



## Sense of Community and Quality of Life in the Poor Society during Covid-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesian people have a collective culture that adheres to the values of togetherness and kinship, so that the role of the community is quite significant in influencing the quality of life of the community, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. This influence may have a higher implication for low-income societies as the vulnerable ones. The aim of this study is to examine the influence of the sense of community on each dimension (physical, psychological, social, environmental) of the quality of life in the poor communities in Jakarta. The participants were 289 Jakartans with low socio-economic status, which were collected using incidental sampling. The data were analyzed using the Spearman correlation method. The results of data analysis show that there is a very significant relationship between the sense of community and the social dimensions of the quality of life ( $p < 0.001$ ), with a spearman  $\rho = 0.342$ . However, on the other hand it was found that the sense of community was negatively correlated with the psychological dimension ( $p = 0.012$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\rho = -0.147$ ), the physical dimension ( $p = 0.01$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\rho = -0.150$ ), and has no correlation with the environmental dimensions ( $p = 0.620$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) of the participants' quality of life. This result is very likely affected by the data collecting process and the characteristics of the participants. The results of this study might be used by various communities in the poor societies and also the government institutions upon them, especially to strengthen ties and social support between members during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keyword:** poor society; quality of life; sense of community

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### INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a problem that difficult to overcome. BPS said that number of poor people at March 2019 was 25.14 million people or 9.41 people of the population of Indonesia. Meanwhile, According to BPS DKI Jakarta (2018), the number of poor people in DKI Jakarta at March 2019 was 2.47% or 365.55 thousand. At March 2020, it becomes 118.8 thousand person (BAPPEDA, 2020). BAPPEDA DKI Jakarta also said that the increase of the number of poverty rate caused by the raising of pricing goods and services, and also a large number of people lost their job during the pandemic covid-19.

About 11.8% employees and laborers were laid off caused by covid-19 outbreak. Employees who were not lost their job, experienced decrease of their income. It was recorded that 6.8% employee experienced decrease their income up to 50%, while 30.8% experienced decrease in their income less than 50% (Meiliana & Purba, 2020). These various layoffs make people lose their job and income to meet their necessity of life of their self also their family (Putri et.al., 2020), and at the end it raised the number of poverty rate.

Poverty can affect several aspects of life. One aspect that is affected by poverty is health. The low health condition of the poor is partly due to the limited access of the poor to obtain adequate information and health services and the low knowledge and behavior of life that cares about health. Another aspect influenced by poverty is psychological. The middle to lower (poor) economic

community tends to feel unhappy and have the possibility of experiencing serious mental disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, and personality disorders.

In addition to the risks to health and psychological aspects, it turns out that poverty can have an impact on the environment of the individual concerned (Markum, 2009). Based on the results of a survey by the Perkumpulan Prakarsa (in Pratiwi, 2019) which measures the level of poverty based on three quality indicators of life (health, education and living standards), as many as 81% of the poor cannot get access to proper drinking water and 83% of other poor people do not have access to adequate sanitation. This emphasizes that people with low or poor socio-economic conditions will generally have a low quality of life, as confirmed by the results of Ranakusuma's research (2015).

The World Health Organization or WHO (1998) defines quality of life as an individual's perception of their life position in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and are related to goals, expectations, standards and concerns. In addition, quality of life can also be defined as a person's opinion about their life in relation to the culture and values in which that person lives to achieve their hopes, goals, concerns and standard of life (Nawaz & Usman, 2019). Quality of life can also mean the level of an individual's satisfaction with his life as a whole, and how that individual wants to be mentally recognized by the surrounding environment so that he can feel a comfortable life and away from threats, and can fulfill his basic needs (Afiyanti, 2010).

People who experience situations that are not favorable for their quality of life generally have conditions such as living in a slum environment, having low socio-economic status, limited income, and other conditions as previously mentioned. On the other hand, considering that Indonesia has a collective culture that emphasizes togetherness, this can be a separate asset, especially in terms of providing social support. The poor in the capital generally live in dense neighborhoods. One of the things that can be pursued to create social support is to strengthen a sense of togetherness and a sense of belonging in these communities, also known as a sense of community.

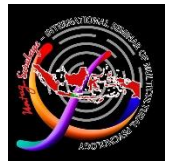
Sense of community can be interpreted as a feeling of togetherness in a group that each individual is important to other individuals, or it can also be interpreted that these groups and individuals have the belief that their needs will be met by their commitment to be together in the group. Meanwhile, Sarason (in Wibowo, Pelupessy, & Narhetali, 2013) defines a sense of community as a person's feeling that he is part of a network of relationships that support each other.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) state that there are four criteria to define a sense of community, namely membership, influence, reinforcement (integration and fulfillment of needs) and shared emotional connections. Membership is a feeling of belonging or sharing a sense of personal attachment. Influence is a sense of importance, creates a difference for the group and vice versa feels the importance of the group for its members. Reinforcement consists of integration and fulfillment of needs, a feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group. Shared emotional connection is a commitment and belief shared among members, in the form of history, places and times spent together, to similar experiences (in Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008).

Sense of community can affect several aspects of life, such as socializing among others, where there is a relationship between positive social support and a sense of community, while negative support is not consistently related to the sense of community (Tang, Chi, & Dong, 2017). Meanwhile, Nugroho's research (2017) also found that there is a positive relationship between social support and a sense of community. The results of these studies indicate that the social dimension in quality of life can grow from a sense of community and social support, which is part of a sense of community.

In addition, the presence of feeling together as part of the community where you live, which will also bring out closeness and social ties, can have a positive impact on one's psychological well-being (Rahmawati, 2017). Shinta and Dewi (2013) in their research say that there is a significant positive relationship between the sense of community and self-esteem, where self-esteem is basically a

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psychological aspect of quality of life. This shows that the psychological aspect of quality of life is also closely related to a sense of community in community.

Talen (1997) states that the existence of public space facilities can increase interaction and share information with the local community, so as to build a sense of community in the environment. Meanwhile, other studies have found that a dense environment can basically create a high sense of community, compared to an environment that is relatively tenuous (Noviantri, Wiranegara, & Supriatna, 2019). The short distance between the houses between residents makes it more possible for them to communicate with each other more often, so that it can create a sense of togetherness in the environment, which is included in the environmental aspect of quality of life.

Meanwhile, research by Lee, Arozullah, Cho, Crittenden, and Vicencio (2014) shows that social support has a strong and positive relationship with physical health. Thus, all four aspects of the quality of life can be related to the sense of togetherness and social support obtained in the community. This assumption is strengthened by the results of the research of Gattino, De Riccoli, Fassio, and Rollero (2013) which state that environmental aspects, psychological health, and physical quality are influenced by the sense of community, especially relational dimensions such as sense of belonging to the community, perception interconnection, and interdependence with others, all of which were found to have a positive effect on quality of life.

In connection with the context of Covid-19 itself, WHO itself has emphasized the importance of strengthening community and community-based services in overcoming this pandemic. According to UI psychologist, Dicky Pelupessy, strengthening the sense of community is important in arousing collective awareness and solidarity in the community as well as protecting those who are vulnerable to this virus (mediaindonesia.com). But on the other hand, research related to the sense of community in the context of the pandemic itself is still very minimal, if it can't be said that it doesn't exist yet. Studies concerning communities during the Covid-19 pandemic are still more focused on services and mitigation.

Likewise with research on quality of life. The results of a study conducted in Vietnam found that people who were suspected of being positive for Covid-19 tended to be more prone to depression and had a lower quality of life related to health (Nguyen et. Al.2020). On the other hand, the results of research by Zhang and Ma (2020) from China found that local people felt less stress as a result of Covid-19, because at the same time they felt increased social support and care from family and relatives. In Indonesia, the authors have not found a similar study.

The occurrence of the corona or covid-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the quality of life of low-economic communities in Indonesia. In fact, Indonesian people with a collective culture have social capital that can help overcome the impact on the quality of life, namely in the form of a sense of community. But on the other hand, research on the relationship between sense of community and quality of life during the Covid-19 pandemic is still very minimal in Indonesia, while studies in other countries have found a link between social factors and quality of life. Therefore, this study aims to see the relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in low economic communities, especially in Jakarta.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach, which is a non-experimental study with a correlational method. The variables observed in this study were a sense of community and quality of life.

### Hypothesis

There are four examined hypothesis in this study:

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in the physical dimension;

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in the psychological dimension;

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in the social dimension;

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in the environmental dimension.

### **Participants**

The population in this study were the poor in DKI Jakarta. The poor category refers to the category from BPS, namely those who earn below IDR 3,358,360.00 per month. The subject ages were selected from adolescents to adults. The sampling technique used was accidental sampling.

### **Instrument**

There are two scales used in this study. The first is the Indonesian version of the WHOQOL-BREF scale adapted by Purba, et.al. (2018). This scale measures four dimensions of quality of life, namely physical, psychological, social and environmental health. The scale of the physical health dimension consists of seven items, and the psychological dimension consists of six items, the social relation dimension has three items, and the environmental dimension has eight items, so that a total of 26 items is included. The second scale is the Brief Sense of Community Scale or BSCS, which was adapted from Peterson, Speer, and McMillan (2007). This scale consists of a total of eight items. Both use a Likert scale response with a score range from one to five.

### **Research Procedure**

Taking into account the safety and security factors during the Covid-19 pandemic, researchers conducted online data collection via Google Form. Meanwhile, some data were taken directly by entrusting it to one of the participants in a residential area, after the government imposed a new normal, by carrying out the applicable procedures or regulations. Researchers also conducted data sorting or screening to the data that had been collected by matching them according to the criteria set in this study.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis technique used is the Pearson correlation test. However, if the data is found to be abnormal, the correlation test is carried out using the Spearman technique. The correlation test was carried out to see the relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life of the participants, where if the significance value was 0.05, the relationship could be said to be correlated.

## **RESULT**

After data collection is carried out, then sorting is done first to select data that provides the criteria required in the study. Initially, there were 293 people who fit the criteria. However, after the initial normality test was carried out, it was detected that there were 5 respondents who were outliers in the data, so that the five people were not included in the data analysis. Thus, a total of 289 subjects in this study, consisting of 149 men and 140 women, ranged in age from 16 years to 45 years. As for the complete demographic data can be observed in Table 1.

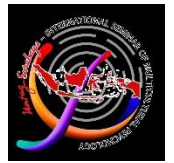


TABLE 1  
Demographic data

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	149	
Female	140	
<i>Education</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SD (elementary)	15	
SMP (middle)	22	
SMA (high school)	240	
Diploma	3	
Undergraduate	8	
Post-graduate	1	
<i>Income per month (in Rupiahs)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
< 1.000.000	34	
1.000.000 – 1.500.000	53	
1.500.000 – 2.500.000	147	
2.500.000 – 3.350.000*	55	

\*Note. maximum income per month for poor

While in Table 2 it can be seen how the data description for each variable to be tested includes the highest and lowest scores, the mean and standard deviation of the sense of community, as well as the four dimensions of quality of life. Meanwhile, based on the results of the data normality test, it was found that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, for the process of data analyzing will use a non-parametric statistical test.

TABLE 2  
Data Description

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Max Score</i>	<i>Min Score</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Sense of community	11	40	28.79	4.589
QoL: Physical	35	14	24.43	3.724
QoL: Psychological	30	9	18.69	3.926
QoL: Social	15	4	10.28	1.824
QoL: Environmental	40	14	25.56	4.337

Table 3 shows the results of the correlation test conducted between the sense of community variable and each dimension of quality of life. Based on the table, it can be noted that there is a significant relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in the physical dimensions or hypothesis 1 is accepted, but with a negative correlation value ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $\rho = -0.150$ ). This means that the higher the sense of community in the poor, the lower the physical quality, and vice versa. Likewise, the correlation between sense of community and quality of life in the psychological dimension ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $\rho = -0.147$ ), means that hypothesis 2 is accepted also with notification. Meanwhile, the results of the correlation test between the sense of community and the environmental dimension obtained  $p = 0.620$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), which means that there is no relationship between the sense of community in the poor and the quality of life in the environmental dimension, or hypothesis 4 is

rejected. Sense of community was only found to provide a very significant positive correlation with the social dimension of quality of life ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $\rho = 0.342$ ), means that hypothesis 3 is fully accepted.

TABLE 3  
Data Analyzing Result

<i>Correlation Among Sense of Community and</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>QOL_Physiological</i>	-0.150*	0.01
<i>QOL_Psychological</i>	-0.147*	0.012
<i>QOL_Social relationship</i>	0.342***	0.000
<i>QOL_Environmental</i>	-	0.62

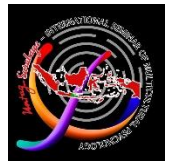
The existence of rejected hypotheses, or the results of research that are not in accordance with theoretical assumptions, encourages researchers to carry out additional analyzes, especially by considering demographic factors, namely age and gender (de Bruin, 2020; Hossain, 2020; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007; Wu, et.al, 2010). Thus, the researchers conducted separate tests related to sense of community and quality of life variables based on age (adolescents and adults) and gender (male and female), using the Mann-Whitney technique. As a result, there was a significant difference in the sense of community between men and women ( $p = 0.025$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), but there was no difference in quality of life between the two groups ( $p = 0.128$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, it was found that there was a difference in the sense of community between adolescent and adult respondents ( $p < 0.001$ ), with adult respondents gaining a higher sense of community. As for the quality of life, there was a difference between adolescent and adult respondents ( $p < 0.001$ ), with adolescent respondents retaining a better quality of life. Additional analysis findings can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
Result of t-test Based on Age and Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Sense of community</i>		<i>Quality of life</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Male	29.42	0.025*	78.29	0.218
Female	28.13		79.67	
<i>Age</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Adult	30.12	0.000***	73.72	0.000***
Adolescence	27.26		85.02	

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the relationship between the sense of community and the quality of life in low-economic communities in Jakarta. The correlation test was carried out between the sense of community variable with each dimension of quality of life. It was found that there is a significant relationship between the sense of community and the social dimension of quality of life. The results of this study are in line with the research of Tang, Chi, and Dong (2012) which states that there is a positive relationship between social support and a sense of community, where social support itself is included in the dimensions of the social relationship of quality of life. In this case, the higher the sense of togetherness possessed by a community or society would be followed by a huge perception of the quality of its social relationships. An individual who gains a sense of togetherness in a community will



maintain a bond with the other members of the community, because when the sense of togetherness in the community is high, there is a process of sharing experiences, stories, and so on. In addition, it can encourage a sense of the importance of one member to another, as well as meets the needs of the community (Gattino, De Riccoli, Fassio, and Rollero, 2013).

However, the sense of community was found to be unrelated to the environmental dimension of quality of life. As previously known, the residential neighborhoods of the lower middle class in Jakarta are generally crowded and slum areas, such as along riverbanks and narrow alleys. The results of the research from Namazian and Mehdipour (2013) shows that a crowded environment that encourages too much interaction with other people possesses the potential to cause interpersonal stress, or in other words, it can reduce a sense of community in individuals. This is partly proper to reduced personal space for individuals, which also affects the feeling of being free from the influence of others and the comfort of choosing. Regarding this comfort, Heimstra and Farlins also added several criteria for a residential environment that can provide psychological comfort for individuals, including the level of density, access to the facilities, and the maintenance of the house (in Jaenudin & Marliani, 2017). These factors are less fulfilled in the housing environment of the lower middle class.

Meanwhile, it was found that there was a negative correlation between the sense of community and the quality of life in the physical dimension. Primarily, a sense of community togetherness can have a positive effect on one's health, like the results of the research of Gattino, De Riccoli, Fassio, and Rollero (2013). Fellow members of the community generally care about each other's health conditions, and frequently encourage physical activities such as sports together that can improve health. However, one note that needs to be considered is that the data collection process in this study was carried out in a covid-19 pandemic situation. A sense of community or commitment and a sense of togetherness in the community for the Indonesian people is often interpreted as individual involvement in activities carried out by the community concerned. Whereas in a pandemic or epidemic condition, the transmission is remarkably easy to occur when someone is in a crowded situation especially without maintaining a distance, as is still done by many people in Indonesia. Several times there have been clusters or points of the spread of the coronavirus which originated from the presence of community crowds, such as the celebration cluster, demonstration clusters of the work copyright bill, concert clusters, and birthday clusters. Not to mention community events or organizations that do not comply with health protocols, or the existence of super spreaders, namely individuals who travel frequently in the community so they are prone to spreading the virus (Dwianto, 2020). In other words, being directly active in communities during a pandemic can indeed be something that is vulnerable to one's physical health.

Apart from the physical dimension, a sense of community was also reclaimed to be negatively correlated with the psychological dimension of quality of life. As with other correlation test results, this negative relationship is also likely to be influenced by subject factors and pandemic conditions. A community for the poor means fellow residents with middle to lower economic status, where this equality of socio-economic status can encourage competition and social comparison. In this case, the middle to lower-middle-class community or neighbors become a reference group that becomes a reference for individuals to make comparisons related to their income and this can have an impact on the well-being concerned. In addition, individuals who see this comparison as important will tend to be unhappy (Alderson & Katz-Gerro, 2016). Coupled with the covid-19 pandemic situation, where there were many layoffs and decreased economic capacity of the community in general, the impact of this social comparison will be even more pronounced. On the other hand, community awareness can also increase individual awareness of pandemic conditions, which indirectly increases the likelihood of being exposed to negative information related to the socio-economic and health situation of this outbreak, which is vulnerable to stress (Reed, Chan, & Mikels, 2014).

Based on the results of additional analysis, it was found that adolescents and adults contain differences in quality of life, with adolescents enjoying a better quality of life. This result is in contrast to the results of research by de Bruin (2020) which states that the quality of life in adults is relatively higher during the Covid-19 pandemic compared to adolescents. Meanwhile, there were furthermore differences in the sense of community between adolescents and adults, with a more excessive level of sense of community in adults. This result is also in contrast to research from Steinberg and Monahan (2007) where adolescents are more vulnerable to the influence of their community. However, the results of this study also state that adolescence is a critical age, so that on the other hand it also allows them to be separated from groups or have a low sense of community.

Simultaneously, based on the gender category, it was found that there were differences in the sense of community between men and women, where men had a higher level of sense of community. Meanwhile, for the quality of life variable, there was no difference between men and women. These two results are less consistent with the results of Hossain (2020) study which shows that in some developing countries, men are more vulnerable to socio-economic impacts than women. This is possible because in Indonesia, in contrast to the countries that are the setting for Hossain (2020), in general women work as a voluntary process and financial management is carried out by the wife (Nurhayati, Soeparno, & Martani, 2019), so that in a pandemic condition like this the awareness of the crisis is equally felt by women.

The two additional analysis results that are contrary to previous research and theory, plus unproven hypotheses, convince researchers that the problem lies in statistical testing or data collection. Data collection is carried out in pandemic conditions, which requires researchers and teams to collect data online. The results of the additional analysis indicate a very significant difference between adolescent and adult subjects on both variables, and this strongly indicates the error that occurred in the subject's response. In most cases, the boomers generation will find it difficult to access the internet, including responding to online assessments. This is influenced by physical and cognitive abilities, especially if the person concerned is in a state of poverty so that he is isolated from knowledge about online activities (Nuriana, Rizkiyah, Efendi, Wibowo, & Raharjo, 2019). On the other hand, it is also possible to have social desirability motivation on the side of the adolescent subject, which can encourage individuals to respond to items manipulatively or on the contrary answer haphazardly (Ciptadi & Umar, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that there was a negative correlation between a sense of community and quality of life in physical and psychological dimensions. Meanwhile, there is no relationship between the sense of community and quality of life in the environmental dimension. Sense of community was only found to be positively correlated with the social dimension. This shows that in the poor and in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, in general a sense of community will contribute more to maintaining the quality of social relations between residents, but on the other hand it obtains less positive contribution to physical health, stress levels, and a sense of comfort in the environment.

The researcher discovered one thing that should be considered in the online data collection process, namely that the researcher needs to pay attention to the characteristics of the respondent. In this case, respondents with middle to late adulthood and suffer low socioeconomic and educational status, are not advised to be given an online questionnaire or questionnaire. Meanwhile, for adolescents with low educational and socioeconomic levels too, supervision and a little control mechanism are needed in the questionnaire filling process.





The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of community-based psychosocial interventions to maintain the quality of life of the community amid the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. The parties that can take advantage of the results of this research include the social services, community apparatus such as RT, RW, and sub-district, as well as various independent communities. As for further researchs, it is advisable to control the demographic factors of the subject.

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