodness-of-fit of the proposed model. Another set of goodness-of-fit statistics identified as Baseline comparisons' indexes, including Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI), were used to support the fitness of the hypothesised model. In addition, the value of Root Mean Square Error of the Approximation (RMSEA) was also used to support the hypothesised model goodness-of-fit.

A questionnaire developed by Mohamad *et al.* (2016) was used for data collection. Initial pre-test indicated a Cronbach alpha value of 0.848 (religion), 0.828 (life), 0.915 (mind), 0.838 (lineage) and 0.770 (property). For the purpose of this study, minor modifications were made in the demographic section. The questionnaire consists of two parts, namely demographic (9 questions) and dimension of QoL (33 questions).

Although the questionnaire had already been used by Mohamad *et al.* (2018), the researchers pre-tested it again at Marang Prison using 30 respondents to further strengthen the reliability of the instrument. The recent pre-test Cronbach's alpha value was in line with Karim, Mohamad & Muhammad (2019) and exceeded the value of .700. A survey method was applied during actual data-collection process, which was conducted by trained and experienced enumerators monitored by the research team. The actual data collection took almost six months to complete, from April 2016 until June 2016. Through descriptive and inferential analyses, the study obtained the general data of study.

3. Results

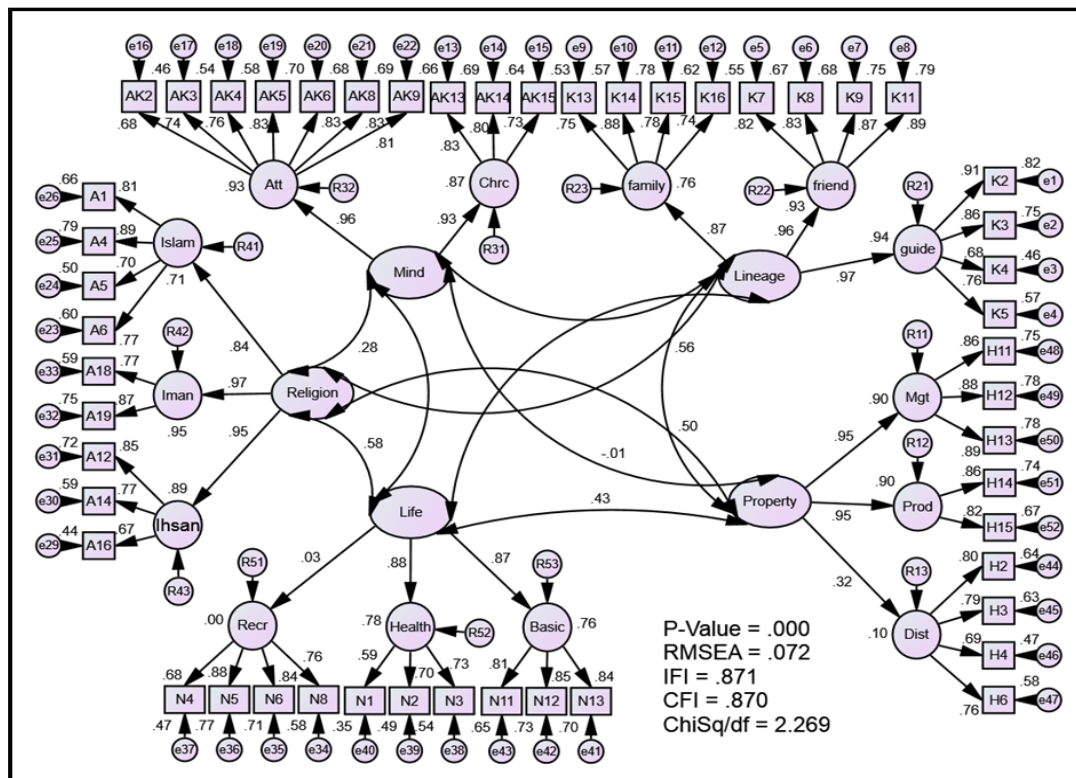
3.1. Respondent

The quantitative study employed a simple random sampling procedure and managed to select a total of 451 inmates imprisoned in these prisons. The respondents' age was between 21 to 40 years old. Generally, 97.3% of respondents were Malay, while the rest were Chinese (2.7%). The mean age was 33 years and 50.2% of respondents fall into the age group of 21 to 40 years (50.2%). In terms of educational achievement, 60.2 % of the respondents possessed a secondary education, compared to 20.4% who possessed only a primary level of education. In addition, most of respondents (64.1%) were self-employed before imprisonment. Most of the respondents were prison reentry residents, as the mean score for frequency of imprisonment higher than two times was 67.8%.

3.2. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

The QoL measurement model for prisons is shown in Figure 1. The final measurement model consists of 50 items; fitness indexes (RMSEA, TLI, CFI and Chisq/df) had achieved the required level.

Figure 1
The QoL Measurement Model obtained for prisons in Malaysia



Based on the output, the study assessed the three types of validity: construct, convergent and validities. Composite reliability for QoL construct was also assessed. These constructs are required to achieve all validity and reliability test requirements before it can be applied into practice. The convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) for prison is shown in Table 2 while the assessment for construct validity is also made in Table 3. All values of AVE have exceeded the threshold value of 0.5 indicating that the Convergent Validity of these constructs achieved the required level.

Table 2
Reliability and validity results for prisons in Malaysia.

Construct	Religion			Life			Mind		Lineage			Property		
CR>0.60	0.96			0.82			0.96		0.93			0.86		
AVE >0.50	0.88			0.61			0.92		0.81			0.68		
Factor Loading	0.71			0.96			0.99		0.98			0.84		
Subconstruct	Isl.	Im.	Ih.	Saf.	Sport	Needs	Att	Char.	Fam.	Fri.	Law	Mgt.	Prod.	Dist.
CR>0.60	0.89	0.83	0.78	0.91	0.87	0.78	0.93	0.86	0.86	0.91	0.90	0.90	0.82	0.86
AVE >0.50	0.62	0.71	0.56	0.77	0.63	0.55	0.66	0.68	0.63	0.71	0.76	0.75	0.69	0.62
Factor Loading	0.88	0.98	0.95	0.88	0.55	0.80	0.97	0.95	0.99	0.85	0.86	0.93	0.94	0.54

Notes: Isl.= Islam, Im. = Iman, Ih. = Ihsan, Saf. = Safety of Self and Family, Sport = Sport and Recreation, Needs = Basic Needs, Att. = Individuals attitude, Char.= Individuals Character, Fam.= Relationship with family, Fri.= Relationship with friends, Law= Law and Regulation, Mgt = Management, Prod. = Production and Dist.= Distribution.

Table 3
Assessment for construct's validity of QoL in prisons of Malaysia.

Category	Index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.072	The required level is achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.870	The required level is achieved
Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	2.269	The required level is achieved

4. Discussion

As discussed earlier, the values of CR also exceeded 0.6, which indicated that CR for the QoL construct has been achieved (Awang, 2015; Mohamad *et al.*, 2017). According to Awang (2015), once the measurement model of a construct achieved three categories of model fit, namely absolute, incremental and parsimonious fits, the construct validity is reached. Thus, based in Table 2, the study concludes that the construct validity of QoL has been achieved.

Only three QoL dimensions have yielded high factor loading scores, with mind yielding highest score ($\lambda = 0.99$), while lineage and life yielded the second and third highest score ($\lambda = 0.98$ and $\lambda = 0.96$), respectively. The moderate factor loading is property ($\lambda = 0.86$) and the lowest score is religion ($\lambda = 0.71$). According to Mohamad *et al.* (2016), inmates' communities in prison context perceived QoL is important in terms of mind due to numerous government efforts in developing the rehabilitation treatment program within prison to reform their mind. Treating mind in rehabilitation programs such as Human Development Program can be valuable to inmates' community especially drug-abuse inmates. Research has consistently shown that mind-based drug abuse treatment can reduce drug use and drug-related criminal behaviour (Mohamad *et al.*, 2018). The respondents have demonstrated importance of relationship with family in relation to lineage, as this sub-construct yielded high factor loading score ($\lambda = 0.99$). This research accentuated that drug-abuse inmates' communities have good QoL in family relationships as prison management committed in social involvement and frequently organizes prison visit to support prisoners' wellbeing. This finding was also supported by previous studies which postulated that social support could be one of the most critical factors to improve QoL (Denney *et al.*, 2014; Ali *et al.*, 2017).

The importance of life is emphasized by respondents when it comes to QoL. Among potential causes of respondents' high ranking QoL for life in terms of safety and basic needs was due to humane treatment environment for inmates in prison department custody, in line with Enuke (2001), who claimed that prison inmates should be treated as human beings with basic needs. The respondents have shown their concern on getting employment after release, because high ranking in terms of management and producing property sub-construct. The result was attributed to Human Development Programme in prison, which offers vocational programmes and employability skills training during the time of incarceration. As claimed by Behrens (2004), offenders receive payments for their participation in the programme, enabling them to take responsibility and save for their reintegration. Religion was the lowest score. This finding has driven us to query, how is the religious practice in Malaysian prisons? Even though modules such as *halaqah* emphasis on religion and faith-based programming in prison, an underlying question in all of this is whether religion in prisons really makes a difference. This finding was in line with studies conducted by Stansfield, Mowen, O'Connor & Boman (2017) who claimed that religion was less likely affect the reoffend.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of this study confirmed that four QoL dimensions yielded high factor loading scores: mind, lineage, life and property in Malaysian prisons. Nevertheless, Religion dimension yielded a lower score.

This kind of findings has contributed to additional knowledge on Malaysian's QoL from Maqasid al-Sharia perspectives, particularly inmates' communities. This subjective study found that safety, attitude, relationship with family and production are the main contributors to dimension of life, mind, lineage, and property respectively.

To further enhance the inmates' communities' QoL, it is recommended that the focus should be placed on efforts to further improve religion aspects, while programs, strategies and plans on enhancing inmates' communities' QoL should be focused on specific groups, such as different age require different programs approach.

The present study relies on the instrument established by Mohamad *et al.* (2016) which was specifically developed for measuring inmates' communities' QoL. In the future, it is suggested that the future, it is suggested that additional aspects of QoL such as cultural, psychological and spiritual be incorporated. This is because, the result shows religion factor had a lower score as compared to other factors. As mentioned by Stansfield, Mowen, O'Connor & Boman (2017), religion was less likely affect the reoffend but factors such as spirituality may be helpful to express their religious beliefs and practices. As claimed by Costanza *et al.* (2008) the overall quality of life at any given time depends on the degree to which each identified human need is met, the so-called 'satisfaction'; and the importance of the respondent's or group's needs to question their relative contribution to their subjective well-being. According to him, it consists of two different scales to assess each element in relation to human needs, one scale recording the degree of achievement, the other recording its importance. Therefore integrating factors like cultural and psychological can contribute to different degrees to overall QOL in inmates communities.

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