

EFFECT OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL NORMS, AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ELDERLY PERSON IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND

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Abstract

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica quality of life “is the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events”. Hence the core objective of this study was to explore the effects of the political environment, social norms, and social engagement on the quality of life of an elderly person in northeast Thailand. 600 elderly persons were the respondents of this study, hence a survey aimed to collect primary data, was conducted. Partial Least Square (PLS) was used to analyse the primary data aiming to achieve the final results of this study. The increased value of the political environment, social norms, and social engagement have a positive relationship with the quality of life of an elderly person. Furthermore, the personality of an elderly person also has a positive relationship with the quality of life of an elderly person. This study helps an elderly person especially residing in northeast Thailand aiming to increase the quality of his/her life. Moreover, this study provides sufficient knowledge for the research community for further research aimed to explore the quality of life of an elderly person.

Keywords: Political environment, social norms, social engagement, the personality of an elderly person, and the quality of life of an elderly person.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thailand is considered a dense population country (Brummaier et al., 2021). The higher value of dense population has negative effects on the quality of life of the people. In a dense population, various reasons enhance the value of already life-affecting factors such as environmental degradation, low per capita income, and unemployment, that decrease the quality of life of the people, or the life-affecting factors such as political environment, social norms, and social engagement that increases the quality of life of the people. There are significant effects of the political environment, social norms, and social engagement especially on the quality of life of an elderly person residing in North-eastern Thailand.

This study is aimed to explore the effects of the political environment, social norms, and social engagement on the quality of the life of an elderly person. Hence, the relationship between the

aforementioned factors affecting the quality of life of an elderly person especially in Northeastern Thailand d is explored in this study. Moreover, one of the basic objectives of this study was to know how the quality of life of elderly persons (Siboni et al., 2009) is affected due to the changes in the values of the influencing significant factors that have robust effects on their lives.

With the help of this study, the elderly persons residing especially in Northeastern Thailand will have an adequate amount of knowledge that will benefit them to enhance the quality of their lives without any investment. Moreover, this study is also helpful for the health professionals who are working to enhance the quality of life of elderly persons. This study has significant importance in the health sector of Thailand.

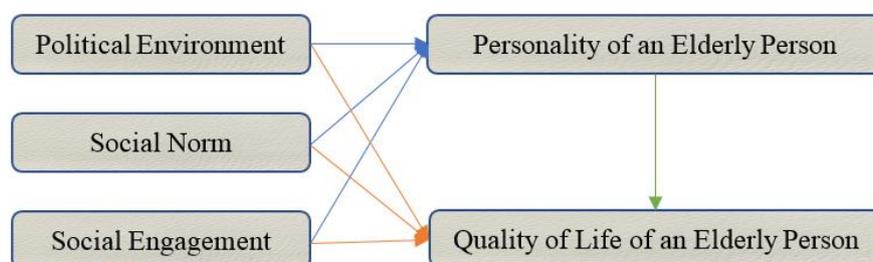
Several studies are available describing the effects of the political environment on the quality of life of a person (Brown, 1999). However, these studies have missed the role of social norms and social engagement. Hence, this is a unique study that explores the effects of the political environment, social norms, and social engagement on the personality of the and elderly person and the quality of his/her life.

Every research study has practical and theoretical implications. Theoretically, this study describes that there is a direct relationship between political environment, social norms, social engagement, and the quality of life of an elderly person. Furthermore, the personality of an elderly person mediates the relationship between political environment, social norms, social engagement, and the quality of life of an elderly person.

Due to the scope of this study, the effects of factors that cause lowering the existing quality of life of an elderly person, are not discussed; the factors such as environmental degradation, low per capita income, and unemployment. Moreover, there is a strong need to explore the effects of psychological factors such as personality, motivation, habit, and well power on the quality of life of an elderly person.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Figure 1: The study's theoretical framework shows the relationship between political environment, social norm, social engagement, the personality of an elderly person, and the quality of life of an elderly person.



2.1 Political Environment and the Quality of Life of an Elderly Person

The political environment is a setting in which people influence, operate, and interact with the system in which they live. In a political environment, arrangements are formed that are necessary to fulfill basic needs and infrastructure that influence the quality of life of people (Leung, Famakin, & Wang, 2019). According to a past study, in a society, a political environment provides opportunities to participate in subjects like future decisions, the welfare of the society, and legislation (Shelomentseva, Narynbayeva, Bepalyy, Frezorger, & Makenov, 2021). However, this study shows that the quality of life of an elderly person is directly influenced by the value of the political environment. It means in societies in northeastern Thailand, where the political environment is more efficient, the quality of life of the people especially the elderly persons is fair. However, in the societies in northeastern Thailand where the political environment is not functioning sufficiently, the quality of life of elderly persons is poor. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

H1: Political environment has a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person.

2.2 Social norms and The Quality of Life of an Elderly Person

Acceptable unwritten rules of behavior that change according to the situation, environment, and culture of a particular place are called social norms (Aung, Koyanagi, Ueno, Tiraphat, & Yuasa, 2021). However, social norms kept changing over time. A previous study describes that there are four types of social norms: 1). mores 2). Las 3). Taboos 4). Folkways. These four types of social norms inform the behavior of people that influence the quality of life of people. According to the results of this study, polite changes in the value of social norms result in an increase in the quality of life of an elderly person especially residing in northeastern Thailand. While normally, the quality of life of the elderly persons remains poor that don't value their social norms. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

H2: Social norms have a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person.

2.3 Social Engagement and the Quality of Life of an Elderly Person

It is the social engagement that enables one to share his/her views, opinions, and decisions with other people. Social engagement allows a person to build relationships with more people (Ang, Lim, & Malhotra, 2021). Hence social engagement plays a significant role in the life of a person. According to a past study social engagement involves community building, economic development, community education, community organization, and direct services (Sheila, Zhu, Kintu, & Kataike, 2021). Hence, social engagement lies in various forms that have an important role in the life of a person. Data from this study shows that the life of an elderly person is directly influenced by the value of his/her social engagement. An elderly person spending more time aiming to engage socially, usually lives a better quality of life. However, the quality of life of an elderly person is poor if he/she misses to socially engage.

H3: Social engagement has a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person.

2.4 Political Environment and the Personality of an Elderly Person

The political environment is directly affected by the technological, political, legal, social, environmental, and economic changes in society. However, any change in the political environment directly influences the personalities of the people in the society. According to a previous study, external factors such as political environment, education, and social freedom have a significant role in the personality of a person (Khodjamkulov, Makhmudov, & Shofkorov, 2020). However, results from this study show that positive changes in the political environment especially in northeastern Thailand also have a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person. While any poor development in the political environment of the societies in northeastern Thailand causes undesired changes in the personality of an elderly person. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

H4: The political environment has a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person.

2.5 Social norms and The Personality of an Elderly Person

It is examined that the long-term influence of personality change and personality level on aging is higher than the initial levels of personality traits. However, the personality of an elderly person is influenced by various factors and social norms are one of them. According to a past study, social norms are responsible for order in society (Hogreve, Matta, Hettich, & Reczek, 2021). There is always a need for a guide and direction for the behavior of human beings especially seeking predictability, order, and understanding of each other's actions in social relationships. This is why social norms are very important and have a significant influence on the personality of an elderly person. Results of this study show that the accepted standard of people's behavior in a society increases the value of the personality of an elderly person. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

H5: Social norms have a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person.

2.6 Social Engagement and the Personality of an Elderly Person

Life without strategy and life with a strategy has different aspects and have different outcomes. However, life with strategy becomes more comfortable, prosperous, and roomy. Social engagement is a strategy that helps one to develop his/her personality aiming to be more acceptable, satisfactory, and respectable in society. The personality of an elderly person is influenced by several factors however, social engagement is one of them and plays a significant role in personality development. Evidence from past studies shows that the personality of a person is directly influenced by the value of his/her social setup (Triolo et al., 2020). However, this study shows that the personality of an elderly person becomes more decent with the increase in the value of his/her social engagement. However, by losing the value of social engagement, the personality of an elderly person also becomes unrefined. This is why it is hypothesized that;

H6: Social engagement has a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person.

2.7 The Personality of an Elderly Person and the Quality of Life of an Elderly Person

The impressive personality of a person has significant importance in the life of that person. Because an impressive personality enhances the quality of learning, communication, and self-esteem. A previous study shows that everyone has a personality with different qualities that determine the nature of personality (Barsasella et al., 2021). Personality plays a vital role in the life of a person. However, results from this study show that an impressive personality of an elderly person especially in northeastern Thailand helps to develop or maintain the quality of the life of an elderly person. While the quality of life of an elderly person remains poor if the person doesn't have an acceptable personality. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

H7: The personality of an elderly person has a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and mixed methods were not applied to conduct this study; however, the quantitative research method was preferred because the nature of the current study is quantitative. Elderly persons residing in northeastern Thailand were the respondent of this study. Hence, a list containing basic contact information of elderly persons, created by getting information from offices of various housing societies in northeastern Thailand. However, the list was without gender discrimination. Moreover, an area cluster sampling approach was used to conduct this study. Because area cluster sampling is an appropriate approach when the population of the study resides in a wide area. As northeastern Thailand is a very wide area, hence the population of this study was distributed in various clusters.

After the selection of area cluster sampling, a sample size of this was 800 as a sample size of 800 is considered as a very good sample size. A questionnaire was developed. However, the questionnaire was distributed into three major sections. The first section of the questionnaire was containing the questions about the demographic information of the respondents such as respondents' name, age, occupation, and marital status, etc. In the second section of the questionnaire, the respondents were responsible to answer the question based on the basic variables of this study. In the third section of the questionnaire, there were 20 questions based on a 5-point Likert scale starting from 1 as "Strongly Agree" to 5 as "Strongly Disagree". Copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the respondents of this study by using their email addresses. While creating the email, a paper was attached with the email containing a brief description of the objective of this study. However, it was ensured that all the information received from the respondents will be confidential and will only be used to achieve the objectives of this study. Hence, an individual email was sent to every respondent of this study. After 40 days of email sent to the respondents, there were 340 responses received. Hence, a reminder message was sent to the rest of the respondents. 15 days of the reminder message there were more, 300 responses received. Initially, there were 640 responses received, however, 40 responses were excluded because these responses were partially filled. 600 responses were considered as primary data of the current study. PLS was used to analyze this primary data aiming to achieve the objectives of this study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is one of the important parts of any research study which require the appropriate selection of statistical tool. In this direction, the current study considered the relationship between variables through primary data, therefore, SmartPLS is most suitable for the current study (J. Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017; J. F. Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012; Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). Therefore, SmartPLS is applied and confirmatory factor analysis was carried out as given in Figure 2. While confirmatory factor analysis, it is found that none of the scale items is below 0.5 factor lading which is the minimum threshold level. It is given in Table 2.

Figure 2: Measurement Model

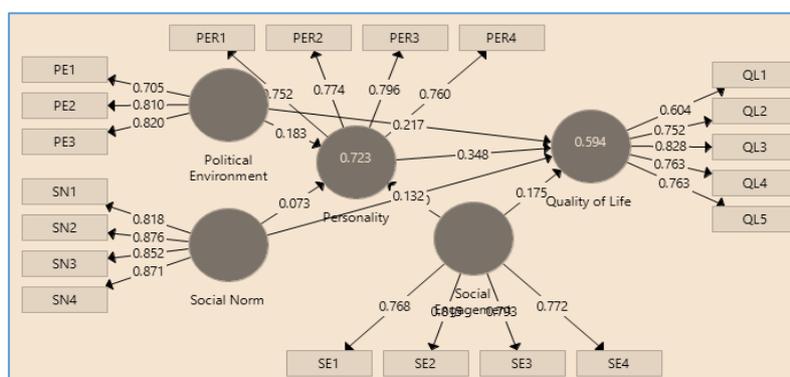


Table 1: Factor Loadings

	Personality	Political Environment	Quality of Life	Social Engagement	Social Norm
PE1		0.705			
PE2		0.81			
PE3		0.82			
PER1	0.752				
PER2	0.774				
PER3	0.796				
PER4	0.76				
QL1			0.604		
QL2			0.752		
QL3			0.828		
QL4			0.763		
QL5			0.763		
SE1				0.768	
SE2				0.815	
SE3				0.793	
SE4				0.772	
SN1					0.818
SN2					0.876
SN3					0.852
SN4					0.871

Reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity are the major parts of PLS measurement model. Convergent validity was reported with the help of average variance extracted (AVE) which must be above 0.5. Table 3 indicates that AVE is above 0.5 for all variables. Reliability is examined through composite reliability (CR) which is above 0.7. Finally, discriminant validity is shown in Table 4.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Alpha	rho_A	CR	(AVE)
Personality	0.772	0.776	0.854	0.594
Political Environment	0.777	0.787	0.823	0.609
Quality of Life	0.797	0.807	0.861	0.556
Social Engagement	0.795	0.796	0.867	0.62
Social Norm	0.877	0.879	0.916	0.731

Table 3: HTMT

	Personality	Political Environment	Quality of Life	Social Engagement	Social Norm
Personality					
Political Environment	0.88				
Quality of Life	0.808	0.852			
Social Engagement	0.863	0.865	0.884		
Social Norm	0.789	0.803	0.751	0.739	

This study addressed the effect of political environment, social norms, personality and social engagement on quality of life. For this purpose, PLS-SEM was used (F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & G. Kuppelwieser, 2014; J. F. Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013) and results are reported in Table 5. It shows that political environment, social norms, personality and social engagement has positive effect on quality of life. As the t-value is above 1.96 for all variables and beta value is positive. Increase in political environment, social norms, personality and social engagement increases the quality of life.

Table 4: Direct Effect Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Personality -> Quality of Life	0.348	0.357	0.121	2.867	0.004
Political Environment -> Personality	0.183	0.179	0.069	2.639	0.009
Political Environment -> Quality of Life	0.217	0.213	0.074	2.915	0.004
Social Engagement -> Personality	0.78	0.774	0.083	9.45	0
Social Engagement -> Quality of Life	0.175	0.175	0.045	3.799	0
Social Norm -> Personality	0.073	.065	0.02	3.61	0
Social Norm -> Quality of Life	0.132	0.127	0.01	1.97	0.049

5. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis of this study is: “political environment has a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person”. Literature shows that maintaining the quality of life of senior citizens required special care by the stakeholders, government, or a responsible person (Šiška et al., 2021). However, an environment of a society has a significant impact on the health of an elderly person. Hence, there is a strong need to look after them with special care. Therefore, the role of the political environment has significant importance for an elderly person. The second hypothesis of this study is: “social norms have a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person”. It is obvious from the past literature that social norms have a significant role in society (Wang, Yang, Wang, Douglas, & Su, 2021). A person who doesn't obey the social norms of his/her society normally is not accepted in society. Moreover, the quality of life is directly affected by the rules and regulations in society.

The third hypothesis of this study is: “social engagement has a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person.” There are several benefits of social engagement in the life of a person. Studies are also available that describe that social engagement also has medical benefits for people such as the increase in the value of social engagement of a person, it also increases the value of cortisol and estrogen in the person (Perry et al., 2020). The fourth hypothesis of this study is: “the political environment has a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person”. It is the personality of a person that helps the person to gain self-esteem, confidence, improved communication skills (Asensio-Ramon et al., 2020). Hence, the personality of a person is a very important factor. Therefore, it is mandatory to evaluate the factors which have a significant influence on the quality of personality of a person.

The fifth hypothesis of this study describes that; “social norms have a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person.” Social norms provide social influence and conformity that have a significant influence on the personality of human beings in society (Thalmayer, Saucier, Ole-Kotikash, & Payne, 2020). However, social norms lie in every action such as while using the phone, social media, face-to-face meetings, and even in every relationship. Hence it is mandatory to confirm the guidelines provided by the social norms. The sixth hypothesis of this study is: “social engagement has a positive influence on the personality of an elderly person.” In other words, social engagement simply means high-level participation in social activities. Social engagement is used to maintain or develop the social connections that have significant importance for the personality of a person by strengthening affinity and interaction between relationships. Results from a previous study show that social engagement is compulsory aiming to develop a personality (Scanlon, Del Toro, & Wang, 2020). The seventh hypothesis of this study is: “The personality of an elderly person has a positive influence on the quality of life of an elderly person.” Personality affects relationships, work performance, and lifestyle. A previous study shows that political and social attitudes, physical health, and behavior of a person are influenced by his/her personality (Yang & Wu, 2021). Hence, a person's personality has a significant influence on the quality of life of a person.

6. CONCLUSION

The political environment, social norms, and social engagement have a direct relationship with both the personality of an elderly person and the quality of life of an elderly person. However, the personality of an elderly person mediates between the relationship of the political environment, social norms, social engagement, and the quality of life of an elderly person. The PLS was used to analyze the primary data received from the respondents of this study, aiming to obtain the results of the study. This study provides boosts to the elderly persons especially those residing in northeastern Thailand aiming to enhance their quality of life.

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