

## Residential Specifications Required for Seniors Well-Being and Survival in Malaysia

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### Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the characteristics and specifications required in building homes and residences for the elderly. This study uses a survey method among the elderly to analyze the characteristics and specifications of the required housing. Quantitative data analysis from a survey questionnaire on 266 senior citizens was conducted which was analyzed descriptively and inferential. Descriptive analysis involved means and percentages for each residential feature and specification required by seniors. Inferential analysis was performed through non-parametric tests involving Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis tests to identify whether there are differences between several factors such as gender, age, location zone, marital status, past/current employment sector, health financing, monthly cost of living, residence, current and life financing against the residential specifications they need.

**Keywords:** Housing Specifications, Life Financing, Well-Being, Senior Citizens

### 1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that since 2019, the number of people aged 60 and over has approached the figure of one billion. This figure is expected to increase to 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050. This increment will occur rapidly in the next few decades particularly in developing countries.

As Malaysia does not yet have the conducive efficiency in facing the increase in senior citizens in the future, based on the United Nations (UN) projections, it is expected that Malaysia will become an old country by 2030 when its citizens aged 60 and above will represent 15 percent of the country's population. The National Senior Citizens Policy (DWEN) and the National Senior Citizens Action Plan (PTWEN) are discourses that illustrate the government's commitment to improve the well-being and survival of senior citizens amidst the development in Malaysia.

It is in line with the United Nations (UN) policy to ensure that life and well-being of all ages as enshrined in the third Sustainable Development Goal which stipulates human settlement as inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Inclusive and safe human settlement is on the government's agenda in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Social Welfare Department (JKM). The government has been considering of the best method to provide strong support to the elderly, especially those living alone in developed countries.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined the need for the placement of the elderly such as areas that are comfortable, quiet, clean and close to green parks that can give them peace of mind. Senior citizens should

be provided with special and user-friendly accommodation in public areas that are equipped with pedestrian facilities. The surrounding area also needs to provide easy access to important location for those who are less active in addition to the elderly-friendly building infrastructure particularly in the event of an emergency.

The quality of life of seniors is closely related to their personal characteristics, happiness and the aging process relative to the socioeconomic and cultural conditions in which aging occurs (Lee, W. K. M. dan Kwok, H.-K., 2005). WHO defines the concept of quality life as individuals' perceptions of their position in life in terms of the cultural context and value system in which they live and is closely related to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns (World Health Organization, 1998).

The quality of life is seen as a concept that is structured to form policies and actions to improve the standard of human life. Maintaining the quality of life for the elderly is the overall goal of policy makers in a country (Walker, A., Maltby T., 2012). Well-being and quality of life are actually very closely linked and have a major impact on national development (SitiNadira Ahmad Rozlan shah, RosmadiFauzi and Jamilah Mohamad, 2015). A prosperous life is closely related to a high quality of life because quality of life is a degree of well-being felt or enjoyed by an individual or a group of people (Ross, C. E., & Van Willigen, M., 1997).

## **2. Research Methodology**

A survey through a questionnaire was conducted on 266 senior citizens involving stratified sampling covering all zones in Malaysia such as north, south, central, east and East Borneo. This quantitative data analysis was performed descriptively and inferential. Descriptive analysis involved means and percentages for each residential feature and specification desired by seniors. Inferential analysis was performed through non-parametric tests involving Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis tests to identify whether there are differences between gender, age, location zone, marital status, past/current employment sector, health financing, monthly cost of living, current residence and financing, the lives of the elderly against the specifications, geographical location and environment of the community as well as the residential facilities they need.

Non-parametric tests were used due to abnormally distributed data in addition to independent variables involving nominal demographic data and categories such as gender, age, location zone, marital status, past/current employment sector, health financing, monthly cost of living, residence current and financing of life. The Mann-Whitney Test is required to analyze nominal data of no more than two categories as independent variables such as gender and marital status while the Kruskal Wallis Test is used to test nominal data of more than two categories such as age, location zone, marital status, past/current employment sector, health financing, monthly cost of living, current residence and life financing.

There are 9 hypotheses involved in this study namely;

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no difference between male and female senior citizens on the characteristics and specifications of the required residence.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no difference between the various age groups of senior citizens on the characteristics and specifications of the required housing.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no difference between the various zones of senior citizen location on the required residential features and specifications.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no difference between the marital status of the elderly on the characteristics and specifications of the residence required.

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no difference between the past/current employment sectors of the elderly on the characteristics and specifications of the required housing.

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no difference between the health financing of the elderly on the features and specifications of the required housing.

H<sub>07</sub>: There is no difference between the monthly cost of living of senior citizens on the characteristics and specifications of the required housing.

H<sub>08</sub>: There is no difference between the current residence of the elderly on the characteristics and specifications of the residence required.

H<sub>09</sub>: There is no difference between financing the lives of the elderly on the features and specifications of the required housing.

### 3. Gender Factors On The Housing Specifications Of Senior Citizens

Since the value of  $p = 0.679 > 0.05$  for Residential Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.1), then H<sub>01</sub> failed to be rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female seniors on the required residential specifications.

**Table 1.1:** Results of Mann-Whitney of Elderly Gender Test on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Location and Facilities of Elderly Residential Facilities

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
B	
Mann-Whitney U	8569.000
Wilcoxon W	16697.000
Z	-0.414
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.679

a. Grouping Variable: Elderly Gender

The results of this study are in line with the findings of NurSyakiranAkmal Ismail and others (2017) that there is no difference in old age life choices between men and women (NurSyakiranAkmal Ismail, Norehan Abdullah, Kalthum Hassan, ShamzaeffaSamsudin, UmmuAtoyah Ahmad Zamuan, RohanaYusofdanNurzalyna Mohamed Zaki, 2017)

### Age Factors on Housing Characteristics and Specifications and Geographical Position and Community Environment.

Since the  $p$  value =  $0.095 > 0.05$  for Residential Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.2), then H<sub>02</sub> failed to be rejected. So there is no difference between the various ages of seniors on the characteristics and specifications of the required residence.

**Table 1.2:** Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of Various Age Levels of Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Location and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	4.706
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.095

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Age Levels of Senior Citizens

According to Norlaila et al (2009), gender-based financial well-being depends on savings before reaching the age of 60 (Norlaila Abu Bakar, Nor Aini Idris dan Doris PadminiSelavaratham, 2009). This is because, senior citizens whether retiring from government or private institutions will each earn a living after retirement using savings or retirement accumulated before the age of 60 years. These savings will also limit the way of life of the elderly after retirement due to having to cover the costs of living and other costs, especially involving medicines and health care.

### Senior Residential Zone Factors on Specifications, Geographical Location and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities

Since the value of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  for Residential Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.3), then  $H_{03}$  is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the residential zones of the elderly against the residential specifications.

**Table 1.3:** Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of Senior Residential Zone on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Position and Facilities of Elderly Residential Facilities

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	37.421
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: Senior Residential Zone	

This is observed due to the differences in culture and way of life of the community in each state in Malaysia. The selection and needs of the residents in each state are also different as well as the selection of the characteristics of the specifications, geographical location and facilities of senior citizens' residential facilities in each state.

### Factors of Marital Status of Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics

#### Geographical Location and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities

Since the value of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  for Housing Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.4), then  $H_{04}$  is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the marital status of seniors against residential specifications.

**Table 1.4:** Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of Marital Status of Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Position and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities.

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	24.861
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: Marital Status of Senior Citizens	

In the United States, Velkoff (2001) found that factors influencing future planning were marital status, finances, health, family size and structure, services and facilities by government as well as local culture (Velkoff VA, 2001). According to Lopes (2005) a study conducted in Portugal has found that 75% of seniors living alone are female seniors. This is due to the higher life expectancy of women and being more prone to partners' death because it is common for women to marry older partners (Lopes A, 2017).

**Past/Current Employment Sector Factors of Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics and Geographical Position of Senior Citizens' Residence**

Since the value of  $p = 0.292 > 0.05$  for Housing Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.5), then  $H_{05}$  failed to be rejected. Therefore, there is no difference between the various past/current employment sectors of the elderly on the characteristics and specifications of the residence.

**Table 1.5:** Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of Past/Current Employment Sector of Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Location and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities.

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	6.154
df	5
Asymp. Sig.	0.292

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Past/Current Employment Sector (whichever is relevant )

**Elderly Health Financing Factors on Specification Characteristics and Geographical Position of Elderly Residence**

Since the value of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  for Residential Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.6), then  $H_{06}$  is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the health financing of the elderly against the characteristics of the required residential specifications.

**Table 1.6:** Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of Elderly Health Financing on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Location and Facilities of Elderly Residential Facilities

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	40.934
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Health Financing

This is due to senior citizens who are funded by heirs, guardians, children or under assistant relatively possess limited options on the specifications and geographical position of the elderly residence since they are more likely to live in a provided house compared to those who finance their own health with the ability to manage the life planning themselves according to their own comfort and existing income taking into account post-treatment savings.

**Monthly Cost of Living Factors for Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics and Geographical Position of Senior Citizens' Homes**

Since the value of  $p = 0.433 > 0.05$  for Residential Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.7), then  $H_{07}$  failed to be rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the cost of living of the elderly against the required residential specifications.

**Table 1.7:** Kruskal Wallis Test Results on Monthly Cost of Living for Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Location and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	3.804
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.433

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Monthly Costs of Living

This is because, senior citizens prefer to carry out their own activities such as gardening, walking, playing with grandchildren as their ability to move becoming gradually limited compared to their life before reaching the post-employment age.

**Current Residential Factors of Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Location and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities**

Since the value of  $p = 0.00 < 0.05$  for Residential Characteristics and Specifications (Table 1.8), then  $H_{08}$  is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the current residence of the elderly on the characteristics of the required specifications.

**Table 1.8:** Results of the Kruskal Wallis Test of Current Residence Senior Citizens on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Position and Facilities of Senior Residential Facilities.

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	33.557
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Current Residence

According to Glaser (1997), seniors are not only make life planning choices based on themselves, but household structure also has a significant relationship to their old age life. Children who live with parents are able to provide assistance in terms of daily activities and finances compared to children who live far away (Glaser K, 1997). This is because senior citizens are accustomed to the routine before reaching the seniority with the current residential environment that makes them comfortable to maintain them in making choices when they reach the age of senior citizens.

**Factors in Life Financing of the Elderly on the Specifications, Geographical Location and Facilities of the Residential Facilities for the Elderly**

Since the value of  $p = 0.00 < 0.05$  for the Residential Specification Characteristics (Table 1.9), then  $H_{09}$ , is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the health financing of the elderly against the characteristics of the required residential specifications.

**Table 1.9:** Results of the Kruskal Wallis Test of Senior Citizens Life Financing on Specification Characteristics, Geographical Position and Facilities of Senior Citizens Residential Facilities.

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
B	
Kruskal-Wallis H	37.703
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: Life Financing	

This is the same as in Table 1.6. Senior citizens who are funded by children, heirs, guardians or receive assistance are relatively having limited options on the characteristics of housing specifications compared to those with the ability to support themselves or through retirement savings.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this analysis found that there was no difference for the factors of gender, age, past/current employment sector and the monthly cost of living of the elderly on the residential facilities of the elderly. However, there are differences for the factors of residential zone, marital status, current residence and financial status of the elderly to the senior citizens' residential facilities.

Currently, these factors need to be taken into account by the housing contractors before making a housing plan in Malaysia. In fact, this would be a great help the community at large and not only the senior citizens in facing the Old Country status in the near future. In addition, these factors not only fulfill the rights of the senior citizens to live their lives in peace but also the whole Malaysians at large since senior citizens are part of the population in Malaysia and everyone is gradually becoming senior citizens in the future.

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