

## MAQASID APPROACH IN MEASURING QUALITY OF LIFE (QoL)

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### Abstract

*Studies and discussion in measuring the quality of life (QoL) has been at the centre stage ever since people realize its importance for the wellness of mankind. It is even more important when the concept is associated with sustainable development goal (SDG). Some studies relate QoL with physical health, psychological health, social relationship and environment. Others associate it with authentic happiness that refers to the criteria of pleasant life, a good life, a meaningful life and balanced life. Nevertheless, what can be considered as a holistic QoL? Can it be confined to the material and physical wellness of the people? Could there be any different perspective in looking at the concept in a holistic view? This study would attempt to answer the above questions by deliberating the dimensions of QoL enshrined by the maqasid al-shariah (the objectives of shariah). External Desk Study is employed in getting the required information and data relating to the definition and measurement of QoL. Relevant literatures in the area are reviewed and analysed in coming up with the new dimensions of holistic QoL. In analyzing the data, deductive approach is used to come up with the list of indicators for every dimension of maqasid-based QoL. Finding of this study is expected to shed light in looking into a much broader dimension of QoL.*

**Keyword:** Maqasid; Quality of Life (QoL); Holistic QoL

### INTRODUCTION

Quality of life (QoL) is the general well-being of individuals and societies that outline positive and negative features of life. It observes life satisfaction, including everything from physical health, family, education, employment, wealth, safety, security to freedom, religious beliefs, and the environment (Barcaccia, 2013). It is indeed indicators to measure a nation's development

status, economic growth and political stability (Noor Suzilawati, Mariana, Syahirah & Alias, 2017).

Quality of life also refers to standard indicators of the quality of life that include not only wealth and employment but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, & Watts, 2009). Quality of life can be perceived as the well-being state of an individual and it also describes the state of mind that individual is in.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of life (QoL) as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of culture and value systems in which they live and concerning their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns” (WHO, 2012). QoL also is referred to a concept concerning physical health, mental health, social relationships, and emotional well-being (Baernholdt et al., 2012). So far, there has been no single, universally accepted definition of quality of life but the existing conception recognizes that quality of life is determined by personal/social factors as well as subjective/objective factors (Elosua, 2011).

Quality of life is quantifiable since it has a measurement tools associate to it. Measurements of quality of life involves both objective and subjective indicators. Objective indicators include education, health, time occupy, social interaction, living conditions and many more. While subjective indicators include life satisfaction, personal wellbeing, happiness level and many other subjective criteria. There are multiple dimensions in assessing quality of life. As suggested by National Institute of Health Malaysia in defining quality of life, multidimensional aspect of QoL includes psychological, physiological, social, interpersonal, spiritual, political, temporal and financial. All the dimensions will give a measure in assessing the quality of life of an individual.

The above-mentioned multidimensional quality of life might be enough to measure the nation’s status, hence assessing the state of SDG of a country. Nevertheless, a more holistic expression of life quality has been outlined in Islam under the maqasid al-shariah concept. The quality of life under maqasid al-shariah dimensions include hifz al-deen (faith), hifz al-nafs (human self), hifz al-aql (intellect), hifz al-nasl (posterity/dignity) and hifz al-maal (wealth) (Noor Suzilawati et al., 2018). This study would focus on measuring QoL holistically in light of the maqasid al-shariah.

## **TAXONOMY OF QoL**

Defining quality of life (QoL) is not an easy task as there are many vague and inconsistent definitions in the literature. Studies often look at QoL at a rather limited perception of the concept. They limit their definition based on what the researchers have seen in a certain context. The concept is also being dealt in various papers at a heterogeneous manner. Farquhar (1995) had come up with

the taxonomy of QoL definitions that enables the existing inconsistent QoL definitions being structured into a framework.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Quality of Life definitions

Type	Name for type	Description
<b>(A) Expert/professional's definitions</b>		
I	Global definitions	The most common, general, type of definition - usually say little about the possible components of QOL. Usually incorporate ideas of satisfaction/dissatisfaction or happiness/unhappiness.
II	Component definitions	Break down QOL into a series of components, dimensions or domains, or identify characteristics deemed essential to any evaluation of QOL.
II a	(non-research-specific)	Identify a number of dimensions of general QOL, but may not necessarily claim to cover every possible dimension
II b	(research-specific)	Explicitly tailored to meet the objectives of a specific piece of research. May therefore overlook or exclude certain dimensions of QOL considered less relevant to the research aims.
III	Focused definitions	Refer only to one or a small number of the dimensions of QOL
III a	(explicit)	Focus on a small number of dimensions of QOL considered essential to QOL, but does so explicitly.
III b	(implicit)	Focus on one or two dimensions of the broader concept of QOL, but implicitly, without making this clear.
IV	Combination definitions	Global definitions (same as type I) that also specify dimensions (as in type II).

Source: Farquhar 1995.

The first type of definition i.e., global definition is a general definition of QoL that incorporate the idea of satisfaction/dissatisfaction and happiness/unhappiness felt by people. This includes both the conditions of life and the experience of life. The measurement is rather subjective in terms of individuals' own assessment of their life experience. The second type of QoL definition i.e component definitions are those definitions which were broken down into parts or dimensions. The parts or components are further subdivided into non-research specific and research specific. Non-research specific definitions refer to QoL definitions in terms of general underlying dimensions such as health status, financial status, socio-economic status, life satisfaction, self-esteem and as such. Research-specific definitions on the other hand define QoL concept in terms of the focus of a particular research. Such example is a study on QoL that goes beyond the general dimensions such as freedom, privacy, respect for individual, maintenance of dignity and other similar terms (Farquhar, 1995).

Type three definitions are focused definitions that defined QoL into a very specific and focused component. This type of definition is further classified into explicit and implicit. The most common example of explicit

definition is health-related quality of life (HRQoL) that includes nursing, medicine and health promotion. HRQoL is in fact among the biggest volumes of QoL studies in literature (Laranjeira, 2008). The implicit definition occurs when the researchers defined quality of life in terms of one small component of QoL implicitly, making the readers to have difficulty in assessing the interpretation of the definition. The last type of definitions covers definitions type I and II that comprise diverse areas of QoL including personal satisfaction, self-esteem, performance ability, previous experience, economic status, general health, emotional status; all of which contribute to the overall quality of life (Farquhar, 1995).

In measuring the quality of life (QoL), some would look at QoL from the angle of individual perception and feeling of satisfaction, which make it very subjective. A 65-years old grandmother for example would perceive her life to be of good quality when she can still walk alone unassisted and having free of any illness. A 35 years old executive would perceive his life to be in good quality whenever he has a secured job and happily married with a beautiful wife and blessed with healthy children. A wheel-chaired handicapped person would find himself in good life quality when he has family that support him, and he could manage himself to the restroom. Others who may not even have secured jobs or family support could still find their life in good quality whenever they have freedom in pursuing their passion or dreams. On the other hand, quality of life could be looked objectively on certain characteristics.

In this regard, Janzen (2003) had classified the measurement of QoL into subjective and objective measurement. Subjective measure of QoL deals with an individual's perception of various aspects of life based on their background, attitudes, cultures, religion, emotion and as such. The objective measurement looks at the external observable dimensions such as physical health, financial condition, employment status, educational levels, environment, facilities and other similar external qualities which are independent of individuals perception (Janzen, 2003). Rapley (2003) in the same context had outlined the objective and subjective indicators of QoL as follow:

Table 2: Objective and Subjective Social Indicators

Objective Indicators	Subjective Indicators
1. Life expectancy	1. Sense of community
2. Crime rate	2. Material possessions
3. Unemployment rate	3. Sense of safety
4. Gross Domestic Product	4. Happiness
5. Poverty rate	5. Satisfaction with life as a whole
6. School attendance	6. Relationship with family
7. Working hours per week	7. Job satisfaction
8. Perinatal mortality rate	8. Sex life
9. Suicide rate	9. Perception of distributional justice
	10. Class identification
	11. Hobbies and club membership

Source: Rapley (2003)

Many studies nowadays incorporate both objective and subjective measurements of QoL. Study by Grochtdreis, Koenig, Riedel-Heller and Dams (2020) for example examine the health-related QoL (HrQoL) of the refugees whose life were secluded in cramped and crowded refugees' camps in war-zone affected countries such as Syria. The state of health conditions in the forms of illness and diseases as well as nutrition level of the refugees would tell on whether they have better or lower quality of life. The study also conducted survey to the refugees in examining on what they perceived life is in the refugee's camps.

In measuring the level of QoL, one could have a range from good to poor QoL. Studies indicate that low quality of life could be due to disaster (Jin, Ying-kang, You-ping, Ping & Fang, 2012); critical illness (Howard, Crowe, Choroszewski, Kovatch, Haynes, Ford, Beck, Scott & Gregory, 2021)); loss of job and financial support (Ikeda, Igarashi, Odani, Murakami & Tabuchi, 2021), cultural discrimination (Salehi Salehi, Whitehead, Sebar, Upadhyay, Coyne & Harris, 2021) and many other adverse situations or elements.

## METHOD

This study employed qualitative research method through external desk study. External Desk Study is employed in getting the required information and data relating to the definition and measurement of QoL. This method of study is considered suitable as the main sources of data are published on-line materials and printed works.

In acquiring the data, relevant literatures in the area are reviewed and analysed to come up with the new dimensions of holistic QoL. The existing dimensions of QoL in literatures are vast in coverage and scope. Hence, this study limits the scope into type IIa taxonomy of QoL definitions with the

expected measurement to adopt subjective method. The collected data are deductively analyzed to come up with the maqasid-based dimensions and indicators.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

This section discussed the indicators of QoL in the light of maqasid-al-shariah. As emphasized by Cobb (2000), the choice of indicators for inclusion in a QoL framework should be based on an explicit theory that constitute a positive QoL. The basic theory used in this study is the concept of dharuriyah al-khamsah or five basic qualities of life in Islam. Before deliberating on maqasid dimensions of QoL, the existing dimensions under WHO (World Health Organization) is visited.

## **DIMENSIONS OF QOL**

Generally, existing literature indicated that the core QoL domains and their indicators are emotional well-being (contentment, self-concept, lack of stress), interpersonal relations (interactions, relationships, support), material well-being (financial status, employment, housing), personal development (education, personal competence, performance), physical well-being (health, daily living activities, leisure), self-determination (autonomy/personal control, goals/personal values, choices), social inclusion (community integration and participation, community roles, social support) and rights (human, legal) (Schalock, 2004).

The World Health Organization (WHO) had developed WHOQOL-100 quality of life assessment that can be used cross-culturally around the globe. The development of WHOQOL-100 was initiated upon realizing the need for a genuinely international measure of QoL beyond health and healthcare (WHO, 2012). Having been tested in several stages, the WHOQOL domains include physical health, psychological health, social relationships and environment (see Table 3). WHOQOL instrument assessment had been used in many different countries to assess the quality of life of the nation. Among the earlier study was done in Iran (Ali, Leila, Esmail & Azizallah, 2013) that investigated the quality of life of health-care staffs. Other later study was by Fiona, Lin, John, Katherine & Frances (2018) that examined the association between neighborhood environment and QOL among residents in Hong Kong.

Table 3: WHOQOL Domains

Domain	Facets incorporated within domains
1. Physical health	Activities of daily living Dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids Energy and fatigue Mobility Pain and discomfort Sleep and rest Work Capacity
2. Psychological	Bodily image and appearance Negative feelings Positive feelings Self-esteem Spirituality / Religion / Personal beliefs Thinking, learning, memory and concentration
3. Social relationships	Personal relationships Social support Sexual activity
4. Environment	Financial resources Freedom, physical safety and security Health and social care: accessibility and quality Home environment Opportunities for acquiring new information and skills Participation in and opportunities for recreation / leisure activities Physical environment (pollution / noise / traffic / climate) Transport

Source: WHO (2012)

A recent study that applied WHOQOL had been conducted on type-2 diabetic patients to assess their quality of life (Abbasi, Soltani, Mansori, Khazaei, Sohrabi & Talebloo, 2020). The study proved that WHOQOL instrument is reliable instrument for clinical and research uses.

### MAQASID DIMENSIONS OF QOL

Islam as a complete religion, has enshrined human being with a comprehensive manual for the Muslims to practice as a way of life. This comprehensive manual is known as the shariah (complete and comprehensive Islamic law). The outlining of the manual has specific objectives (maqasid) of preserving and protecting the well-being of the people in the worldly life and the life here after. Known also as maqasid al-shariah (the objectives of shariah), the laws aimed at preserving the five basic qualities of life (dharuriyah al-khams) constituting the deen (spiritual/belief), the nafs (live), the aql (intellect), the ird (dignity) and the maal (property). In understanding the maqasid al-shariah, one needs to comprehend the very basic core concept of maslahah vis-à-vis mafsadah (Ahcene, 2013). This basic core concept is in line with the underlying principle

of the maqasid itself that is “Removal of harm (mafsadah) and preserving benefit (maslahah)”. Maslahah simply refers to public interest while mafsadah is anything that would bring harm to the live of the human and non-human being inclusive of the surrounding nature.

The maqasid dimension of QoL is unique as it covers an eternal dimension of life beyond the worldly material life. The ultimate goal of the wellbeing is the rewards from the Almighty in the form of Jannah (heaven) in the hereafter. The following subsections dwells on the five maqasid dimensions and their indicators.

## 1. Religion /Spiritual

Spirituality or religion secures the highest position in the maqasidic dimension of QoL. This is in line with the concept of maqasid syariah in which religion represents the foremost purpose. In other words, the QoL in Islam is more closely related to personal piety, spiritual solace and pleasure. This can be inferred from the concept of *al-falah* (success) as indicated in *al-Qur’an* in *surah* al-Mu’minun: 1-11). Rationally, those who achieve the best quality of life will lead a successful life, and *surah* al-Mu’minun: 1-11) highlights seven important points regarding the characteristics of successful believers. The most important criteria are mentioned in the first verse, “Successful indeed are the believers” (al-Mu’minun 23:1), which signifies that the faith (iman) and piety as a condition to succeed in this world and hereafter. Among the characteristics *al mu’minun* (believers) mentioned are those who can develop *khusyu’* (concentration) in *solat*, turn away from *al-laghw* i.e dirty, false, evil vain, falsehood, and all that forbidden by Allah, paying *zakat* (alms-giving) guards their chastity i.e. private parts, from illegal sexual acts, discharge his trust truthfully and faithfully, and observe their daily prayers.

With regards to this, two prominent Islamic scholars have developed and formulated guidelines to be successful Muslims. Al-Qurthubi’s (1214-1273) for example, developed five steps for success which include *halal*, *qanaah* (contentment), *taufik* (blessings of Allah in proportion to one’s expectations), *sa’adah* (happiness), and *jannah* (heaven). On the other hand, Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) outlined seven stages for success consisting of knowledge and *ma’rifat* (gnosis), repentance, temptation, obstacles, motivation, imperfections, praise and gratitude (Umami Salwa & Muhammad Khair, 2016). It is also important to note that the maqasid dimension of QoL relating to spirituality is emphasised to fulfil the purpose of human beings’ existence in this world that is to worship Allah, as Allah says: “And I (Allah) created not the *jinns* and humans except that they should worship me (Alone)” (Quran: al-Dhariyat: 56).

As for the way to preserve the quality of spiritual and personal piety, Gamal Eldin Attia (2010) suggests Muslims to establish and strengthen sound teaching of Islam and avoid anything which would undermine it. This can be done through investigation, contemplation and comprehension of the Islamic teaching from the Quran and Sunnah. Muslims should also shun themselves from major sins such as *shirk* (association of partners with God) hypocrisy, showing off etc. and perform all the obligatory rites of worship. Another important way is to shape themselves with the fundamental morals and ethics of Islam including truthfulness, sincerity, integrity and a commitment to righteous action (Mohamad Alram, 2011). All those suggested acts reflecting the need for spirituality in obtaining God's blessing towards achieving prosperity in this world and the life hereafter.

## 2. Physical/Human Life

The second dimension of maqasid QoL is the physical aspect of one's life. Among the significant indicators for this dimension is security (Mohamad Alram Laldin, 2011). To ensure security, Islam prevents attacks on people's lives, that include among others murder, assault, and committing suicide (Quran, al-Nisa': 93; Quran, al-Isra': 33). Islam also requires the enforcement of the law of retribution against those who commit deliberate aggression against others (Qisas) and requiring that anyone who commits unintentional assault to pay blood money (Quran, al-Baqarah: 178-179).

Another indicator is body needs by way of food and drinks, clothing, shelter, protection again infectious disease and mortal dangers such as fire, drowning, poisoning, car accidents machines, electricity and various sort of radiation, as well as commanding the treatment for those afflicted by illness or accident (Gamal Eldin Attia, 2010). This shows that physical fitness is very important as it can improve one's health, well being and thus enhance the QoL.

Yasser (2016) pointed another indicator i.e marriage. This is because marriage is a sacred relation in which a husband and a wife continues the procreation of the human life. In this relation, the couples have mutual respect, love, and cooperation in bringing up the children. Marriage is a heavenly bond in which men and women fulfill their physical and psychological needs to the other gender.

## 3. Intellectual

Al- 'aql or intellect (mind, human reason) is the third dimension of maqasid QoL. The indicators of this dimension cover three main elements namely (i) the development of the mind, (ii) the preservation of mind and (iii) the utilization of mind. To develop the mind means, Muslims should ensure the mind is in

the best possible condition, whether with respect to its capacity for scientific thought or mindset, training the rational way of thinking, or nourishing the mind with knowledge and skill so that people will be wiser, prudent and skilful (Gamal Eldin Attia, 2010).

The second element i.e to preserve the mind means to safeguard the well-being of the senses, the nervous system and the brain and to maintain the mind's ability to function properly. As for the means of preserving the mind, Gamal Eldin Attia (2010) suggested that:

- i. Avoiding anything which could damage the mind system such as taking intoxicants or drug, and treating whatever sort of imbalance or malfunction relating to psychological, nervous or mental disorders (Quran, al-Ma'idah: 90)
- ii. Avoiding the behaviour that would impede the mind's function or create mental confusion such as groundless speculation, blind imitation of one's forbears, arrogance, superstitions and false doctrines, argumentativeness, obstinacy, self-importance and hypocrisy
- iii. Avoiding media or any activities which engage in brainwashing operations, attempts to restrict people's thinking and dissemination of a corrupt way of thinking.

The third element is the utilization of mind i.e, to activate the mind with those activities which might be termed as "intellectual activities" that can be performed either individually or collectively. One can engage in any discussion, express views and give opinions (Mohamad Akram, 2008).

#### 4. Dignity/honor

The fourth dimension of maqasid QoL is dignity or honor. Islam has given a distinct position of dignity to humanity by viewing humans as the noblest of creatures and man as the trustee (or vicegerent) of God on earth. Thus, according to the Islamic attitude, all individuals deserve to be treated in a way of dignity, nobility, and respect, and deserve to be taken decent care of for any issues (David, 2014). The Qur'an sheds light on how human beings should relate to one another while observant of each other's dignity (Quran, al-Isra': 70; Quran, al-'Alaq: 1-5; Quran, at-Tin: 4; Quran, al-Hijr: 29; Quran, Sad: 72). Islam has also regulated the relationship of man and woman by encouraging Muslims to enter into marriage contract in order to protect their dignity. Severe punishment for those who commit adultery is imposed as it leads to the increase of social problems illegitimate child, irresponsible parents and others. (Quran, an-Nur: 2).

The classical scholars of al Qarafi, al Tufi, al-Subki and al-Shawkani classify the preservation of honor among the essentials alongside the preservation of progeny or family lineage. However, Ibn Ashur classifies the preservation of honor among the exigencies despite the prescribed punishment in Islamic law for assaulting someone's honor through the crime of *al qadhf* (false accusation of sexual misconduct), while discretionary punishments are prescribed for slander of other than *qadhf* (Muhammad Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, 2006; Gamal Eldin Attia, 2010).

Measuring QoL based on maqasidic approach on this dimension considers all indicators related to human dignity. It is not limited simply to sexual aspects rather it includes anything related to reputation, individual right to privacy and the sanctity of one's private life. QoL in relation to dignity is also measured by having a strong marriage bond. This is because marriage in Islam is considered as *ihson* (fortification) (Quran, an-Nisa': 24 -25; Quran al-Ma'idah: 5). A person who marries is fortified as marriage provides them with a fort built for the satisfaction of sexual desires and the protection of her morality and chastity (Ibn Kathir, 1993).

## 5. Material

In the context of maqasid shariah, wealth is very important to preserve human social order and to promote the ummah's prowess and glory (Muhammad Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, 2006). Several Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions dealing with property and wealth and this shows that wealth has an important status in Shariah, being the mainstay of human society's activities and the solution to its problems (Quran, al-Baqarah: 254; 2-3). Most importantly, wealth in Islam emphasises the importance of fulfilling the needs of an individual and to foster their well-being (Muhammad Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, 2006).

The Quran instructs Muslims to persistently work whenever and wherever it is available: "disperse through the land and seek of the bounty of God" (Quran, al-Jumu'ah: 10) and "God hath permitted trade and forbidden usury" (Quran, al-Baqarah: 275). In the Prophetic tradition, the Prophet preached that merchants should perform tasks that were not only morally required but also that were essential for the survival and flourishing of a society. Interestingly, the Quran views poverty as the promise of the Devil, and prosperity as the promise of God, "The Devil threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. God promised you His forgiveness and bounties" (Quran, al-Baqarah: 268). Thus, working is very important for survival. Sufficient wealth can lead to a better quality of life where a person can have access to better quality of education, food, health and well being and living conditions.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed at looking into the dimensions of QoL from a rather different perspective. The existing QoL assessment by WHO (known also as WHOQOL) comprised of four main dimensions namely physical health, psychological, social relationship and environment. These four dimensions have covered all the basic things that could measure the quality of life of the people across countries and nations. The dimensions nevertheless are restricted within the form and the apparent qualities of life. They do not take into consideration the underlying concept by looking the substance that life could bring beyond the logical reasoning. The maqasidic dimensions represents the philosophy of Islamic legislations. They cover the parameters of the maslahah that would bring benefit and wellness of the people; not just the life of the people in this world but also beyond (hereafter). Anything that would bring mafsadah (harm/evil things) are avoided and should be removed at all costs. Furthermore, the indicators of maqasidic dimensions emanate from the divine revelations comprising the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet PBUH. They could give insight beyond what human could see with the naked eye. In other words, the maqasidic approach of measuring QoL is not just covering the apparent forms of life qualities but also the substance that life could bring in a longer horizon.

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#### Penafian

Pandangan yang dinyatakan dalam artikel ini adalah pandangan penulis. Jurnal Pengurusan dan Penyelidikan Fatwa tidak akan bertanggungjawab atas apa-apa kerugian, kerosakan atau lain-lain liabiliti yang disebabkan oleh / timbul daripada penggunaan kandungan artikel ini.