

## Comparison between Elderly Attenders and Non-Attenders of *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas* in Sarawak

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### ABSTRACT

Malaysia is not left behind as it is going towards becoming an aging nation. Currently, there are 10.7% of the population who are above 60 years old which is equivalent to 3.5 million of elderly people and this is expected to rise in the near future. The objective of this research is to compare the quality of life, activities of daily living, cognitive function and depression between elderly attenders and non-attenders of *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas* (PAWE). In this cross-sectional study, a total of 735 elderly participated where 101 elderly who attended PAWE and the remaining 634 elderly did not attend PAWE. Older People's Quality of Life (OPQOL), Prospective Retrospective Memory Questionnaire (PRMQ), Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), Katz Activities of Daily Living and Lawton Instrumental Activities of Daily Living were used as study instruments. The statistical analysis involved were Pearson's correlation, independent t-test, Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and multiple group analysis. Household income and activities of daily living have shown positive correlation with quality of life. Cognitive function and depression correlated negatively with quality of life. Based on PLS-SEM, there was better quality of life, activities of daily living, cognitive function, and lesser depressive symptoms among elderly PAWE attenders. The findings obtained from this study will be able to support the planning and future programs of expanding senior activity centres such as PAWE as it promotes healthy ageing among elderly people.

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**Contribution/Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature on elderly health particularly about elderly population in Sarawak and provides evidence that supports the importance of senior citizen's activity centre on the well-being of elderly people.

## 1. Introduction

The world's population is going towards an aging population ([World Health Organization, 2017](#)). This is evident by the doubling of aging population from 12% to 20% within the span of 5 years ([World Health Organization, 2018](#)). The global situation of becoming an aging nation is also seen in the demographic picture of Malaysia where the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) have estimated that by the year 2030, 15% of the total population constitute older generation who are above 60 years old. Currently, there has been an increased in the ageing population in Malaysia from 2.2 million in 2010 to 3.5 million elderly people above 60 years old and this is equivalent to 10.7% of the population ([Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020](#)). An aging population is a consequent of the increased in life expectancy and with increased life expectancy comes multiple issues related to ageing. The problems that arise due to ageing are multi-faceted such as cognitive function, mental health, physical function and health problems such as acute and chronic diseases ([Mafauzy, 2000](#)). Efforts have been taken by the government of Malaysia to reduce the problems related to ageing such as developing senior citizen's activity centre or *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas*, PAWE ([Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita Keluarga dan Masyarakat, 2011](#)). The rationale of this study is that we will be able to identify the possible effects that *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas* (PAWE) has on the quality of life, activities of daily living, cognitive function, and depressive symptoms among elderly people in Sarawak. This study will be valuable to the well-being of elderly population in the state because the findings from this study can be applied to support the establishment of more senior citizen activity centre in Sarawak.

### 1.1. Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to compare the quality of life, activities of daily living, depression and cognitive function between elderly attenders and non-attenders of *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas* (PAWE) and to determine if activities of daily living, depression and cognitive function predict the quality of life among elderly people in Sarawak.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Global situation of elderly population

Aware of the consequences that would occur among the growing elderly population and the challenges that they currently face in order to have a healthy ageing process, the WHO as an international health organization which represents many countries have identified measures that could be done within these countries ([World Health Organization, 2015](#)). For instance, strong and united leadership is needed within the institution in order to implement policies that is age-friendly and could benefit the elderly population. A systematic guidance and tools which are evidence-based need to be applied by these leaders to ensure that the policies are effective. Furthermore, in order to ensure that efforts are done in sync at different level of organization in a country, being well-informed of the existing regional and international frameworks on healthy ageing will be an added advantage ([World Health Organization, 2015](#)). WHO has been known to collaborate with several parties to ensure that policies on ageing health is being developed appropriately to benefit the elderly population. For instance, these collaborations are used to provide technical support and guidance for developing evidence-based policies and facilitate in building on the understanding among various stakeholders on the concept of healthy ageing at multiple levels in the country. Other than collaboration with other parties, an