

EXPLORING QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG OLDER PEOPLE: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING ANALYSIS

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Purpose: Quality of life is a central issue for older people. The aging population and life expectancy are increasing, but a variety of factors may affect quality of life during the years of later life. Older people frequently perceive certain factors as having greater importance to their quality of life. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the value of having pets, and assess the impact of social support and self-rated health on morale and quality of life. Method: A sample of 164 community-dwelling participants aged over 65 from Taipei (76 males, 88 females) completed the questionnaire including WHOQOL-BREF, inventory of Socially Supportive Behavior, self-rated health, morale, and having pets. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to validate the fitness of the conceptual framework and observed data. Results: The SEM model was acceptable (Chi-square=1.403, df=2, $p<.496$; CFI=1.000; NFI=.988; RMSEA=.000). The findings indicated a significant relationship between social support, self-rated health, morale and quality of life. The SEM also identified a significant relationship between self-rated health and morale. Social support was significantly larger in self-rated health. Having pets had no effect on quality of life in this study. Conclusions: These findings suggest that health, social support and morale are more important for quality of life among older people. It is to note social support's relevance in the variables associated with self-rated health. Having pets did not affect quality of life among older people in this study. From this we find that health is most likely more important than having pets.