

Quality of Life in the Elderly Qur'an Memorizers

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the quality of life of elderly Qur'an memorizers. Nine elderly Muslims who live in several regions in Java Island, Indonesia, were involved as informants. The informant was recruited by purposive sampling. The data collection method used a semi-structured interview technique. Data analysis used phenomenological techniques to uncover research objectives. The result showed that: In general, the memorizing Qur'an has an important influence on the elderly's quality of life. Specifically, the quality of life of the elderly can be seen in the improvement of several areas such as patience, self-concept, self-esteem, ability to remember, and self-confidence. In addition, the elderly felt that their role was more accepted by the community, one of whom was trusted to teach the Qur'an in the mosque.

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INTRODUCTION

Various experts have studied the quality of life for several decades. It has become the primary goal of contemporary health studies, including physical, psychological, social, and economic health, and others (El-Maouche & Dobs, 2010). Various experts have discussed the quality of life, including philosophy, psychology, religion, economics, and health (Morton et al., 2020). It refers to various discussions depending on the theme under the discourse and overlaps with the concepts of subjective well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction (Van Leeuwen et al., 2019). Additionally, different backgrounds such as culture, social environment, and economic levels are different aspects in determining it. Individuals from developed countries define the quality of life differently than individuals from developing countries.

In general, there are three philosophical approaches to assessing the quality of life. The first describes the quality of life as a good life which refers to the notions that come from religion, philosophy, and culture (Cai et al., 2021). The second approach relates to life satisfaction (Veenhoven, 2015). The last approach is associated with individual experiences in their respective being (Costanza et al., 2007). Meanwhile, Veenhoven (2007) reports that the direction of research on the quality of life overlaps with five other research themes, incorporating social indicators research, happiness studies, gerontology of successful aging, psychology of well-being, and health-related quality-of-life studies.

In Circa 1970s, most experts defined the quality of life, leading to the definition of a life without stress. People felt stressed when they could not deal with pressured situations due to the inadequate quality of human resources. Since then, an understanding of the importance of subjective perception of one's life began to develop, especially the exploration of various meanings of life experiences that have been experienced. Adequate resources would be able to deal with various pressures and take solutions to various problems faced. Discussions on this theme continued in the 80s.

In the 1980s, the notion of quality of life increasingly varied. Experts who define the quality of life are more diverse. For example, Ferring et al. (2004) define the quality of life as an individual's perception of

his functioning and well-being in various life domains. In this definition, the assessment of the quality of life is more focused on the interaction and balance of the individual when perceiving his subjective condition. The way a person attaches meaning to his life experiences, whether they are considered stressful or even challenging, will affect a person in perceiving the quality of life. In dealing with specific circumstances, the individual should be disappointed or patient. The second concerns how individuals perceive external events that befall them, such as moving to a different place or adapting to their current living environment. Furthermore, the definition of quality of life is defined more openly. To this day, scientists have not found the common ground in this definition.

Quality of life is translated as the judgments people project to describe their experiences of health and illness (Carr et al., 2001). Carr et al. further explain that quality of life is a broader concept and relates to whether a disease or disorder limits a person's ability to fulfill traditional roles. While Rapley (2003) affirms that the quality of life is the extent to which a person can feel and enjoy the occurrence of all important events in his life so that his life becomes prosperous. Based on the aforementioned opinion, it can be concluded that the quality of life is one's assessment of limitations and how one can act to fulfill the needs of his daily standard of living.

Quality of life is a personal assessment of individual well-being, including physical, emotional, material, and social well-being (Felce & Perry, 1995). Other experts append cultural context as essential to defining quality of life. WHO (Woronoff, 1996) defines the quality of life as a person's perception of the life he lives based on the culture and values of the individual living and comparing his life with the objectives, expectations, standards, and goals that have been set personally. The definition proposed by WHO includes a complex definition that embraces cultural, social, and personal considerations and accommodates various scopes of quality of life areas, including the quality of life of older adults.

Previous studies have shown that religion has a strategic role to improve the quality of life of the elderly (Krause, 2003; Taufik et al., 2021). Other researchers found that religious activities can lead to calmness and increase spiritual well-being (Yuniarwati et al., 2020), and increasing spiritual well-being will improve the quality of life (Heng et al., 2021). One of the religious activities is memorizing the Qur'an.

The memorizing Qur'an activity is usually carried out by teenagers. The activity requires at least a healthy physique, self-determination, and strong memory skills. All of these requirements are owned by teenagers. However, some elderly people disapprove of this opinion. In old age, some of the elderly show proud achievements in memorizing the Qur'an. Some of them can memorize the whole of the Qur'an (114 chapters). The purpose of this study was to investigate the quality of life of the elderly who memorized the Qur'an.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were elderly Muslims who memorized the Qur'an from various regions in Java, Indonesia, namely: Solo, Yogyakarta, Magelang, Brebes, Mojokerto, and Depok. Researchers do not have any kind of relationship with all informants. The informant selection was carried out by purposive sampling following the required criteria, namely the elderly who had or were in the process of memorizing the Qur'an.

Nine elderly people (four male, five female) were involved in this study. The average age of participants was 68.33 years (range 60-75 years). Informants have memorized the Qur'an in various ways. The majority of them have memorized 1-10 chapters (44.4%), 11-20 chapters (33.3%), and 21-30 chapters (22.3%). Currently, the informants are still repeating the verses they have memorized (*muraja'ah*) and trying to add to the memorization of the next verse.

Procedures

This research was conducted through several stages: 1) *Identification of informants*, they were recruited from various Qur'an memorizing institutions. Information about informants was obtained from key persons who have been active in the development of Qur'an memorization; 2) *Background diversity*, the recruitment was based on the diversity of backgrounds such as age, gender, and memorization achievement. Different backgrounds will enrich the information; 3) *Informed consent*, it was very important to know the motivational strength of the informants to be involved in research. Informants who are willing to fill out informed consent will provide optimal information needed in the study; 4) *Interview process*, interviews were conducted about three meetings. The timing of the interview was agreed upon by the informants and researchers. Interviews were conducted in two conditions, namely offline (face-to-face interview) and online (via the platform). Interviews were recorded using digital audio, then the data obtained were transcribed and analyzed.

Data analysis

Data analysis used phenomenological analysis which was carried out in a series of stages, namely: the researcher did the transcription of the data; coding that refers to the research question; thematic clustering and labeling; ends with analysis and interpretation. The process of data analysis and interpretation is carried out to obtain textural descriptions and structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). This is done through a bracketing process where things that are not following the research objectives are ruled out. In addition, the bracket out was carried out to help researchers obtain an objective understanding expressed by the informants without being contaminated by the researcher's perspective and experience.

DISCUSSION

There is a contradiction between the condition of the elderly and the activity of memorizing the Qur'an. The contradiction is indicated by two dispositions. On the one hand, the elderly experience several declines, such as physical decline, activity, social involvement, and memory (Milanovic et al., 2013). On the other hand, some elderly show the opposite effort with cognitive decline, namely memorizing the Qur'an. In the findings of this study, the quality of life of the elderly is indicated by the elderly's awareness of their shortcomings, but the elderly can act elegantly or even be able to optimize their role. Informants describe a quality life with positive expressions, such as maintaining memory (not senile), being patient, positive self-image, and role is accepted by the community.

The informant believes that memorizing Qur'an activities will keep them from senile disease because the mind is constantly stimulated to work. This was stated by several informants: *Memorizing the Qur'an can strengthen my memory (NC, M, 75 years old); In the past, I was not sure I could memorize the Qur'an because it was easy to forget. But after starting to memorize and repeat the memorization every day, my memory is better (WJ, F, 72 years old); I memorized the entire Qur'an several years ago and now I have not forgotten it anymore (SD, M, 68 years old).*

Continuous memory activation, including memorizing the Qur'an, will improve memory skills (Fairuzillah & Listiana, 2021; Yuniartika et al., 2021). This opinion was also confirmed by Novebri and Dewi (2020) who found a correlation between the ability to memorize the Qur'an and the memory capacity of Senior High School students. Students who gradually memorize the Qur'an and continuously repeat their memorization tend to have better memory skills than students who do not memorize the Qur'an.

The informant also revealed that memorizing Qur'an activities must be done in a focused and continuous manner. Therefore, this activity becomes a means to practice discipline and patience.

Informants WS, and IZ revealed: *That memorizing must be done continuously and get us used to be patient (WS, F, 65 years old); Memorizing the Qur'an is for our afterlife, so we have to be patient (IZ, F, 63 years old).* In addition, the informant also admitted that reading the Qur'an repeatedly created peace of mind. This was informed by TB and SD informants: *Memorizing the Qur'an not only maintains its memorization but also has to maintain its behavior (TB, F, 66 years old); I try to use my time optimally. Every day if I don't teach, I repeat my memorization (SD, M, 68 years old).*

Research conducted by Ishak et al. (2021) found a correlation between memorizing the Qur'an and quality of life. Based on their findings, memorizing can improve psychological and health well-being. Reading the Qur'an can stabilize moods such as anxiety, stress, and depression (Kamal et al., 2013; Mahjoob et al., 2016).

Repeating Qur'an memorization and the ability to memorize the Qur'an affect the informant's self-image. Initially, the informant did not expect that he could consistently memorize and be able to maintain memorization. This achievement makes the informants view themselves more positively, and individuals have higher self-esteem. This statement is implied in the following informant's statement: *After I finished memorizing the Qur'an I felt more valuable. I am also more confident to read the Qur'an in front of many people (FR, F, 63 years old); Now I feel more patient and can see the problem from the positive side (HL, M, 74 years old).*

The findings above are in line with previous studies which state that there is a positive correlation between achievement and self-concept (Skaalvik & Hagtvet, 1990). The higher the achievement, the more positive the self-concept. Zahra et al. (2010) explained that the relationship between achievement and self-concept is not a one-way relationship, but both have a mutual relationship. In addition to increasing self-concept, achievement also increases self-esteem. High self-esteem reflects a good quality of life (Kazemi et al., 2016).

The informant's success in memorizing the Qur'an has implications for other positive activities, such as being trusted to teach reading the Qur'an in the mosque, teaching the Qur'an to grandchildren, and teaching Qur'an. This increases the informant's gratitude for being able to benefit others. FR and MTH informants explained: *In addition to memorizing the Qur'an, I also teach Qur'an in the mosque and listen to the memorization of the Qur'an for my grandson (FR, F, 63 years old); I feel more accepted by the community, and many people are interested in learning the Qur'an 'an with me (MTH, M, 69 years old).*

Social acceptance is correlated to the quality of life. This acceptance shows positive support for the role of the elderly which in turn improves the quality of life of the elderly (Marczak, 2019; Widodo et al., 2019). The elderly who has a significant social role has a higher quality of life than the elderly who do not have a social role (Datta et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

The memorizing Qur'an activities have a major influence on the elderly's quality of life. The quality of life is shown by several positive effects such as time management, discipline, increased patience, self-concept, self-esteem, ability to remember, and self-confidence. The elderly who memorized the Qur'an described themselves more positively with continuous expressions of gratitude. Through memorizing the Qur'an, the elderly can still contribute to others in the form of teaching reading and memorizing the Qur'an, and checking the readings of the Qur'an that are memorized by others.

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Ethics statement

This study was conducted based on ethical standard.

Authors contribution

TT contributes in designing the study, data collection, data analysis, and writing the manuscript. RL and PAR contributes in data collection, data analysis, and writing the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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