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RESEARCH REVIEW

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Profiling and Segmentation of Urban Poor Children for Better Quality of Life

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PROFILING AND SEGMENTATION OF URBAN POOR CHILDREN FOR BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is not just about money. There has been growing recognition over recent decades of the multi-dimensional quality of poverty, and it is the cumulative effect of a range of deprivations that is most troubling. Poverty is not just about the capacity to afford a basic food basket; it is a matter of lack of access and exclusion in a range of areas, including basic civil and political rights, and this may be especially evident in cities. While the issue is urgent, the state of quality of life among the urban poor's children in this country has received very little attention.



ABSTRACT

Urban poverty in Malaysia has become an alarming phenomenon due to impacts of urbanization and it has created some social challenges. While reviews of past and present trends and studies have highlighted evidence of the nature and causes of urban poverty in the country, research on the quality of life of Malaysian urban poor's children has received very little consideration. Past research has indicated the link between poverty, parenting, and psychological distress. World Health Organization (WHO) highlights how these children face a lifetime risk of mental health issues and negative well-being and UNICEF emphasizes their crucial needs and prioritizes the protection of the children. However, this issue is not well researched and there is lacking scientific evidence that captures the children of urban poor's quality of life and mental health status. Studying the children's wellbeing is fundamental, as they are the future social group that will shape the country. Therefore, the study proposed carried two main objectives. First is to understand how living in poverty shapes the well-being of urban poor's children by constructing a profile and segmentation. Second is to explore why there are variations in the level of quality of life among urban poor's children of similar background and social status. The research will employ both methods of quantitative and qualitative studies. First, through descriptive research, a profile of the children based on the quality of life, resilience, and mental distress indicator will be performed. Second, based on the profiling and segmentation analysis, an in-depth investigation will be conducted to determine factors that make a difference in the quality of life and their life expectation. The study is significant in providing valuable insights in developing protective measures for the children's social wellbeing.

Keywords: Quality of Life, Urban Poor, Children, Profiling, Poverty.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Past research has indicated the link between poverty, parenting, and psychological distress. World Health Organization (WHO) highlights how these children are at risk of mental health issues and face negative well-being consequences that can last a lifetime and UNICEF emphasizes their crucial needs and prioritizes the protection of the children. A study by UNICEF (2011) of the urban poor highlights that living without secure tenure creates terrible distress and chronic anxiety for the children as the small and overcrowded homes with little opportunity for exploration and physical activity create tempers and a potential for harsh treatment. Eventually, difficult living conditions also inevitably mean some level of neglect for young children (Roelen & Notten, 2011). What is worse is the degree of transience, crowding, insecurity, and poor conditions in many settings can mean a high level of stress and undermines their social capital thus resulting in lower level of reciprocity and higher rates of crime and violence (Bartlett, 2011). The Malaysian Prime Minister highlighted in The Mid-Term Review of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, 2018 that enhancing the health and wellbeing of Malaysian Citizens is essential in achieving inclusive growth for the nation (Unit, 2018). Thus, it is essential to further investigate the health and wellbeing of the children of urban poor citizens. This study will provide deep insight into urban poor children's profile and their views on quality of life dimensions. Furthermore, this study will contribute to a better alliance of formal and informal support systems. The information can help the government, service providers, and policymakers to develop strategies, policies, and programs to improve the quality of life of urban poor families in Malaysia. This research project is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education under Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS). The total grant is RM83,950.

3. MATERIAL & METHOD

A sequential explanatory study will be carried out to answer the research objectives of the study. This research study will employ both quantitative and qualitative research designs and will be carried out in two (2) phases in order to achieve both research objectives. Firstly, the quantitative research is meant to get the profile of the children of urban poor in order to explore how the parents, schools, social surroundings and community, friends, as well as peers make a difference in shaping their current quality of life and future expectation. Secondly, the qualitative research will be conducted to get an in depth view of the variation of urban poor children quality of life especially from the aspect of quality of life, resilience including mental condition and behavior (emotion and body language will be captured using video camera), and life expectation. Finally, key stakeholders that play important role in the society namely the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), the Prime Minister's Department, and the Department of Urban Development and Planning will be interviewed besides the main research subjects.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research is expected to propose the most appropriate protective measures for shaping urban poor children's social wellbeing. The expected outcome of the study will significantly contribute to a better alliance of formal and informal support systems for the children.

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