

## **The Motivation, Entrepreneurial Attitudes, and Quality of Life among People with Absolute Poverty in Sabah, Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The current study was aims to examine the relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial attitudes towards quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah. Seven hundred and forty-four people with absolute poverty aged between 18 and 40 years participated in the study. Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation scale, Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire, and the short version of World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQoL-BREF) were used to collect quantitative data on the respondents' motivation, entrepreneurial attitudes and quality of life. Pearson correlation shows that motivation and entrepreneurial attitudes among people with absolute poverty significantly correlate with their quality of life.

**Keywords:** motivation and quality of life, entrepreneurial attitudes, Pearson correlation analysis, people with absolute poverty

## INTRODUCTION

Each individual has an inspiration for a better life and achieve a high quality of life. The quality of life is a crucial goal in the life of every human being for future, and worth enough as an important issue in the discussion among theorists (Yuill, Crinson, & Duncan, 2010). Economic problems such as poverty are a global issue around the world that affects the quality of life (Barrientos, Gorman, & Heslop, 2003). Turnbull et al. (2004) explains that the problem of poverty affects the individuals' quality of life (QoL) in terms of health, productivity, social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Sumultanseously, Diener and Suh (1997) revealed that people living with poverty have lower quality of life. They also believed that people living with absolute poverty experience problems related to healthy lifestyle, due to the difficulties faced in obtaining normative needs in their every day life. Therefore, the people with absolute poverty will only gain the desired needs in line with their economic ability, but it is likely not to improve their subjective wellbeing (Berridge, 1996).

In Malaysia, studies on the quality of life among people with absolute poverty tend to be explained using objective indicators (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). The Economic Planning Unit, since 1999, has implemented a special study on the quality of life of Malaysians including people with absolute poverty by using Malaysian Quality of Life Index. The Malaysian Quality of Life Index has components namely income and distribution, health, education, employment, transportation and communication, housing, environment, family life, social involvement, safety as well as culture and recreation (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). These components are indicators of the quality of life often used in assessing the individual's quality of life (Economic Planning Unit, 2011) including among people with absolute poverty.

However, researches on the quality of life focusing on subjective indicators are not much more attentive, but being as an important elements they might improve the QoL like motivation, social support, love and self-development (Diener & Suh, 1997). Studies on the quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah also focusing more

on objective indicators (Fund To Help Eradicate Poverty, 2015). Study on the quality of life using subjective indicators is important as it can explain the quality of life among people with absolute poverty based on their evaluations towards their life experiences in the context of their life standard (Diener & Suh, 1997). In discussing the quality of life, economic abilities is not a major variable in improving the quality of life, but subjective indicators of psychological and psychosocial variables (Palomar, Pinol & Uralde, 2004). There are many identified subjective indicators to improve the quality of life among people with absolute poverty, such as motivation (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002), social support (Helgeson, 2003), personality (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999), and aspirations (Cassidy & Lynn, 1991). At the same time motivation and entrepreneurial attitudes are also subjects of attention. Therefore, study on the quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah remains limited and needs to be addressed.

Motivation is a characteristic of individual personality associated with the desire for self-reliance and developing mastery skills (Palomar et al., 2004). According to Chriswardani (2005), poor people who do not want to try to improve their life, being lazy and uncreative, is the factor that caused decline in quality of life. Kim, Hong, and Rowe (2000) explains that individuals who grown up in low socioeconomic status such as absolute poverty typically develop a sense of dependency and fatalism because of poor intrinsic motivation. Thus, this condition leads to low life satisfaction that can influence quality of life. Contrary with individuals who grown up with high socioeconomic status, they tend to have a high intrinsic motivation to achieve their goals of life (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). However, Inglehart and Klingemann (2000) explains that external motivation such as improvement on economic or upgrading neighborhoods are more positive to improve quality of life among people with absolute poverty. In fact, materiallally poor affects the wellbeing of their lives. This material aspects allow them to access resources more easily and reduce the sense of social isolation from the non-poor community as a whole (Easterlin, 2001).

Besides, entrepreneurship is considered as one of the alternatives to address the socioeconomic problem, especially among the unemployed and people with absolute poverty (Garba, 2012). Based on previous

studies, entrepreneurial attitudes have proven to improve quality of life of people with absolute poverty since it provides an opportunity to improve their quality of life (Akpomi, 2009). Singer (2004) explains that entrepreneurial attitudes is a significant alternative in dealing with economic problems due to absolute poverty to improve and achieve a good quality of life. Krueger and Brazeal (1994) argued that entrepreneurial intentions prove the best predictors of human behaviour. However, Maimunah (2001) believed that entrepreneurial attitudes do not play a positive role in enhancing the quality of life among people with absolute poverty. Hence, the current study is conducted to explore the relations between intrinsic motivation, entrepreneurial attitudes, and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah. This is because the issue of poverty in Sabah are quite significant as the state of Sabah have the highest rates of people with absolute poverty.

### ***Research Objectives***

The current study is conducted based on the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between motivation and quality of life among people living with absolute poverty in Sabah.
2. To investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and quality of life among people living with absolute poverty in Sabah.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The current study applies the quantitative approach, which uses the questionnaire to answer the research questions. Also, this study was conducted with the help of five research assistants who were self-appointed by the researchers. This is because the questionnaire involves some locations (districts), which makes it difficult for researchers to implement the survey due to the factor of time constraint.

### **Sample and Location**

The current study involved 744 people with absolute poverty around the state of Sabah, Malaysia. The sample consists of various ethnic groups including Bugis, Suluk, Dusun, Malay, Sungai, Kadazan, Bajau, Chinese, and so on. All the samples are aged between 18 and 40 year.

This study was conducted in eleven districts around the state of Sabah in areas that have a high rate of people with absolute poverty. These locations are Kota Kinabalu (80 respondents), Pitas (71 respondents), Papar (69 respondents), Kota Marudu (70 respondents), Putatan (60 respondents), Kudat (78 respondents), Tuaran (50 respondents), Matunggong (70 respondents), Tamparuli (64 respondents), Penampang (62 respondents), and Kota Belud (70 respondents). Samples from each locations are selected among those who earn income not more than RM 540 per month in accordance with the *Paras Garis Kemiskinan Tegar* in the state of Sabah which has been determined by the Department of National Statistics, Malaysia.

### **Instrument**

The current study uses an instrument which involves four parts including the demographic information, motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and quality of life.

1. **Demographic information.** The demographic information used explains better about the quality of life among people with absolute poverty. The information covers aspects of age, ethnicity, religion, academic achievement level, occupation, monthly salary, and number of family members.
2. **Motivation.** Respondents' motivation regarding works/jobs were measured by Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) constructed by Ryan and Deci (2000). The scale consists of 18 items with six dimensions namely intrinsic (3 items), integration (3 items), identified (3 items), introjection (3 items), external (3 items), and amotivation (3 items) respectively.
3. **Entrepreneurial attitude.** Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) constructed by Moriano (2005), modified and adjusted by Linan and Chen (2009) of Asian culture was used for the measurement of entrepreneurial attitude. The EIQ has 18 items and contains four dimensions namely personal attitude, subjective norm, perception of behavioral control, and entrepreneurial interest.
4. **Quality of life.** Short version of World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQoL-BREF) (World Health Organization, 1997) was used to measure quality of life among respondents. The scale consists of 26 sets of questions with responses using five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5. The scale involves four dimensions called

physical health, psychological health, social relationship, and general health as well as quality of life in general.

## **Research Procedures**

A pilot study was conducted on 60 samples of people with absolute poverty background and has been implemented during two weeks. The pilot study was carried out by the researchers themselves. The results from the pilot study were used to modify all the scales before the actual study. In the actual study, respondents were gathered in the local community hall with help from the community development officers. Respondents were isolated from each other to make sure they do not discuss with each other about the items of the questionnaire. The researchers also ensured the environment of the hall such as seats provided to the respondents were comfortable and pleasant. Before the study was conducted, the researchers first made a rapport with the respondents as an introduction. Researchers also explained the objectives of the study and that the rights for the respondents as the subject of the study will be protected and kept secret. Once rapport and short briefing has been done, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents with the help of research assistants. About twenty minutes of time was allocated to all respondents to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was collected and put in a box. Lastly, the data was keyed using the Statistical Packages Science Software (SPSS) program. The data were used to analyze, test the objectives of the study, and answer the research questions.

## **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using the SPSS version 24.0. Pearson correlation were used to test the relationship between variables. All *p* values are set on the level of  $<.05$  with five percent of data considered as error or incorrect.

## **RESULTS**

### **Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted to examine the reliabilities of the scales using alpha Cronbach. The coefficients of alpha Cronbach were 0.852, 0.859 and 0.875 for WEIMS, EIQ, and WHOQoL-BREF respectively.

## Actual Study

- a. The relationship between motivation and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah

**Table 1**

*Pearson correlations coefficient between the motivation and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Quality of life</b>
<b>Motivation</b>	.357**

\*\* $p < .01$

The findings of table 1 show the Pearson correlation analysis between the intrinsic motivation and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah. From the analysis it was found that there was a significantly positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = 0.357$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, it revealed that those people with absolute poverty who have high intrinsic motivation gain a high quality of life.

- b. The relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah

**Table 2**

*Pearson correlations coefficient between the entrepreneurial attitudes and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Quality of life</b>
<b>Entrepreneurial attitude</b>	.232**

\*\* $p < .01$

Table 2 shows the result of the Pearson correlation analysis between entrepreneurial attitudes and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah. There was a significantly positive relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah ( $r = 0.232$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Thus, it explained that

people with absolute poverty who have positive entrepreneurial attitudes show a moderate quality of life.

## **DISCUSSION**

The cardinal aim of the current study was to investigate the relationship between the motivation, entrepreneurial attitudes and quality of life among people living with absolute poverty in Sabah. The findings of the study unveiled that both intrinsic motivation and entrepreneurial attitudes positively correlate with quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah.

The study found that motivation and quality of life positively are related, but a weak relation. In other words, people with absolute poverty who have positive motivation show a tendency to achieve a high level of quality of life. The researchers concluded that any changes in the motivation among people with absolute poverty would lead to changes in their quality of life. When individual's negative motivations change in positive motivations, it improves their quality of life. Astone and McLanahan (1991) have explained that high motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, helps the people with absolute poverty form their goals of life to be achieved. Typically, the ultimate life's goal among people with absolute poverty is to improve their socioeconomic status in order to have a better quality of life. Ryan and Deci (2000) have pointed out that those individuals who achieve their life's goals due to intrinsic motivation can achieve his/her wellbeing, which also enhances their quality of life.

Besides, the effort to improve the quality of life through the role of intrinsic motivation helps the people with absolute poverty to explore opportunities and abilities that they have (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997). This is because the people with absolute poverty tend to show lower intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation that is more positive to achieve goals. Therefore, if the intrinsic motivation continuously lowers so, people with absolute poverty have lower or even no eager spirit to improve their quality of life (Eliot & Sheldon, 1997). Thus, this kind of poor motivation contributes to difficulties for people with absolute poverty to explore the opportunities and abilities they have on themselves.

In addition, people with absolute poverty who show external motivation will be able to encourage themselves to improve their quality of life. Inglehart and Klingemann (2000) has explained that increasing external motivation such as upgrading their living areas can helps them to improve their life. In other words, people with absolute poverty will put more efforts if their living environments motivate them to improve their quality of life.

Furthermore, we found that entrepreneurial attitudes have a significantly positive, but weak, relationship. We concluded that people with absolute poverty that shows positive entrepreneurial attitudes tend to have a better quality of life. This is because entrepreneurial attitudes can help people with absolute poverty to generate entrepreneurial activities as an alternative for economic resources (Singer, 2004). The entrepreneurial attitudes that can be defined into entrepreneurial activities are alternatives for self-employment while they are not working in any type of employment. Douglas and Shepherd (2000) has stated that self-employment in entrepreneurial area is another way of increasing quality of life even better. Therefore, to work on entrepreneurship an individual has to gain interests and attitudes on it. This kind of alternatives is quite effective for individuals including people with absolute poverty (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2005).

Moreover, it is believed that entrepreneurial attitudes of people with absolute poverty can improve quality of life through learning. As stated by Tshikovhi and Mvula (2014), a positive entrepreneurial attitudes as well as knowledge regarding entrepreneurship that have been applied from the learning process help the students with absolute poverty to improve their income and quality of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

The current study aims to examine the relationship between motivation, entrepreneurial attitudes, and quality of life among people with absolute poverty in Sabah. The finding shows that the motivation and entrepreneurial attitudes play positive role to improve quality of life among people with absolute poverty. This finding is important to provide information to the stakeholders such as the government in

helping improve the quality of life among people with absolute poverty, which is not only applied the objective but subjective indicators.

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