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Relationship between Economics Attributes and Quality of Life, Malaysia

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Abstract:
Quality of life research receives favourable attention, especially in urban areas, as the percentage of urban population increases rapidly. People are moving to urban areas with a view to improving their family quality of life and their standard of living.The adverse effect of this massive urban-rural migration, however, pays attention to responding to social, political and economic changes. Crisis in employment opportunities, public transport and other services and amenities are known as economic attributes in this study. In order to have a better quality of life, the quality of the neighbourhood is important as it can affect the satisfaction of the features of the neighbourhood. The economic attributes of the features of the neighbourhood are one of the factors that can influence the satisfaction and quality of life of the neighbourhood.The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of economic attributes on urban quality of life. In reviewing this relationship, this study also consider the role of neighbourhood satisfaction as a mediator.Primary data was collected in seven selected areas of the Klang Valley through a survey of 500 respondents. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used for data analysis. The findings have shown that there is a positive relationship between the economic attributes of satisfaction in the neighbourhood and the quality of life.Partial mediation exists between economic attributes and quality of life, where the satisfaction of the neighbourhood as a mediator in this study.This study highlights that economic attributes such as adequate employment opportunities, variety of shops and modes of public transport and the efficiency of public transport are important factors in improving urban quality of life.

Keywords*: economic attributes, neighbourhood satisfaction, quality of life, urban cities.*

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INTRODUCTION

The percentage of Malaysia's urban population has grown rapidly as more people choose to move to urban areas, particularly the Klang Valley areas. In 2015, 74.3 percent of the urban population is expected to grow to 77 percent by 2020 (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2017). Of the 32.4 million population in Malaysia, 89.3 percent are internal migrants, with Selangor receiving the highest number of inter-state migrants and 19.8 percent coming from rural to urban migrants and only 6.8 percent from rural to urban migrants (Department of Statistic, 2018). The data provided by the Department of Statistics 2017 and 2018 show that migration from rural to urban areas is higher and crucial.The impact of this massive rural-urban migration in Malaysia can lead to a number of social problems in urban areas, such as crime rate, high unemployment, urban poverty and deteriorating air pollution (Sarwar, Chowdhury &Muhibbullah, 2006; Siwar, Ahmed, & et. al., 2016). The migration of most people is due to following a family, a career, a new environment, marriage or divorce, a better education, a better family lifestyle and a higher standard of living.The effect of this high rate of migration in Malaysia could lead to an increase in crime, high unemployment, urban poverty and air pollution (Sarwar, Chowdhury &Muhibbullah, 2006; Siwar, Ahmed, & et. al., 2016). The migration of most people is due to following a family, a career, a

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new environment, marriage or divorce, a better education, an increase in their family lifestyle and living standards, and a higher quality of life for their families (Department of Statistic, 2018). There has been an increasing interest in the assessment of the quality of life (QoL) (Psatha, Deffner, &Psycharis, 2011) in various aspects that some of the research focuses on health and QOL (Geetha, Sairah, &Marium, 2017;Marini Ab Rahman, Galaichelvi&Nurain 2019 &Dutta, Diba, & Das, 2019) and other researchers focus on neighbourhood satisfaction and QoL. QoL can be defined as how people live successfully and happily within the environment (Mohit & Ali, 2016) and people can enjoy their standard of living with a healthy lifestyle that allows them to have access and freedom to gain knowledge and enhance their personal development (Hassan, 2013).Malaysian population in urban areas is expected to increase by 2030 (Zainal et al., 2012). As a result, neighbourhood quality is believed by some researchers (Mohit, 2016; Salleh, 2012; Choguil, 2007 &Sirgy et al., 2002) to be a starting point in understanding QoL as they spend most of their lives in their neighbourhood that will influence their economic and social life. Prementier et al. (2011) stated that neighbourhood satisfaction concerns residents' assessment of their neighbourhood environment whether they are pleased or disappointed with the surroundings of their housing units.Neighbourhood satisfaction also included environmental quality satisfaction, noise, neighbourhood shops, green space and community involvement (Prementier etal., 2010; Lu, 1999 & Mohan and Twigg, 2007). Lovejoy et al. (2010) viewed the concept of neighbourhood satisfaction as a way for residents to assess their neighbourhood environment that meets their needs and their happiness with their neighbourhood environment.According to Sirgy& Cornwell (2002), economic features can have a significant impact on the satisfaction of the neighbourhood and contribute to the satisfaction of life. Mohit (2012) also confirmed the relationship between economic features and neighbourhood satisfaction.Shields et al. (2009) also found in their study that the economic features of the internal and external factors had a positive impact on the satisfaction of the neighbourhood. Previous study by Shields et al. (2009) stated that marital status, health, education and income levels are an internal economic factor. The aim of this study is to assess the relationship between economic attributes and quality of life with the new dimensions of proximity to retail facilities, access to employment opportunities and public transport, as these dimensions have shown to be important in meeting the final needs of urban populations, rather than focusing solely on GDP, individual incomes and other socio-economic status.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Economic Attributes

Socio-economic backgrounds and the economic value of the neighbourhood are economic factors that can influence the satisfaction of the neighbourhood (Salleh et al., 2012). Mohit (2016) found that socio-economic status, neighbourhood development, house value and living cost are indicators of economic factors that can influence the satisfaction of the neighbourhood, and the results showed that all variables have a significant positive relationship with the component.Erkip (2010) indicated that income and ownership of houses could influence the satisfaction of urban residents in the neighbourhood.Lovejoy et al. (2010) also found that income and household will have a significant impact on neighbourhood satisfaction in California.The finding is consistent with the previous study by Grinstein, Freeze &Quercia (2011) that the homeownership of the residence is an important factor in the neighbourhood satisfaction of low and moderate household incomes and will influence the satisfaction of the neighbourhood and the overall quality of life.Shield et al (2009) examine how the impact of neighbourhood life satisfaction has been used as a measure of social support and socio-economic in the study. The result has shown that there is a positive and significant correlation with individual satisfaction.In his research, Mohit (2016) measures the economic viability in calculating items of lower-income group livingability attributes in Nigeria, the dimensions are household income, transport costs, public transportation and living standards.The study found that economic vitality was significant in measuring the liveability of the neighbourhood.Balestra& Sultan (2013) stated in their study that access to job opportunities and public transport facilities can have an impact on the satisfaction of the neighbourhood. This is important for people living in the urban area, as they can easily find work and have easy access to job opportunities

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in the neighbourhood and do not have to travel far to their workplaces. This could reduce their travel costs. Access to public transport can also reduce travel costs and travel time.De Vos et al. (2016) added proximity to the shop is part of a measure of neighbourhood satisfaction. The study has shown that proximity to shops, leisure activities, public transport, family/friends and work are important for the neighbourhood, especially in urban areas. Accessibility of different shops in the neighbourhood has been identified as an important role in economic attributes. Shops and retailers are found to have a significant impact on the satisfaction of the neighbourhood.Variety of shops and stores in the neighbourhood will encourage people to consume more and show that there is a variety of shops in the area. The study emphasises the importance of urban amenities that have contributed to the growth and development of cities and regions in urban neighbourhoods (Clark, 2004; Clark, Lloyd, Wong & Jain, 2002; Lloyd & Clark, 2001). Compared to the measurement by Sirgy (2002), the economic features involved only satisfaction with the home value, satisfaction with the cost of living, satisfaction with the socio-economic status and improvement of the neighbourhood, Oner (2017) has revealed a new outcome on the importance of accessibility to shops in measuring neighbourhood satisfaction in urban areas.Thanks to the high accessibility of shops and stores in the neighbourhood, more people will be attracted to live in the area and to the satisfaction of the neighbourhood, as people will be happy to have a variety of shops and stores in their neighbourhood. In other words, individuals will benefit indirectly from the retail market that has provided them closest to their neighbourhood, making it easier for them to meet their daily basic needs and making their neighbourhood attractive and convenient for residence.Białowolska (2016) stated in his study that the satisfaction of living in the city will depend on the public transport provided in the living area, the cultural facilities in the neighbourhood, the retail outlet available in the residential area, the green space and the overall environmental conditions in the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Satisfaction and Quality of Life (QoL). A study conducted by Western &Tomaszewski (2016) on the relationship between objective well-being and overall life satisfaction shows that there is a significant impact between the objective of well-being and life satisfaction. Higher satisfaction with subjective well-being will be achieved with a good health condition, more family time and less financial hardship. Income shows have a direct and indirect impact on life satisfaction after considering other aspects of objective well-being.Moreover, the quality of life is linked to the satisfaction of the neighbourhood. There are three factors that influence neighbourhood satisfaction, physical attributes, social attributes and economic attributes.The findings of the study showed that satisfaction with economic attributes shows a high correlation with satisfaction in the neighbourhood, followed by satisfaction with physical attributes and the least impact with satisfaction in the neighbourhood on social attributes (Mohit, 2016). Neighbourhood satisfaction must be a concern in order to have a high quality of life, as it has also become an interesting study by the government and policy makers as part of sustainable urban development (Howley et al., 2009; Mohan &Twigg, 2007; Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002). The Dublin study by Howley et al. (2009) assesses the satisfaction of the neighbourhood between high density housing and the central city. The findings have shown that the level of noise, the quality of the neighbourhood environment, the commitment of the community, the volume of traffic and the services and facilities provided are the determinants of neighbourhood satisfaction.Sirgy& Cornwell (2002) has developed a conceptual model on how satisfaction with the characteristics of the neighborhood affects the quality of life of residents. Most of the earlier studies supported the model and demonstrated a direct relationship between neighbourhood satisfaction and quality of life (Mohit, 2012; Mohit, 2010; Ibem, 2015; Salleh et al.,2012; Abdul Rahman et al., 2012; Balestra, &Sultan, 2013 ; Mohit, 2016).The following hypothesis was proposed as a result of the above discussion:

H1 : Economic attributes have adirect relationship to satisfaction in the neighbourhood
H2 : Neighbourhood Satisfaction has a direct relationship to quality of life.
H3: Economic attributes have adirect relationship to Quality of Life.

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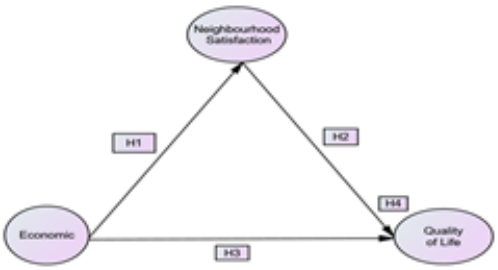
H4: Neighbourhood satisfaction mediates the relationship between economic attributes and quality of life.



METHODOLOGY

A. Data collection

The aim of this study to assess the relationship between economic attributes and quality of life and the mediation effect between the two. This study used quantitative methods to explain the relationship between all variables (AbuKhalifah, 2017) and the data collected by primary data from urban households in selected Klang Valley areas.

B. Sampling procedure

Systematic random sampling was used as a sampling technique to collect the data. The population data set reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2016) shows the sample size of respondents based on the household population in Klang Valley in Table 1 (DOSM, 2016). The criteria for the respondent were: (1) the respondents must reside in landed housing and high-rise housing, and (2) the respondents must be 21 years of age and older.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Municipalities

Local Authorities	Total Population (000)	Percentage Population (%)	Number of Respondent
Kuala Lumpur City Hall	670	15%	75
Selayang Municipal Council	581	13%	65
Shah Alam City Council	509.5	12%	60
Klang Municipal Council	820.8	19%	95
Subang Jaya Municipal Council	814.2	19%	95
Petaling Jaya City Council	705.7	16%	80
Sepang Municipal Council	272.2	6%	30
Total	4373.6	100%	500

RESULTS

A.Socio-demographic characteristics

According to the respondents' profile, more than half of the respondents were male and female, accounting for 45 percent of the total respondents, compared to those of 21-30 years of age (47.2 percent), 31-45 years of age (36.6 percent) and 46-59 (16.2 percent).Single respondents contribute 39.9 percent and 59.9 percent are from married respondents and the majority of respondents work in the private sector, which is 60.1 per cent and 28.8 per cent work in the public sector.As for household income, most of the income groups range from RM1000 to RM3000 (53.8 percent) with income of RM9000 and above contributing 5.9 percentAlmost 48.1 percent are homeowners and live with the family, 24.1 percent are tenants and live with the family, 23.3 percent are co-tenants and 4.5 percent are homeowners and live alone.

B. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) – Individual

Economic Attributes

The study used five items to measure economic attributes as an independent variable. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to validate all five latent constructs involved in this study. The overall result of the CFA is needed to re-specify the

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initial model of the measurement (AbuKhalifeh, &Albattat, 2017). In order to increase the reliability and validity of the construct, any item below 0.6 should be dropped (Hair, Babin, &Krey, 2017). Figure 1 shows that all the loading factor for all latent constructs is more than 0.6. So, there will be no items left for this study.The result shows that all the models fit the data properly with the chi-square is 2.143, GFI is 0.998, CFI is 1.00 and RMSEA is 0.00. There are eight items measured by the satisfaction of the neighbourhood as a mediator. Figure 2 shows all latent constructs for neighborhood satisfaction and found that one item has to be removed (QE1i) as the loading factor is below 0.6.

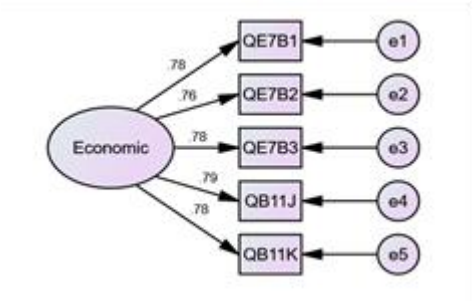

Figure 1

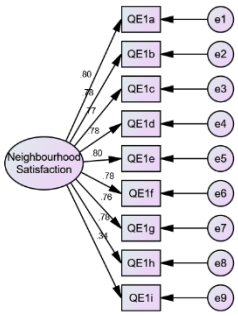

Figure 2

Name of index	Index value
RMSEA	0.057
CFI	0.986
TLI	0.981
IFI	0.986
Chisq/df	2.602

After the item has been removed, the result indicates that all items fit for the data. Result shown in Table 1 below. What can be concluded that it has been shown from Table 1 that all the index value has reached the required level.

Table 2: The summary of Fitness Indexes (Neighbourhood Satisfaction)

Name of index	Index value
RMSEA	0.021
CFI	0.947
TLI	0.959
IFI	0.948
Chisq/df	4.802

Quality of Life

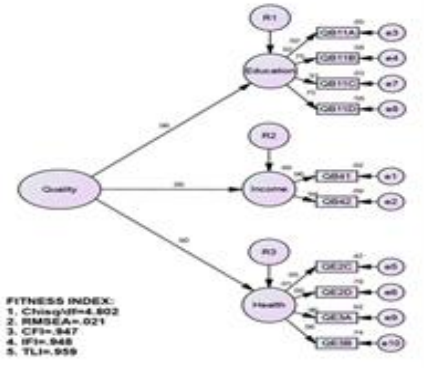

Figure 3

Figure 3 shows that all latent quality-of-life constructs as dependent variables and none of the items have low loading factors. Table 2 shows that all the index value has reached the required level and can be concluded that the model of measurement has achieved construct validity (Zainudin, 2015).

From this table, we can see that all fitness indexes have reached the required level. The construct validity of the measurement model has thus been achieved(Zainudin, 2015).

Table 3: The summary of Fitness Indexes (Quality of Life)

This study will present the result of CR and AVE where both resultsindicate the convergent validity of the construct and the result shows that both CR and AVE exceeds the value of 0.6 for CR and 0.5 for AVE.

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	CR	AVE
Quality	0.966	0.904

C. Structural Equation Model

The second stage of the study analysis is referred to as a structural model that can be tested and presented after all the constructs in the measurement model have met the fit requirement and have been validated. SEM is used to analyse the relationship between all the variables in the model that can be expressed through single and multiple regression. SEM aims to specify which variables directly or indirectly influence the value of other variables (Zainudin, 2015; Byrne and Johnson-Laird, 1989).
SEM was chosen to test the study hypotheses. There are three hypotheses that have been proposed in this study:

H1: Economic attributes have a direct relationship to satisfaction in the neighbourhood
H2: Neighbourhood Satisfaction has a direct relationship to quality of life
H3: Economic attributes have a direct relationship to Quality of Life

Table 3: Regression Weight

Table 3 shows the results of the H1, H2 and H3 test hypotheses showing the causal relationship between the economic attributes of neighbourhood satisfaction, the quality of life satisfaction of the neighbourhood and the economic attributes of quality of life. For H1, the economic to neighbourhood satisfaction regression estimate of 0.133 indicates that one unit increase in satisfaction of economic attributes will result in an increase of 0.133 satisfaction with neighbourhood satisfaction.The P value is 0.006 explained that the regression weight for the economic neighbourhood satisfaction prediction is significant at 0.006. It can be concluded that economic attributes have a significant impact on the satisfaction of the neighbourhood, and that the H1 is duly supported.

	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P
Neighbourhood satisfaction <-- economic	0.133	0.48	2.768	0.006
QoL <-- Neighbourhood Satisfcation	0.308	0.08	3.843	***
QoL <-- Economic	0.210	0.051	4.095	***

H2 testing of the causal effect of satisfaction in the neighbourhood on quality of life. The path coefficient shows that 0.308 explained that one unit increase in neighbourhood satisfaction would increase the quality of life by 0.308 units. With a standard error of 0.080 and a critical critical ratio of 3.843, the prediction of quality of life satisfaction in the neighbourhood is significant at 0.000 levels and the hypothesis is duly supported that satisfaction in the neighbourhood has a positive effect on quality of life.For H3, the test hypothesis is the impact of economic attributes on quality of life. Output of the path coefficient is 0.210 indicates that one unit increase in the satisfaction of economic attributes will increase the quality of life by 0.210 units.The hypothesis of H3 is duly supported as the significant level is at 0.000 in the forecast of economic attributes for quality of life with 0.051 for standard error and 4.095 for critical ratio.

D. Testing Mediation

In this study, there is a research hypothesis that evaluates the indirect relationship between economic attributes and quality of life. This study used neighbourhood satisfaction as a mediator between economic attributes and quality of life. The Step-Wise approach (Baron & Kenny, 1986) has been adopted in this study. This approach is recognised as a key tool for assessing the effects of mediation. Statement of hypothesis for testing the mediation effect as shown below:

H4: Neighbourhood satisfaction mediates the relationship between economic attributes and quality of life

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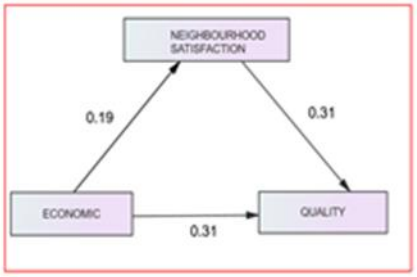

INDIRECT EFFECT	DIRECT EFFECT
a = Economic on Neighbour Satisfaction = 0.19*** b = Neighbour Satisfaction on Quality = 0.31*** a x b = 0.19 x 0.31 = 0.059***	c' = Neighbour Satisfaction on Quality = 0.31*** a x b = 0.046 < 0.31

Partial mediation occurs when the direct effect increases after the model is estimated without the presence of a mediation construct (Neighbour Satisfaction). This step is only acceptable if the indirect effect is significant.As a result of the indirect effect, the result showed that there is a mediation of neighbourhood satisfaction in the Hypothesis Model (H4) that indicates that neighbourhood satisfaction mediates the relationship between economic attributes and quality of life.It can be concluded that economic attributes have a significant direct impact on the quality of life and an indirect impact on the quality of life through the satisfaction of the neighbourhood as a mediator.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that economic attributes have a significant impact on the satisfaction of the neighbourhood, and have an indirect impact on the quality of life through the mediation of the satisfaction of the neighbourhood. Findings that show the construct that has the greatest impact on neighbourhood satisfaction and quality of life can help the government and urban developers to focus on what needs to be more focused on developing such a neighbourhood.There are some improvements needed by the government and urban developers to ensure that people's quality of life is maintained and not deteriorated.

As this study discusses how economic attributes affect neighbourhood satisfaction and urban quality of life, it can be concluded that the variety of retail facilities and other services available, the location of shops and stores are strategic and close to the living area, adequate job opportunities available, the variety of public transport modes (Rapid KL Bus, Taxi, KTM, Monorail) and the efficiency and reliability of public transport is crucial where more and more people move to urban areas and it is important to ensure that all the facilities and services that urban residence needs as they are identified have a significant impact on the quality of life.Government should increase investment in providing more public transport and increase efficiency in access to public transport, in particular on buses that can access from the neighbourhood to the nearest LRT / Commuter Station, increase public awareness and campaign for more public transport use, and provide public transport users with apps and technology as they can plan their daily journey specially to work.Urban planners will accept the development of a residential area close to shopping malls, shops and restaurants. As people who are most likely to go and shop to the place which is convenient and nearest to their living area. This also makes the array of shops more appealing to their neighbourhood.The study also supported by Kim & Park (2018) stated that there is a need for small commercial spaces to create the neighbourhood that people want to live in. In order to build a resilient urban city, the government and the urban planner also focus not only on the design of a neighbourhood area, facilities and amenities, but also on the development of an urban area capable of providing employment opportunities for a residence.A location

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that is strategic and capable of inviting investors to invest to create more job opportunities instead of having to travel from the urban area to work where there will be a high cost. As a result, job opportunities in the neighbourhood can have an impact on neighbourhood satisfaction and quality of life.

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