

# Spatial Analysis of Quality of Life in Economic Dimension of Villages of Lahijan Town

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 03 Jun 2016

Received in revised form 04 Jul 2016

Accepted 14 Jul 2016

### Keywords:

Village,

Quality of life,

Economic,

Lahijan Town

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Lowness of living level in rural areas and as a result, migration of villagers into big cities have created various social and economic issues and problems both in rural areas and cities. In this article, the researchers have investigated quality of life in villages of Lahijan Town in economic dimension.

**Methodology:** The present study is based on the descriptive-analytical method and according to aim is of applied kind. Population of the research includes 12 villages of Lahijan Town in three big, medium and small classes. Samples were selected as 385 persons by using Morgan Standard Table and data were collected by field and library approaches. **Results:** Studied indicators and items were selected in economic dimension according to questions, purposes of research and observed similar studies. Data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS software and using Friedman's Correlation Coefficient Test.

**Conclusion:** In this article, it is tried to explore quality of life in terms of economic dimension in 12 rural settlements having 3773 households. Results indicate that there is a statistical direct and meaningful relationship between economic dimension and quality of life of people at 0.05 alpha level.

## 1. Introduction

In the early 1990s, components related to social development such as social investment and social correlation entered into literature of development and in other words, substantial changes achieved in hierarchy of development purposes and by emphasis of the United Nations, social welfare and quality of life placed on top of development purposes, having decrease of poverty, destruction of environment, increase of sanitary and longevity and overall improvement of quality of life.

In globalization era, different areas compete with each other to attract the capitals which do not recognize national borders. It is through quality of life that many people and capitals tend to settle, work and invest in those areas. Therefore, one can claim that, in the current situation, access to development is not possible from its each dimension according to construct of quality of life. Based on this necessity, in recent years, studies to investigate quality of life in Iran have been changed from different dimensions. Investigating these changes can indicate amount of paying attention to quality of life in internal studies and understanding its position in development studies. Accordingly, in this research, we search spatial analysis of quality of life in villages of Lahijan Town to present approaches.

### 1.1 Fundamentals

Quality of life is a complicated and multi-dimensional concept which is influenced by components such as time and place and personal and social values and its position relates to amount of development of societies (Rezvani, 2008). Some interpret it as viability of an area, others as a size for amount of

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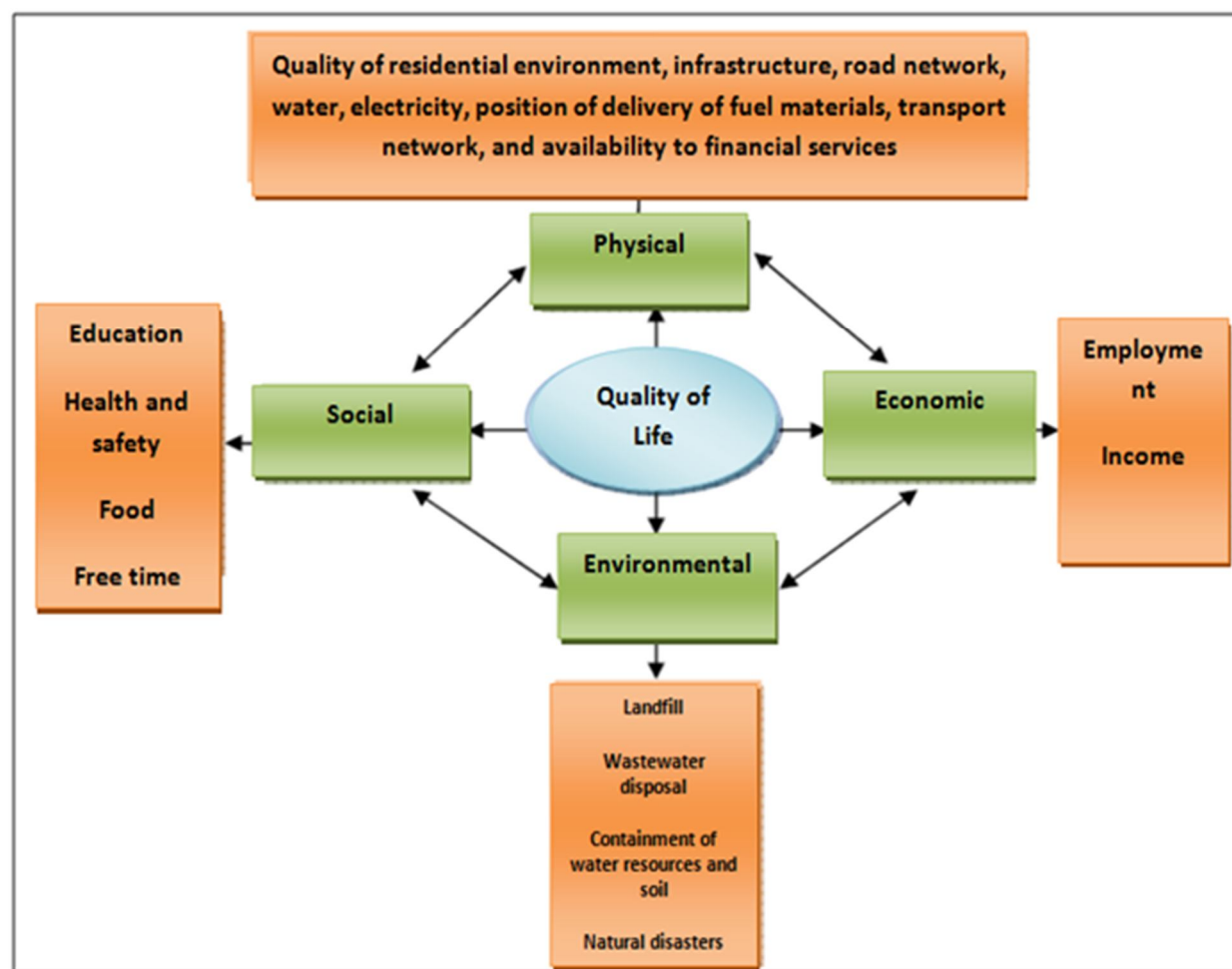
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24200/jsshr.vol4iss04pp13-20>

attraction, and some others as public welfare, social welfare, happiness, and such things (Apli and Menon, 2008). In few recent decades, recognition, measurement and improvement of quality of life were of the main purposes of people, researchers, planners and governments. This scientific and research area has been considerable for many fields such as psychology, medicine, economy, environmental science, sociology and geography (Rezvani, 2008). According to statues of Lahijan in the east of Gilan as a tourist pole and also as an Iranian tea producer, it is required to investigate its villages in terms of quality of life because thereby and due to increase of quality of life in Lahijan Town it is prevented from migration of the youth and emptiness of many villages which today is considered as an issue and rural regions will reach sustainability at regional level. Finally, the present study tries to answer to the question that: how is the situation of quality of life in villages of Lahijan Town according to geographical location in terms of economic dimension? Evaluation of Rural Settlements and Quality of Life (a Favored Life) refers to validation of capabilities of rural settlements to achieve quality of life. Today, because it is suggested that human beings in each point even in village mentally are more needless and freer than city-dwellers due to living in a natural field, quality of settlement is the first condition of feeling quality of life. Therefore, spatial analysis of quality of life achieves a double importance. Determination of Criteria of Quality of Life and Food in Rural Settlements considers evaluation of spatial development important and effective in evaluation of quality of life (and even of food). Report of Human Development, considers quality of life from the viewpoint of spatial and locational studies and believes that substratum of development occurs easier through such path.

### ***1.2 Concept of quality of life***

In Latin, quality conceptually means how and semantically means how to live and includes some differences that vary for every body (Kordzangane, 2006). According to Pal and Kumar, (2005), quality of life is a social concept and has not a real self-meaning but only people give meaning to it (Collados and Duane, 1999). concept of quality of life deeply stems from the thought related to health and there is not a single viewpoint about its cause (Campbell and Bond, 1982). According to Pal, quality of life is defined as a criterion to measure amount of meeting mental and physical needs of a society and in this regard quality of rural life is mentioned as conditions and position of life of rural households (Pal and Kumar, 2005). According to the above-mentioned points, one can say that at present there is not a stable unanimity about concept of quality of life but if commons of these definitions are taken into consideration, we can say that quality of life means better conditions of life in which balance, coordination, desirability and fair equality are institutionalized or necessary bases for life have appeared along with health, safety, peace, calm, joy, creativity and beauty (Yusefi, 2002). In other words, although there are different views in definition of quality of life, a cognitive agreement is seen among experts based on which most of them know quality of life including positive dimensions and as a multi-dimensional concept. What appears certain in these cognitions is the fact that all studies of quality of life are done under two topics –subjective indicators and objective indicators (Allen et al., 2002). Therefore, one of the main and substantial characteristics of quality of life is its multi-dimensionality (Kordzangane, 2006). But at present, this concept has promoted from a concept of absolute hygienic, environmental and psychological backgrounds to a multi-dimensional one (Jomepour, 2005)

Quality of life formed against the absolute economic approach. In some developed communities, this concept was utilized with and sometimes as synonymous with phrases such as public welfare, social welfare, social provision and such things (Yusefi, 2002). Traditionally, the earliest attempts to evaluate quality of life have stemmed from movement of social indicators of 1960s (Hasani, 2003). Theretofore, all indicators of quality of life were objective. In 1970s, subjective indicators were added to measure quality of life. Firstly, Pal and Kumar, (2005), paid attention to subjective and psychological indicators of quality of life (Pal and Kumar, 2005).



Conceptual model of quality of life (source: Ventgoto, 2003, 1030-1040).

Researchers in the field of quality of life face with four issues. First issue is by what method to measure quality of life in people. Second is which existential dimensions of human being should be used in measuring. Third is how to measure in different persons and groups and forth is how to present results to allow comparing people and groups (Nakagawa, 2000). Quality of life is measurable in physical, economic, social and environmental dimensions and its results are explainable. Investigating the mentioned indicators, we can assess quality of life in different societies and various people.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1 Methodology

The main method in every research is determined based on its purposes. Therefore, the present research entitled 'Spatial Analysis of Quality of Life in terms of Economic Dimension in Villages of Lahijan Town' with environmental logistics approach is of applied kind in terms of purpose and its method base is descriptive-analytical. Data related to explain the issue, theoretical framework and concept of research, background of the research and geographical and demographic characteristics of the extended limit was obtained through the documentary method and determination of amount of quality of life of villagers of Lahijan Town and spatial analysis of their quality of life related to indicators of income, occupation and other economic factors and the information required to this research were obtained through the documentary method, and field and survey studies. Also, to collect data, questionnaire, note-taking, interview and computer were used. In this research, after collecting the required data through documentary resources and field studies and their organization and classification, to analyze data, statistical (descriptive and inferential) methods such as Cronbach's alpha method and Spearman's correlation coefficient were used. Also, in this research, to process data, SPSS software was used to analyze and to draw tables and diagrams, Excel software was used and also to draw maps Arc-Gis software was utilized. In this stage, data obtained through library documents and field studies were organized and classified to facilitate and accelerate using codification of the thesis in the form of tables, diagrams and maps.

Population of the research include all villages of Lahijan Town. According to the latest official-political divisions, Lahijan Town has 184 inhabited villages. Sample was determined based on disparity of rural points in coastal, plain, and submontane geographical limitations which from each limitation, respectively 6, 4, and 2 villages were determined according to size of village population and highness information of villages of Gilan Province obtained from Management and Planning Organization of Gilan.



### 3.2 Economic dimension

Income and employment are of other components of quality of life which in many researches their importance is emphasized. Effect of tourism on reagents of income and employment of local inhabitants is by using the items related to satisfaction with level of income, hope to occupational future, having physical health to do activity and having enough savings. Of the first effects expected from tourism growth in every geographical area include positive changes at per capita income level and amount of employment in host society. Advocates of tourism always emphasize on its favored effects at level of income and employment of target area in process of regional and national development. Tourism is one of the ways to increase income.

### 3.3 Quality of employment and income

The most important economic effects of tourism on improvement of quality of life and finally rural development include economic growth and permanent and seasonal and direct and indirect job and job creation in a wide variety of service and non-service jobs, increase of income and improvement of general welfare level of villagers, etc. Empowerment of local societies, making occupational opportunities and economic growth can affect deeply on quality of life of rural people which by accurately and correctly knowing natural, cultural and historical powers and identifying existing strengths in the area they can play important roles in developing each region. According to the above description, in this research, satisfaction with income, hope to occupational future (occupational improvement), satisfaction with sort of occupation, having good physical health to do activities, having credential services such as loan, having agricultural mechanized tools at rural level and satisfaction with quality of employment and income are discussed as the items that explain quality of employment and income in the studied villages.

### 3.4 Satisfaction with income

Predisposing and causing factors of job satisfaction are various and can be classified into internal aspects including personality characteristics, emotional feelings and emotional modes, and external aspects including organizational, social and cultural conditions and characteristics. Income component can have a very important role in people's quality of life. When one's income reaches a certain level and his income gets consistent with his life's spending, his satisfaction level from life achieves its peak. Results show that amount of satisfaction of villagers from their incomes is low so that satisfaction degree of 81.3 per cent of responders had lower income than the average which indicates their dissatisfaction with doing economic activities especially agriculture and unfortunately only 18.7 per cent of villagers are satisfied with their own income.

**Table 2- Degree of satisfaction with income**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	10	62	139	111	63
Percent	2.6	16.1	36.1	28.8	16.4

### 3.5 Hopefulness to future of job (job promotion)

Factors such as small scale and low density of rural settlements, decrease of employment and income in agriculture section, far distance and their geographical isolation, and inappropriate and ineffective transportation network and roads complicate implementation of necessary policies and improvement of rural life.

Therefore, according to importance of quality of life in development and welfare of human communities, assessment of quality of life and explanation of the factors effective on it are specifically important. Results indicate that about 27.8 per cent of responders are hopeful to their job future. About future of life, 72.2 per cent of responders are not sure about future of their jobs. Of causes, of hopelessness to future of life, one can refer to inadequateness of agricultural lands for heirs, difficulty of agriculture, lack of adequate and holistic support for farmers in rice and tea sections and considerable class distinction.

**Table 3- Degree of hopefulness to future of job (job promotion)**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	26	81	125	101	52
Percent	6.8	21	32.5	26.2	13.5

### 3.6 Satisfaction with sort of job

Employment is of those issues that always are important for people, governments and nations. However job and employment apparently relate to economic-living dimension of people, there is a close-run relationship between them and their personal, familial, social, political and cultural dimensions. Job satisfaction is a field in which psychological, social, sociological and economic perspectives have related in. Today, in every country, there are thousands jobs people have and thereby make livings. What always have been paid attention to by psychologists and social scientists is peoples' job satisfaction and effects of this satisfaction in their morale and efficiency of their jobs. If somebody likes his job, his creativity and talent will be flourished in his professional scope and never will be tired and depressed. On the contrary, if somebody does not like his job, both he will be depressed and disappointed and his work will be ineffective and as a result, community will be hurt. About job satisfaction, 29.6 per cent of people are satisfied with their jobs and on the contrary 70.4 per cent of people are not satisfied with their jobs because based on responders their jobs and incomes are not appropriate with a favored life.

**Table 4- Job satisfaction among rural households of Lahijan Town**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	43	71	132	92	47

Percent	11.2	18.4	34.3	23.9	12.2
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### 3.7 Having good physical health to do activities

Factors such as personality, extraception, environmental facilities and requirements of society are important in selecting a job. In brief, one can claim personal factors (such as physical position and personality characteristics), economic factors (such as poverty and unemployment) and also inheritance and gender are effective in choosing a job. Each job needs some certain physical characteristics. In some jobs, an enormous and strong body is required while in some others this may be a barrier to do tasks. Also, in some jobs, existence and healthiness of hands and feet are required while in some others lack and or defect of hands and feet and other body members do not make any problems. Results of field studies in Lahijan Town indicate that 84.4 per cent of people have good physical health to do activities. And only 15.2 per cent of people are not physically health to do activities and living affairs.

**Table 5- Rate of having good physical health to do activities**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	88	135	103	38	21
Percent	22.9	35.1	26.8	9.9	5.3

### 3.8 Having credential services such as loan

Having credential and banking services also is one of favored life components. In recent years, debt instruments have been offered to villagers to provide their necessary requirements such as marriage expenditure and preparation of dower, health spending, fellowship, repair and provision of housing, and help to build houses. And also some facilities have been paid to villagers to help to increase of production and development of small production workshops of villagers with low profit. In this regard, 22.8 per cent of villagers have affirmed their accessibility to debt instruments and 75.4 per cent know their availability to credential services at low level or as impossible and believe that they have not availability to appropriate credits. This item is one of the cases in which dissatisfaction of villagers is clear. It is worthy to recall that the satisfied cases mostly are related to the loans which local or masque's interest-free loan funds provide and pay. Of course, the only village that has a (national) bank is Bazkiyagurab which consists of 1/3 of responders.

**Table 6- Degree of having credential services such as loan**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	34	54	102	100	95
Percent	8.8	14	26.5	26	24.7

### 3.9 Having mechanized agricultural instruments

Development of agriculture is a process varied factors such as environmental conditions and social, economic and cultural factors influence on it. Some part of this variability is achieved by utilizing technology in production of agricultural products which among them one can refer to mechanization (machine technology). Working in wet and small paddy fields causes these fields have complicated mechanization. These factors along with much professional difficulty of agronomy including rice which is common in the studied limit indicate that investigation of role of mechanization is important in development of cultivation of rice. Increase of performance of product in mechanized farms is affected by agricultural mechanization more than traditional farms. Decrease of wastes of product in mechanized farms partly is affected by mechanization which will cause to increase of performance of product. Existence of mechanized instruments can cause promotion of welfare level in the studied limit. 74.3 per cent of villagers said that there are mechanized instruments in their villages and 25.7 per cent of villagers have not mechanized instruments. Some owners of mechanized instruments mentioned buying combine harvester and tractor by using low-interest facilities from the 10<sup>th</sup> government (the previous government).

**Table 7- Amount of having mechanized agricultural instruments at village level**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	47	101	139	53	45
Percent	12.2	26	36.1	13.8	11.9

### 3.10 Satisfaction with quality of economic dimension

Professional satisfaction generally is a favored and positive feeling which a person has with his job. Generally, social factors, environment of job and amount of income influence on satisfaction of job. All hypotheses of satisfaction of job pay attention to provide personal, physical and mental needs and know important paying attention to demands and expectations of employed persons. At the present situation, there are many problems in our villages that are effective on economic dimension of life and causes low incomes in villages, existence of small lands especially in villages of Iran's North and lack of appropriate jobs for young people. Nevertheless, villagers are always noble and pleased people. According to results, 83.1 per cent of responders are satisfied with quality of economic dimension and only 16.9 Lahijan villagers usually earn money through cultivating rice and tea and sometimes services. Having adequate income which can meet their living spending is one of the most important variables that are important in quality of life. Unstructured import of foreign rice and tea makes substantial hurt on morale and income of villagers.

**Table 8- Amount of satisfaction with economic dimension**

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	disagree	Strongly disagree
number	69	76	175	38	27
Percent	17.9	19.7	45.5	9.9	7

### 3.11 Quality of employment and income

Employment and income are important issues in life of villagers and have the most effectiveness on migration of the rural youth. In this dimension, 7

items are used to investigate employment and income of villagers. In this case, the most effective item is saving which in villagers' viewpoint is most effective on quality of life and at the second level, it is using interest-free accounts that strongly affect on life and at the third level, it is satisfaction with income and future of job and feeling satisfaction with job are placed at lower levels.

**Table 9- Ranking mean of Friedman's Test (quality of life and income)**

Item	Mean	Ranking
I am satisfied with my income very much.	4.95	3
I am hopeful to my job future (professional promotion).	4.56	4
I have a good saving.	5.82	1
I am satisfied with the sort of job which I have.	4.72	5
I have good physical health to do activities.	2.84	7
I have credential services and loan from governmental or interest-free banks.	5.43	2
Village uses agricultural mechanized instruments (tractor, combine harvester).	4.02	6

**Table 10- Results of Friedman's Test (Quality of employment and income)**

N	385
Chi-square	450.686
df	7
Asymp.Sig.	.000
a.FriedmanTest	

### 3.12 Hypothesis: *There is a meaningful relationship between economic situation and quality of life of villages of Lahijan Town.*

At the present situation, there are many problems in our villages which are effective on economic dimension of life. These problems include existence of low income in villages, existence of small lands especially in villages of Northern Iran and lack of appropriate jobs for the youth. Nevertheless, 20 percent of people are satisfied with their employment and income.

Predisposing and causing factors of job satisfaction are various and can be classified into internal aspects including personality characteristics, emotional feelings and emotional modes, and external aspects including organizational, social and cultural conditions and characteristics. About satisfaction with income, 54.8 per cent of responders are satisfied with their incomes. About future of job, 60.3 per cent of responders are hopeful to their job future. About satisfaction with job, 63.9 per cent of people are satisfied with their sort of job.

Having credential and banking services is one of favored living components which in this relation 26.5 per cent of villagers know their availability to bank credits as average and 50.7 per cent declared they have no access to them.

As it is observed in the following table, there is a meaningful relationship between economic quality and quality of life based on Spearman's Test at 1 per cent level. Coefficient of this test is 0.599.

**Table 11- The relationship between economic quality and quality of life**

Correlation				
Quality of life	Economic quality			
.599**	1.000	Correlation Coefficient	Economic quality	Spearman's rho
.000	.	Sig. (2-tailed)		
385	385	N		
1.000	.599**	Correlation Coefficient	Quality of life	
.	.000	Sig. (2-tailed)		
385	385	N		
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 4. Conclusion

Subjective indicators mostly highlight attitudes and objective indicators mostly emphasize on facts. With this vision, the present study aims to measure quality of life in rural areas from viewpoint of sample society which 7 items were designed and tested in form of economic dimension. From obtained results, one can infer that in this relation Lahijan Town has a relatively good position. Analyzing perspectives of inhabitants of villages of the town through Spearman's Test show that there is a meaningful relationship between quality of employment and income. Results show that most people of the sample are dissatisfied due to lowness of income resulted from agricultural activities, lack of ability and availability to mechanized instruments and as a

result lowness of the income resulted from agricultural activities, lack of ability and availability to mechanized instruments and as a result lowness of efficiency of production at level unit, lack of appropriate use of credential services to do agricultural activities, lowness of professional variety in villages and lack of satisfaction from sort of job with which they were faced in a working year and finally to achieved low income and saving and are not satisfied with future and promotion of their jobs.

#### 4.1 Suggestions

- Because dominant economic role of the area is agriculture and in this regard it requires development of side services and development of agriculture, establishing repair shops of agricultural machineries, veterinary centers and banking services centers is essential in each of rural districts.
- Emphasizing on training villagers in the field of increase of professional skills in different sections especially agriculture through Ministry of Agriculture Jihad and Education Ministry;
- Performing more field studies to discover and knowing unknown potentials in agriculture sections and relationship of this section with industry and service sections in order to create permanent and stable jobs;
- Creating motive for progress and a bright future in villages: through job-creating and income-creating by making new opportunities via industries related to agriculture and tourism which can assure continuance of activity for reinvestment and have extra production.

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#### How to Cite this Article:

Mikal M., Ramezan E., Amar T., Bigdeli A., *Spatial Analysis of Quality of Life in Economic Dimension of Villages of Lahijan Town*, Uct Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research 4(4) (2016) 13–20.