

# **The Quality of Life (QoL) of the Island People in the State of Terengganu, Malaysia:**

## **A Study on Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian**

### **LA QUALITÉ DE VIE (QDV) DES HABITANTS VIVANT DANS LES ÎLES DE L'ÉTAT DE TERENGGANU, MALAISIE:**

#### **UNE ÉTUDE SUR LE PULAU REDANG ET LE PULAU PERHENTIAN**

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**Abstract:** Enhancing the Quality of life (QoL) of the population is one of the most important development agenda for any developing countries, including Malaysia. The objective of this study is to examine the QoL of the people on Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian, two offshore islands in the state of Terengganu, using the mixed methodology. The findings revealed that nearly 20 percent of the respondents have never received any form of formal education, with more than half of the respondents received primary school education only. This low level education of the parents has resulted in the low level education of the second generation. Education, employment, family life and welfare support are among the factors which influenced the objective (actual) and subjective (perceived) QoL on both islands. The study also showed that the level of the objective and subjective QoL of most of the people on both islands were at the medium level. However, the housing quality was of low standard which affected the quality of peoples' life. The household income somehow influenced the score of the QoL. The study also revealed that the development to enhance the quality of life of the islanders by the government is progressing at a slow pace. The findings based on Pearson correlation also revealed that the objective and subjective QoL were significantly correlated. This means that for most of the people on both islands, the higher their objective QoL, the better their subjective QoL.

**Key words:** Quality of Life; Objective Quality of Life; Subjective Quality of Life; Pulau Redang; Pulau Perhentian

**Résumé** L'amélioration de la qualité de vie (QdV) de la population est l'un des programmes de développement les plus importants pour tous les pays en voie de développement, notamment la Malaisie. L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner la qualité de vie des habitants de Pulau Redang et de Pulau Perhentian, deux îles dans l'état de Terengganu, en utilisant la méthode mixte. Les résultats ont révélé que près de 20 pour cent des répondants n'ont jamais reçu aucune forme d'éducation formelle, et plus de la moitié des répondants ont reçu une éducation primaire seulement. Le faible niveau d'éducation des parents a abouti à la formation de bas niveau de la deuxième génération. L'éducation, l'emploi, la vie familiale et l'aide sociale sont parmi les facteurs qui ont influencé la qualité de vie objective (réelle) et subjective (perçue) des habitants des deux îles. L'étude a également montré que le niveau de la qualité de vie objective et subjective de la plupart des habitants sur les deux îles a été au niveau moyen. Cependant, un niveau faible de la qualité des logements a affecté la qualité de

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vie des peuples. Les revenus du ménage a influencé en quelque sorte le score de la qualité de vie. L'étude a également révélé que le développement et l'amélioration de la qualité de vie des habitants entretenus par le gouvernement de l'île progresse à un rythme lent. Les résultats obtenus de la corrélation de Pearson a également révélé que la qualité de vie objective et subjective ont été significativement corrélées. Cela signifie que pour la plupart des habitants sur les deux îles, plus haut le niveau de leur qualité de vie objective, meilleure leur qualité de vie subjective.

**Mots clés:** Qualité de vie; Qualité de vie objective; Qualité de vie subjective; Pulau Redang; Pulau Perhentian

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## INTRODUCTION

QoL studies used to be pretty narrow, focussing on only one subject but ignoring linkages with others (Adrian Jones, 2002: 5). QoL should be approached in a holistic view. In this study, QoL is discussed in two ways; objective and subjective. According to Sen (1987), 'You could be well off, without being well, without being able to lead the life you wanted. You could have got the life you wanted, without being happy. You could be happy, without having much freedom. You could have a good deal of freedom, without achieving much. We can go on'. And, 'QoL should be understood as an evaluation of the gratification that people derive from the degree to which their material and mental needs are actually satisfied' (Bestuzher-Landa, 1980: 162). Veenhoven states that 'The focus is on description: how well citizens live ('level' of living) and whether life gets better or not (social 'progress'). QoL is conceived in two ways: as 'objective' and as 'subjective' QoL (Veenhoven, 1996b:1)

Generally, the objective conditions of QoL are simply measures of physical well-being of responses. Veenhoven (1996b), also states, 'objective' quality-of-life is the degree to which living-conditions meet observable criteria of the good life, such as income security for everybody, safety in the street, good health care, education, etc. In this context the prefix 'objective' refers to the way of measurement. Measurement is based on explicit criteria of success that can be implied by impartial outsiders". However, the subjective perceptions of QoL are difficult to quantify and measure. 'Subjective QoL is how people appreciate their life personally. For example, how secure they think their income is, how safe they feel in the street, how satisfied they are with their health and education, etc. Here the prefix 'subjective' means that criteria for judgement may vary from person to person. In this case, standards are not explicit, and external judgement is not possible. Subjective appraisals often involve judgements in terms of 'satisfaction'. That is; summary evaluations of how well one likes something. Satisfaction is a central concept in research on subjective quality-of-life' (Veenhoven, 1996b).

## 1. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Researches on quality of life or well being had long begun for decades. Studies on QoL started when Frederick LePlay studied on the European workers' quality of life using an intensive case study method. According to his theory, he suggested that family is one critical social unit that represents the people of a particular place (Zimmerman & Frampton, 1935).

There were studies on the quality of housings, basically held in the United States of America. According to Campbell (1971), Eastman (1978), and Peck & Steward (1985), in America, there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with the housing and the quality of life.

Research on housing in America was then supported by a research done in Africa conducted by Emmanuel D. Fiadzo, *et al* (2001), who stated that the attributes of a home influenced the way people live – in other words; their quality of life. In Fiadzo's study, he quoted that in Ghana, there are still some Africans who live in huts covered mud with poor sewage system, as well as no electricity, which affects their way of life and psychological well-being. Living in such uncomfortable homes affect their psychological needs, thus affects their quality of life.

Veenhoven (1998), investigated on the quality of life between the poor and rich nations, and he found out that '*the better the economy of a country, the higher the quality of life they will be*' (Alex C. Michalos *et. al*, 2000).

A study based in Malaysia by Kor Geok Lin (1987) who once studied on the '*Quality of Life in Rural Communities in Peninsular Malaysia: Current Health and Nutritional Determiners*,' found out that the health of rural communities significantly related with their dietary as well as their knowledge on health.

Lin's study were then supported by another research in Singapore, where it was found that Singaporeans have high psychological well-being based on the factor of good health and close family relations. Furthermore, they also proved that

when the environments they live are conducive, the tendency of a higher psychological well-being is possible to achieve (Kau & Wang, 1994).

A study by Azahan.A *et.al* (2009) also examined the status on quality of life in Seremban, one of the intermediate cities in Malaysia based on three components i.e. urban dwellers readiness, urban environment and urban accessibility. However, rather than assessment made through physical perspective, this research used urban dwellers perspective to justify the quality of life status. 550 respondents from various socioeconomic backgrounds participated in this research. The result shows that all the three components are significantly contributed to the Seremban's quality of life status. However, the score for urban dwellers readiness component is higher than urban environment component (64.2%) and urban accessibility component (60.0%) that is 68.7%. It is also found that the quality of life of people in Seremban's urban dwellers is quite homogeneous, although they are from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The findings show that Seremban has potentials to develop and those who live in Seremban will have better future, as it is pertinent with its function and status as an intermediate city.

Hung Wong (2011) studied on the poverty and social exclusion of three groups of people; youth, women and the elderly living in six remote areas in the New Territories of Hong Kong. In his study, he found out that the QoL of Hong Kong's youth, women and the elderly is adversely affected by limited job opportunities, high cost of travel for employment and poor neighbourhoods in the community. However, perceptions of reasons for their problems are different for all three groups, due to differences in bonding and bridging social capital they have, as well as the differences in perceptions on social exclusion and discrimination directed upon them.

Lum (2011), on the other hand, examined parenting characteristics in families experiencing economic disadvantage and found that the five types of disadvantaged families under study differed in terms of economic hardship, psychological stress and family relationship. Results demonstrated that family relationship and social networks protected economically disadvantaged families, while the negative effects of low income were amplified by powerlessness. Based on the findings, the author argued for the adoption of a family perspective in the formulation of poverty-alleviation policy and the provision of service (Shek, 2011).

## **2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the study is to identify the QoL level of the people on Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian. However, the study focuses on:

- (1) Identifying the level of the respondents' objective QoL.
- (2) Identifying the level of their subjective QoL.
- (3) Determining the relationship between the objective and the subjective QoL.
- (4) Identifying the factors affecting the people's QoL.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

By applying the mixed methodology which is the combination of two research methods, qualitative and quantitative, this study selected a few key informants and 267 respondents. Respondents were heads of families who were randomly chosen. Data collection was done using a number of techniques; structured interviews (questionnaires), unstructured interviews and observations. Questionnaires were analysed using product-moment correlation.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Level of Respondents' Objective Quality of Life**

For the objective QoL in both islands, only 26 respondents (who represent their families) out of 267 samples or 9.7 percent are at low level. 197 respondents or 73.8 percent are at medium level and 44 respondents or 16.5 percent are at high level category.

At Pulau Redang, only 14 respondents out of 146 samples or 9.6 percent are at low level, 109 respondents or 74.6 percent are at medium level, whereas 23 respondents or 15.8 percent are at high level category. At Pulau Perhentian, 12 respondents out of 121 samples or 9.9 percents are at low level category, 88 respondents or 72.7 percent are at medium level and 21 respondents or 17.4 percent are at high level category. More job opportunities in tourism industry on both islands are one of the factors associated with the higher social economic status and the level of the islanders' QoL.

#### 4.2 Objective QoL Level Based on the Respondents' Socio-Demographic Background and Islands.

Generally, analysis indicated the objective QoL based on respondents' socio-demographic background is at medium level category. Gender-wise, the most noticeable difference is that the women's objective QoL is much lower than men's objective QoL.

However, the same cannot be said about the age of the respondents as analysis indicated that the lower the respondents' ages are, the higher their objective QoL level. This scenario is common on both islands.

**Table 1: Distribution Percentage of Objective QoL Level Based on the Respondents' Socio-Demographic Background and Islands**

Socio-Demographic Background	Objective QoL Level					
	Low	Pulau Redang			Pulau Perhentian	
		Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	3.6	80.9	15.5	8.3	73.8	17.9
Female	27.8	55.6	16.6	13.6	70.2	16.2
<b>Age</b>						
Less than 30 years	0	59.5	30.5	5.9	52.9	41.2
31-45 years	0	77.6	22.4	7.5	75.5	17.0
More than 46 years	21.6	73.8	4.6	13.7	76.4	9.9
<b>Level of Education</b>						
Attended school	3.2	79.4	17.4	5.4	74.2	20.4
Never attended school	50.0	45.0	5.0	25.0	67.8	7.2
<b>Employment Status</b>						
Employed	0.9	80.0	19.1	4.4	75.0	20.6
Unemployed	42.0	54.8	3.2	27.6	65.5	6.9
<b>Marital Status</b>						
With spouse	2.4	79.4	18.2	9.3	71.1	19.6
Without spouse	55.0	45.0	0	12.5	79.2	8.3
<b>Residential Status</b>						
Local	11.8	76.4	11.8	12.2	70.7	17.1
Immigrant	2.8	69.4	27.8	5.1	76.9	18.0

Education plays an important role in enhancing people's QoL. In Pulau Redang, 50 percent of the respondents who have never attended school are in low level, whereas in Pulau Perhentian 25 percent of them are in the same category.

Respondents who are employed shows their objective QoL level is much better compared to their counterparts.

It was found that none of the respondents in Pulau Redang, who have no spouse are at the high level category, in fact more than half of them are at low level category.

Analysis also showed that immigrants to the islands have better objective QoL compared to the locals.

Analysis denoted negative correlation between the age of the respondents and their objective QoL. This means that as the respondents get older, their objective QoL decreases.

#### 4.3 Level of Respondents' Subjective Quality of Life

For the subjective quality of life of the people on both islands, 45 respondents out of 267 samples or 16.9 percents are at low level category and 58.1 percents are at medium level. Only 25.0 percent are at the high level category.

For the people of Pulau Redang, analysis of the subjective quality of life indicated that 31 respondents or 21.2 percent are at low level category, 58.2 percent are at medium level, while 20.6 percent are at high level category. For the people of Pulau Perhentian, 14 respondents or 11.6 percent are at low level category, 57.8 percent are at medium level, and 30.6 percent are at high level category.

Generally, the higher percentage (30.6 percent) scored by the respondents in Pulau Perhentian who are at high level category compared to those in Pulau Redang (20.6 percent) indicates that the islanders in Pulau Perhentian are more satisfied with their daily lives.

#### 4.4 Subjective QoL Level Based on the Respondents' Socio-Demographic Background

**Table 2: Distribution Percentage of the Subjective QoL Level Based on Respondents' Socio-Demographic Background**

Socio-Demographic Background	Subjective QoL Level		
	Low	Medium	High
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	17.0	56.2	26.8
Female	16.4	63.0	20.6
<b>Age</b>			
Less than 30 years	7.5	62.5	30.0
31-45 years	16.2	52.3	31.5
More than 46 years	20.7	62.1	17.2
<b>Level of Education</b>			
Attended school	14.6	56.6	28.8
Never attended school	27.1	64.6	8.3
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Employed	15.5	53.6	30.6
Unemployed	21.7	73.3	5.0
<b>Marital Status</b>			
With spouse	15.3	57.8	26.9
Without spouse	25.0	59.1	21.9
<b>Residential Status</b>			
Local	18.2	59.9	21.9
Immigrant	13.4	53.3	33.3

As can be seen from Table 2, for the subjective QoL, the medium level category dominates the QoL as a whole. For either gender, it seems that there is not much difference at all level of categories for their subjective QoL.

In the age of the respondents, analysis showed that there was a negative correlation between the age and the level of subjective QoL. This indicated that the higher respondents' ages are, the lower their subjective QoL. This means that their life satisfaction decreases as their age increases.

For the respondents who have attended school, their subjective QoL is considerably higher compared to those who have never attended school. Analysis showed that the respondents who are employed have a better subjective QoL compared to those who are unemployed.

It is also clear that the respondents who have spouses have a higher subjective QoL compared to their counterparts who haven't. However, there is not much difference for the immigrants and locals in all subjective QoL.

#### 4.5 Relationship Between the Objective and the Subjective Quality of Life

Analysing findings using Pearson correlation revealed that the objective and subjective QoL were correlated significantly at  $r = +0.433$  ( $p = 0.01$ ). This means that for most of the people on both islands, the higher their objective QoL, the better their subjective QoL was.

It can be concluded that, when people are satisfied with their material lives (objective QoL) such as housing, employment etc., they will tend to achieve their subjective QoL (well-being) and live contented lives.

#### 4.6 Factors Affecting the Islanders' Quality of Life

##### 4.6.1 Income

The average monthly income of the respondents in Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian is RM 491.84 and RM 482.58 respectively, which is considered low. Analysis showed that more than half of the respondents (67.1 percent) were considered poor. This indicates that their QoL is in the low level category.

The monthly household income of the respondents in Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian are still low, where more than half of them earn less than RM 600 and RM 500 respectively. However, observations revealed that most of the families in the island have more than one of the family members who are working and contribute to the house-hold expenses particularly for their daily needs. This improvement had a positive impact on the enhancement of their objective QoL.

In Pulau Perhentian, analysis showed that 88 respondents (72.7 percent) are those in the low income and this has direct influence on their subjective QoL.

Observations revealed that the life of the islanders of Pulau Redang is not as difficult as it seems although more than half of them are considered poor. They spent frugally, considering that the price of the household items and other daily needs is quite high compared to the price on the mainland. Transportation cost (from the mainland to the islands and vice versa) has also affected the cost of living on both islands.

Respondents with the monthly income of RM 350 and less are those who are involved in fishing activities and doing odd jobs. For those who earn RM 450 – RM 1500 per month, they are usually involved in tourism-based lower category employments such as cooks, waiters or boat-men.

For those who earn RM 2000 and above per month, they are also involved directly in tourism sector by owning speed-boats or chalets on both islands. There were cases in which the income of the chalets owners reaching up to RM 20,000 – RM 40,000 per month during peak season which is from March to October every year. Some of the speed-boat or fishing boat owners made about RM 1500-RM 3000 each for a 24 hour fishing trip. “Tourists from Japan, China and Europe like the fishing-trip. It proved to be lucrative, each trip brings me between RM 1500 and RM 2000, which can supplement the family’s income”, said one of the respondents in Pulau Perhentian.

**Table 3: Distribution Percentage of Respondents at Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian Based on Monthly Income**

Income (RM)	Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
500 and less	98	67.1	88	72.7
501 to 1000	37	25.3	25	20.7
1001 to 1500	8	5.5	5	4.1
1501 to 2000	1	0.7	2	1.7
2001 to 2500	0	0.0	0	0.0
2501 to 3000	1	0.7	0	0.0
3001 to 3500	0	0.0	0	0.0
3501 to 4000	1	0.7	0	0.0
4001 to 4500	0	0.0	0	0.0
4501 and above	0	0.0	1	0.8
Total	146	100.0	121	100.0

Through a few interviews, it was found that almost half of the respondents on both islands did not reveal their actual income. There were cases where respondents who said that their monthly income was between RM 300 - RM 350, were able to furnish their houses with 29 inches TV sets and many other household items and furniture which could only be afforded if their income is RM 1500 and above per month. Observations also revealed that the islanders of Pulau Perhentian spent more compared to their counterparts on Pulau Redang. However, it is interesting to note that most of the respondents on both islands live frugally in order to save for the ‘difficult season’ which comes between October and February.

#### 4.6.2 Expenses

The pattern of the expenses of the respondents on both islands showed that most of the respondents (94.5 percent Pulau Redang respondents and 75.2 percent Pulau Perhentian respondents) spent their money on their children’s education; 92.5 percent of Pulau Redang respondents and 76.0 Pulau Perhentian respondents stated that they also spent on utilities; and (67.1 percent of Pulau Redang respondents and 73.6 of Pulau Perhentian respondents) on fares (Table 4).

**Table 4: Types of Respondents’ Expenses for Non-Household Items on Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian**

Expenses	Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1. Children’s Education	138	94.5	91	75
2. Clothing	84	57.5	25	20.7
3. Loan	21	14.4	30	24.8
4. Vehicles – Car / Motorcycle	86	58.9	0	0.0
5. Utilities	135	92.5	92	76.0
6. House-hold Facilities	45	30.8	15	12.4
7. Salaries / Wages for Workers	15	10.3	15	12.4
8. Emergencies	85	58.2	58	47.9
9. Contributions to Parents	41	28.1	15	12.4
10. Business Goods	25	17.1	16	13.2
11. Fares	98	67.1	89	73.6
12. Rent	4	2.7	3	2.5

**Table 5: Expenses From Respondents' Monthly Income on Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian**

Total Expenses	Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All	91	62.3	65	53.7
More than half	43	29.5	43	35.5
Half	11	7.5	11	9.1
Less than half	1	0.7	2	1.7
Total	146	100.0	121	100.0

About 62.3 percent of the Pulau Redang respondents spent all their monthly income, whereas it is 53.7 percent of Pulau Perhentian respondents, which indicates that more than half of the respondents 'live from pay cheque to pay cheque'. Only one respondent (0.7 percent) in Pulau Redang stated that he spent less than half of the monthly income, and on Pulau Perhentian, only two respondents (1.7 percent) were in the same situation.

#### 4.6.3 Ownership

Ownership of household items indicates the level of objective QoL. Table 6 shows the percentage of respondents who own household and non-household item on both islands.

**Table 6: Percentage of Respondents Who Own Household and Non-Household Items at Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian**

Ownership	Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
TV Set	132	90.4	112	92.6
Refrigerator	114	78.1	93	76.9
Washing Machine	104	71.2	89	73.6
Gas Stove	144	98.6	117	96.7
Telephone	77	52.7	45	37.2
Cellular Phone	31	21.2	35	28.9
Computer	6	4.1	5	4.1
Radio	114	78.1	87	71.9
Vacuum Cleaner	10	6.8	3	2.5
Fan	136	93.2	112	92.6
Sofa	87	59.6	73	60.3
House	142	97.3	93	76.9
Car	15	10.3	0	0.0
Motorcycle	107	73.3	2	1.7
Boat for Own Use	37	25.3	2	1.7
Boat for Rental	1	0.7	3	2.5
Home / Chalet for Rental	0	0.0	0	0.0
Jewelleries	87	59.6	79	65.3
Land	68	46.6	69	57.0
Land for Rental	0	0.0	2	1.7

The use of fixed line telephones and cellular phones on Pulau Redang is 52.7 percent and 21.2 percent respectively, whilst on Pulau Perhentian it is 37.2 percent and 28.9 percent. Telephone lines can easily be disrupted especially during bad weather. Geographical factor also limits the use of cellular phones on both islands. Analysis indicated that 97.3 percent of the respondents on Pulau Redang own their house and the rest are squatters. A total of 37 respondents (25.3 percent) have boats for their own use, and only one respondent (0.7 percent) who has a boat for rental. About 73.3 percent of the respondents in Pulau Redang own motorcycles as compared to their counterparts on Pulau Perhentian with only 1.7 percent. The main reason for the higher percentage on Pulau Redang is due to the distance from the jetty to their settlement which is approximately 3.5 kilometres. Despite the campaign 'one computer per house-hold' by the government throughout the country, only 4.1 percent of the respondents on both islands own the item.

In General, the ownership pattern of the household and non-household items on both islands is different compared to the mainland. The ownership of basic things such as gas stove, refrigerator and fan dominated the overall household items but the ownership of furniture (such as cupboard, dining table etc.) is lower due to high transportation cost.

#### 4.6.4 Saving

It was interesting to find that the saving pattern of the islanders is different from the people on the mainland. In this study, saving means the sum of money put aside for saving from the respondents' income.

Analysis showed that more than half of the respondents (62.3 percent) on Pulau Redang and 53.7 percent on Pulau Perhentian have no saving. About 29.5 percent of them save less than half of their income as compared to 35.5 percent on Pulau Perhentian. Meanwhile, 7.5 percent and 9.1 percent of the respondents save half of their income in Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian respectively. Only 1 respondent (0.7 percent) in Pulau Redang stated that he saved more than half of the monthly income, and in Pulau Perhentian, only 2 respondents (1.7 percent) were in the same situation.

The findings from the interviews showed that most of the respondents on both islands set their money aside for some particular reasons; emergency cases, expenditures during difficult times, children’s education and festive seasons.

Observations also showed that majority of the islanders stock up some of their daily needs such as sugar, rice, flour, coffee, tea, salted fish etc. in a large quantity.

#### **4.6.5 Health**

The standard of health is also one of the dimensions of the QoL measured in Malaysia. In this study, health is measured by frequencies of respondents on both islands seeing the doctor in the last three months. More than a quarter (27.4 percent) of the respondents in Pulau Redang stated that they had to see the doctor more than three times in the last three months. Meanwhile, 58.2 percent claimed that they did not do so at all during the same period which indicates that most of the islanders in Pulau Redang are in a good health. In Pulau Perhentian, 22.3 percent of the respondents confirmed that they also had to see the doctor more than three times during the same period. The most common illnesses on both islands were coughs, tuberculosis, heart problem, asthma and diabetes.

#### **4.6.6 Housing**

Housing is a basic need of the people. Housing and housing related factors are often ignored although they are vital when trying to understand QoL.

**Table 7: Status of the Respondents’ Houses in Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian**

Status	Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Owner	114	78.1	88	72.7
Squatter	2	1.4	16	13.2
Tenant	4	2.7	3	2.5
Government Quarters	26	17.8	14	11.6
Total	146	100.0	121	100.0

Analysis showed that 114 respondents (78.1 percent) own their houses, two respondents (1.4 percent) are squatters, whilst 4 of them (2.7 percent) are renting the house and 26 respondents or 17.8 percent are living at government quarters; such as the teachers’ residence.

On Pulau Perhentian, 72.7 percent of the respondents owned their houses. Table 7 shows that the percentage of respondents squatting or staying with their parents or in-laws is relatively high, at 13.2 percent. Only 2.5 percent were renting the house. The basic model for the houses in Pulau Redang which were built by the state government is that of the rural Malay kampong houses, known as PPRT house (PPRT is a Development Programme for the Hardcore Poor) on a 1/6 acre land. Land is considered ‘spacious’ compared to the land provided to their counterparts in Pulau Perhentian which is 40’ X 40’. For Pulau Perhentian, observation showed that, until the end of 2010, the islanders were still living in overcrowded dwellings and households. For these islanders, the basic house was a small kampong house with a bedroom, a kitchen, a living area, and a bathroom. A house like this costs RM 25 000.

#### **4.6.7 Education**

Education is seen not only as a basic human right but also as an avenue for social mobility. In this study, education is assessed on the years of schooling of the respondents. The longer their years of schooling, the higher their level of education.

Analysis showed that education contributed significantly to the enhancement of the quality of life of the islanders. Education variable correlated significantly and positively with the objective QoL at  $p < 0.01$  ( $r = +0.429$ ) and  $p < 0.01$  ( $r = +0.333$ ) with the subjective QoL. The higher their level of education, the higher their objective and subjective QoL.

As mentioned before, 20 percent of the respondents never received any form of formal education and over half of the respondents only received primary school level education. The impact of this low level education is highly related to the low level of the education for the second generation. Further more, geographical location of the islands has also affected the accessibility to schooling. Although there is a primary school on both islands, children have to go to the mainland for

their secondary education. This could be one of the reasons why the drop-out rate is high on both islands. This clearly suggests that this matter has to be ‘discussed and solved’ by the government.

#### 4.6.8 Employment

Majority of the respondents are low income earners. Their traditional occupation is fisherman. Employment correlated significantly to the enhancement of the quality of the islanders’ lives. Employment variable correlated significantly and positively with the objective QoL at  $p < 0.01$  ( $r = +0.503$ ) and  $p < 0.01$  ( $r = +0.279$ ) with the subjective QoL. This means the respondents who are employed have higher objective and subjective QoL compared to their counterparts who are not. The level of the respondents’ life satisfaction is higher because they do not have to rely on others. They have stronger purchasing power and are able to make decisions.

#### 4.6.9 Family life

The quality of family life is assessed on the basis of marital status, number of children and household size. Family life variable correlated significantly and positively with the objective QoL at  $p = 0.01$  ( $r = +0.353$ ) and  $p = 0.01$  ( $r = +0.168$ ) with the subjective QoL. With regard to the marital status, respondents who have spouse have a higher objective and subjective QoL compared to their counterparts. The house-hold size indicates that the larger the household size, the lower their objective QoL. As for the number of children, higher objective QoL and life satisfaction is closely associated with a small number of children.

#### 4.6.10 Financial assistance

Assessment of financial assistance is based on the financial assistance to the islanders from the governmental or non-governmental sector. Result from a Pearson correlation analysis showed that the variable was significantly and negatively correlated with the objective QoL at  $r = -0.245$  ( $p = 0.01$ ). This implies that, the more financial assistance the respondents get, the lower their objective QoL. This variable showed no significant relationship with the subjective QoL.

#### 4.6.11 Safety level

In this study, safety level is assessed on the basis of crime rate on both islands. The relationship between safety level and objective and subjective QoL was examined. From the analysis, the level of safety indicated significant and negative correlation with the objective QoL at  $r = -0.126$  ( $p = 0.05$ ). In other words, for the islanders’ QoL level, the higher the crime rate is, the lower their QoL will be. It is interesting to note that safety level showed no significant relationship with the subjective QoL. This is probably due to the small number of crimes committed on both islands.

#### 4.6.12 Religion

Religion is measured by the level of religious education needs on both islands. About 80.1 percent of the respondents stated they agree extremely if the government improves their religious knowledge. Another 18.7 percent agreed and 1.1 percent did not give any answer. It is interesting to note that, religion variable showed no significant relationship with both QoL, objective and subjective, although it has been predicted to have a significant relationship. This is probably due to the low level of the islanders’ religious beliefs.

#### 4.6.13 World-view

In determining world-view, respondents were asked, “How is your life now as compared to five years ago?” and “How would you expect your life five years in the future as compared to now?”. The analysis is to determine the changes in their QoL in ten years and it is also related to their perception of life.

**Table 8: Respondents’ Perception Related to their QoL Now as Compared to Five Years Ago**

	Both Islands		Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%
About the Same	79	29.6	42	28.8	37	30.6
Little Changes	93	34.8	59	40.4	34	28.1
A lot of Changes	85	31.8	40	27.4	45	37.2
Extremely a lot of changes	10	3.8	5	3.4	5	4.1
Total	267	100.0	146	100.0	121	100.0

On the perception related to QoL, analysis indicated that, 40.4 percent of the respondents in Pulau Redang stated that there have been little changes as compared to their counterparts in Pulau Perhentian which is only 28.1 percent. The percentage for ‘a lot of changes’, in Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian is 27.4 and 37.2, respectively. About 28.8 percent of the respondents in Pulau Redang claimed that their QoL now is about the same as it was five years ago, whereas the percentage in Pulau Perhentian is 30.6 percent. There is not much difference in the percentage of those who claimed that their QoL has changed a lot (only 3.4 percent in Pulau Redang and 4.1 percent in Pulau Perhentian).

In terms of respondents' expectation for their QoL in the next five years, Table 9 shows that better QoL have the highest percentage (49.3 percent for Pulau Redang and 52.1 for Pulau Perhentian). This is followed by 'uncertain answers' where the respondents were not able to predict their QoL in the next five years (43.2 percent for Pulau Redang and 34.7 for Pulau Perhentian). Another 7.5 percent (Pulau Redang) and 10.7 percent (Pulau Perhentian) predicted that their QoL would be much better. Only 2.5 percent of the respondents in Pulau Perhentian and none in Pulau Redang predicted their QoL will remain status quo. The islanders were also asked "Are you happy living in the island?". Interestingly, as shown in the above table, over three quarter of them (Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian) claimed that they were happy. This is followed by 9.6 percent and 16.5 percent of the respondents in Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian who stated that they were extremely happy. Another 8.2 percent in Pulau Redang and 5.8 percent in Pulau Perhentian mentioned they were not happy. Only 4.1 percent in Pulau Redang and none in Pulau Perhentian claimed that they were extremely not happy living on the island.

**Table 9: Respondents' Expectation Related to their QoL Five Years in The Future**

	Both Islands		Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%
Uncertain	105	39.3	63	43.2	42	34.7
Same as now	3	1.1	0	0.0	3	2.5
Better	135	50.6	72	49.3	63	52.1
Much better	24	9.0	11	7.5	63	10.7
Total	267	100.0	146	100.0	121	100.0

It seems that the islanders of Pulau Perhentian enjoy their lives more than those of Pulau Redang. They seem happy with the easy tempo of the island life.

#### 4.6.14 Necessity of Life

Necessity of life is one of the indicators which have been pointed out in this paper. It is measured by two questions to the respondents which are; state three most essential needs in your life now; and have you achieved your necessity need? Analysis shows the three most essential needs in the islanders' lives are as follows:

- |                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| (1) Renovating Houses  | 91.3 |
| (2) Children's Success | 89.0 |
| (3) Buying Boat        | 87.0 |

The findings from interviews also indicated that the islanders need more money to fulfil their lives instead of just meeting their basic needs. "Money is everything; we are going to perform 'haji' (pilgrimage) to Mekah, renovate our houses, buy speed-boats and

involve in tourism industry businesses", said one community leader in Pulau Perhentian.

**Table 10: Level of Respondents' Achievement of Their Necessity Needs**

	Both Islands		Pulau Redang		Pulau Perhentian	
	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%
Not Achieved	63	23.6	40	27.4	23	19.0
Partly Achieved	176	65.9	92	63.0	84	69.5
Mostly Achieved	19	7.1	6	4.1	13	10.7
Fully Achieved	9	3.4	8	5.5	1	0.8
Total	267	100.0	146	100.0	121	100.0

About 65.9 percent of the islanders on both islands stated that only half of their necessity of life is achieved. This is followed by 23.6 percent who revealed that their needs are not achieved and only 7.1 percent stated their needs are mostly achieved. Only 3.4 percent declared their necessity needs fully achieved. This is detailed in Table 10.

The necessity of life indicated significant and positive correlation with the objective and subjective QoL at  $r = -0.186$  ( $p = 0.01$ ) and  $r = 0.151$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) respectively. Although the correlation is weak, the results indicate that the higher their need's achievement, the higher their objective QoL as well as their life satisfaction.

This study also examined some other aspects of basic needs for the islanders. Observations revealed that the islanders were under privileged and deprived in terms of social amenities particularly with regard to drainage, sanitation, and garbage disposal.

## 5. SUGGESTIONS

Several suggestions have been made on how to enhance the QoL level of the island's community. This is a task that should be carried out coherently between the government/NGOs as well as the community itself.

The housing quality on both islands should be upgraded. A resettlement programme should be done to secure a better housing particularly on Pulau Perhentian in the near future. Allocation of more land for low cost housing should also be considered on both islands. In terms of healthcare, improvements on health services, Pulau Perhentian in particular is an absolute must. Deployment of resident doctors and nurses are needed for a proper healthcare services to the community.

Steps should also be taken to provide the community with the latest educational technology for schools throughout both islands. A community library is critically needed for this purpose. Religious knowledge improvements programs would be needed to solve the worrying increase in social problems that now threatens the community especially on Pulau Perhentian.

Finally, we need to provide the community with more job opportunities. This could be achieved by the implementation of 'One Product One Village' programme. Unemployment would not be a problem anymore thus leading to a better QoL.

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