

THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF TRASH PICKERS' CHILDREN IN RAWA KUCING TANGERANG

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Abstract

The quality of life of children is one of the achievement targets on human development and poverty eradication, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Quality of life is one of the indicators of child's health and well-being that are currently considered to be more accurate than the child mortality rate. Tangerang, one of the closest areas to Jakarta as a capital city of Indonesia, is recorded to have approximately 340 residents working as trash picker and dwelling in a landfill. Trash pickers are mostly identical with poverty and non-hygiene circumstances. Thus, the purpose of this study was to profile the quality of life of trash pickers' children. The quality of life was measured with an instrument of translated and validated KINDL questionnaire. KINDL has six domains including physical health, emotional health, family functioning, self-esteem, social functioning and cognitive functioning. The participants were 42 parents (mostly the mothers) working as trash picker with children aged between 4-7 years old in Rawa Kucing landfill, Tangerang. This study indicated the various results among KINDL domains in the quality of life of trash pickers' children. Social functioning was found to be better than other domains while the cognitive functioning was indicated as the most difficult domain to cope in terms of education and assignment from regular school. This profile of the quality of life of trash pickers' children will be used for further in-depth studies on the health-related quality of life in children from other domains for enhancing the improvement of human resources quality for better well being.

Keywords: Quality of life, Trash Picker, Children, Questionnaire.

Presenting Author's biography



Gisely Vionalita is one of the lecturer in Public Health Department in University of Esa Unggul who graduated from Faculty of Public Health University of Indonesia (SKM-2008) and from School of Health Sciences in Universiti Sains Malaysia (M.Sc-2013). She has some experiences in reserach during her time as research assistant in Malaysia and also during her time working in UNICEF Indonesia. She has presented her research nationally and internationally.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has been committed in achieving the objectives and targets of human development and poverty eradication, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achievement of the MDGs is not only the responsibility of the government but also the duty of all citizens in Indonesia. One of the objectives of MDGs includes the quality of life of children and it becomes a challenging task for Indonesia because the population is dominated by the ratio of children [12]. The quality of children is a priority issue in some countries at this time because it will greatly affect the quality, productivity and human resource potential which will be held at a future time. The quality of these children will greatly affect a child's readiness to follow formal education.

At this age, the children's personal character as well as the ability of being independent will be developed and significantly learnt. Subsequently, these qualities will increase the capability of human resources in the future. Quality of life is one of the indicators of child's health and well-being which is currently considered to be more valid than the child mortality rate. The quality of children is usually influenced by global conditions such as the principle of children protection, environmental conditions and relationships with family, and personal circumstances, such as physical, spiritual and genetic. Aside from the educational lives of children, quality of life is also associated with cognitive development of children since it is closely related to social, motoric, independence, and emotions that will impact on a child's readiness in entering the formal school. Therefore, the supports from the government, environment and parents are extremely essential in creating secure and comfortable conditions in mental and academic education for all children in Indonesia. Based on the data from UNICEF, 2.5 million Indonesian children could not be able to enjoy education. Most of them were 600,000 children in primary school age (SD) and 1.9 million children in secondary school age (SMP). Statistical data of provincial and district levels indicate that there are certain groups of children most affected are come from poor families, thus it is difficult to continue their education to the next level. Based on data obtained from BPS, number of trash picker in Indonesia could reach about 1,256,804 people. Trash picker or the waste picker is defined as one profession by picking up waste materials from garbage heaps, road side dustbins, streets and houses for selling to the local junkyards, middleman, or nearby shops [8]. They are required to collect waste paper, plastic, iron, scraps, bottles, tablet papers, syringes, rags, metal pieces, broken mirrors, wood, shoes, clothes, cardboards, cutlery and also collect food-waste for their consumption. Trash pickers made a profession tasked with collecting garbage for resale to the family livelihood. The work of trash picking is easy to start, as they need no qualification, skill and investment in this profession; children by age 5 to 16 years also engaged in this activity. Children were forced to commence trash picking activity and they are required to collect recyclable items. These children earn their livelihood from the collection, separation and sale for recycling; most of them are the main source of income in their families. They live in unauthorized slums, in low-income residential areas; mostly in shanty towns, bridges, pavements and railway platforms without the facility of pure drinking water and electricity [2]. Tangerang is a direct border town with Jakarta, which has about 340 people who work as trash picker and live in Rawa Kucing landfills. Such income is way below the Regional Minimum Wage (UMR) and a decent standard of living. To determine the impact of the quality of children living in a trash picker family, it would require a study to describe the profile of children's ability to map the quality of life of the children. Therefore this study was aimed to analyze the quality of life from trash pickers' children.

METHODS

This study was cross sectional study that whose aim was to determine the quality of life of the trash pickers' children who lived in Rawa kucing landfill. This research was conducted

in in January. The respondents of this study were obtained with purposive sampling technique with the population was all the parents who have children aged 4 to 7 years-old and attended the public counseling carried out at the meeting hall and organized by the Department of Public Health Universitas Esa Unggul. Subsequently, as many as 42 parents (mostly the mothers) who have children aged between 4 to 7 years-old were selected from 80 people that came to the invitation. The respondents involved in this study should be without limitations in recognizing and understanding the instructions of the interviewer's questions. Parents were questioned for their perspectives regarding with their children's life quality by using KINDL questionnaire. This questionnaire had been translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* and had been validated before it was distributed into the respondents. It consisted of six domains which included the physical, the general feeling, the perception of the self, the family, social, and cognitive. Each question was determined by Likert scale of 1-5 where the higher score indicated the better quality of life. Data would be analyzed descriptively using SPSS 20.0 software to analyze the profile of the quality from trash pickers' children. The data would show the profiles of the quality of life from the children.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The descriptive analysis was carried out to observe the profile of the life quality of the trash pickers' children based on the perceptions of their parents. From the analysis of the entire results of questionnaire, it can be seen that there are significant differences regarding with the domains in the quality of life. The result of analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Means of Each Domain in the Questionnaire.

Variables	Mean
Physical	3.4821
The general feeling	3.5179
The feeling of the self	3.6012
The family	3.5893
Social	3.8810
Cognitive	3.0417

In general, it can be seen that the highest score indicating the better ability of children was derived from the social domain. It showed that the trash pickers' children were still able to build good relationships with their peers and friends. This ability is important because it is an indicator of the flexibility of being engaged in the community. It definitely will prepare the readiness of the children in coping several changes and problems in their social life. N the contrary to the social domain, children seemed to have problem in their cognitive ability. It was indicated from the score of their ability in maintaining the school assignments. It indicated that parents tend to be pessimistic about their children's cognitive abilities.

Early education is really important in which appropriate education in the phase will lead to the children's difficulty in the subsequent stages of education. The early age is the age that is strategically important role in laying the foundations for the establishment and development of human character education and other capacity development so that children are ready to enter further educations [7]. Early childhood is a golden period of development which will determine the quality of children in adult life. Besides, the formation of character quality should be established early since the early childhood is a critical time for the development of a person's character.

Numbers of expert claimed that the failure of planting code on someone at an early age,

will form personal problems in later adult life [8]. Therefore, the study of the life quality of trash pickers’ children is very important to detect the occurrences of delays or limitations in the development which will affect the ability of children in the future.

The parents’ perceptions generally can estimate the welfare of children even though these perceptions may easily overestimate or underestimate certain aspects which may be significantly different from the children’s perceptions. In addition, the expectations of parents and previous experiences of children may affect their views [13].

CONCLUSIONS

The quality of life is an indicator of the children’s health as measured from the perceptions of the physical ability, mental health, general feeling and self feeling, social relations with friends, and family relationships. The measurement of the quality of life of trash pickers’ children is useful to obtain the information related to the profile of the children as early as possible in order to improve and develop the children’s abilities to establish the high quality early childhood.

It can be concluded from the results of this study that there are significant differences among the domains in the children’s quality of life. The highest score was obtained by the social ability domain while the lowest score was obtained by the cognitive domain. It should become the priority attempt to solve the problem from any sectors in Indonesia. It definitely will be important task to improve the quality of children that can affect better quality of human resources in the future. This study was conducted to expose the real problem of the trash pickers’ children.

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