

## THE QUALITY WORLD OF INSTITUTIONALIZED ELDERLIES

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### ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored the Quality World of the elderlies living inside an institution called institutionalized elderlies. In Choice Theory, Quality World is part of the Perceived World and it is described as "personal picture album" of all the people, things, ideas, and ideals that individuals have discovered increase the quality of their lives, to fulfill a person's needs. Basic Human Needs are the general motivation for all behavior of human, the Quality World is the specific motivation. The Basic Human Needs describe what people need, the Quality World pictures detail how people meet those needs. Seven institutionalized elderlies were purposively recruited. Interview proceedings and interpretation of drawings were tape-recorded and were later on transcribed. Transcribed data was categorized and thematised into four thematic levels of the institutionalized elderlies Quality World. Findings of this study will be helpful in giving valuable inputs in the psychological utility of elderly's needs and wants using the lens of Choice Theory. Also, for the care providers and health professionals in the institution in providing a better assistance for the institutionalized elderlies.

**Keywords:** Phenomenological, Quality World, Institutionalized Elderlies, Perceived World, Human Needs

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, the population of older persons are increasing rapidly. According to the World Health Organization, the world will have about 435 million additional elderly persons in next 7 years to reach 1.2 billion by 2025. Elderly population is increasing in most developed countries, part of this population is likely to live in nursing homes (Kimondo, 2012). Such a steep trend towards ageing demands a growing need for expert care in nursing homes (Oosterveld-Vlug et al., 2014). Nursing home care offers a provision for aging individuals when quality of care is not met at home due to lack of support or high care needs beyond what the individual or family can offer (Pohlman, T., 2014). The need for care outside the home is due to the installation of chronic diseases and their complications and the absence of family members to provide the continuous support that elderly dependents need (Lini, Portella, & Doring, 2016).

In the Philippines, it is traditional for the family through generations to care for their aging relatives at their own home as Filipinos practice familism; the concern on the well-being of the relatives (de Guzman et al., 2012). In Filipino culture, it is perceived as a stigma to take services from the community, so many families either decline them or use them in secret. Hence, according to Villaverde (2017), nursing home in the Philippines (that are run by government or NGOs) care for those elderly people who are usually abandoned by their families. The idea of expert care in nursing homes becomes a welcome alternative for families who can afford to pay for the cost of professional geriatric care and for people who have fewer time and means to care for their aged parents or grandparents but have the financial capability to do so (Villaverde, 2017). Institutionalized elderlies are away from home which keeps them away from their usual environment and family. They get their social support from their family that contributes to the satisfaction of their needs (de Guzman, Jurado, & Juson, 2015). Since they are away from their family, they may be affected on satisfying their needs. The tangible motivation for all behaviors is to feel as good as possible as often as possible (Glasser, 1998). According to Glasser (2013), people are social beings who need each other and struggle together to survive. The need for love and belonging is determined in every individual's genes and the ideal way to satisfy their basic needs trying to get close and stay close to each other. However, Choice Theory imparts that people do not satisfy their needs directly. Moreover, Glasser (1998) said people satisfy their needs through their own Quality World.

Quality World is an important part of the Perceived World. Glasser (1998) describes the Quality World as a "personal picture album" of all the people, things, ideas, and ideals that we have discovered increase the quality of their lives, to fulfill a person's needs. It is based on people's wants and needs, but unlike the needs which are general, it is very specific. The pictures in a person's Quality World represents the detailed life he wants to live. It is the world that individuals want right now—it could even be called ideal world, but it is more than ideal; it is the world he believes he must have, or his needs will not be satisfied (Glasser, 2013). While the Basic Human Needs are the general motivation for all behavior of human, the Quality World is the specific motivation. The Basic Human Needs describe what we need, the Quality World pictures detail how we meet those needs. The Basic Human Needs are universal; our Quality Worlds are unique. People store in their quality worlds

the pictures of anything in the real world that they believe will satisfy one or more of the basic needs. To satisfy them, even before birth, people begin to create the Quality World from their perceptions and ideas and begin to fill it with detailed pictures of what they want. Their whole lives will be spent expanding the collection of pictures in their Quality World. According to Glasser (2013), as people grow older and less effective, they tend to include fewer and fewer pictures into their own Quality Worlds. Elderlies make up their mind whether a picture satisfies them. They may store it in their Quality World momentarily, but they may remove it anytime when they realize that it is something not worth keeping anymore. When a picture that has been in their Quality World for so long is no longer as satisfying as they would like it to be, they will often look for a new, more satisfying picture to change it and the only way they can take pictures out of their Quality World is to substitute them with others that fulfill the same basic needs reasonably well.

The present study captures and explores the Quality World of institutionalized elderlies. Particularly, the study would want to generate a picture that will uncover what is most important to the institutionalized elderlies, hence their Quality World. The paper will give valuable inputs in the psychological utility of elderly's needs and wants using the lens of Choice Theory wherein an artistic or drawing component is utilized and will help people feel less threatened and more able to access and assess actions and emotions (Coulter, 2013). Moreover, this study is expected to raise awareness among health professionals to provide a better assistance inside the institution and may help the elderlies prepare for deinstitutionalization. Health care professionals should be truly committed to a provision of care that diminishes the influence of institutionalization on the elderly's mental health and should also contribute to reduce the need for institutionalization by providing precautionary and community care aimed at endorsing the necessary self-sufficiency and independence for elders to accomplish self-care at home, close to their relatives, in their family environment. According to Republic Act 11036 also known as "The Mental Health Act", the State should promote the well-being of Filipinos by valuing, promoting and, protecting mental health. Mental health conditions should be treated and prevented properly; culturally-appropriate, quality, and affordable mental health care is made accessible in the State thus, Filipino elderlies has the basic right to access mental health services if there's a condition to treat or prevent.

### METHOD

#### Research Design

A phenomenological design was utilized in this qualitative study which intends to transform data gathered from the institutionalized elderlies who live the experience. It brought the institutionalized elderlies' experiences into words in the data that were gathered, and then attempt to understand deeply those statements, and to characterize themes and patterns (San Jari et al., 2014). Phenomenological design demonstrates a perspective of validation hermeneutics, conducting with a theory-oriented purpose (Haverkamp & Young, 2011). The focus on accurate understanding that characterizes the validation perspective is further illustrated in the study's goal of describing how the institutionalized elderlies experience this phenomenon (as different from

merging researcher and participant understandings) and in purposefully balancing subjectivity and objectivity in the study.

#### *Parameter of Design*

To determine the Quality World of the Institutionalized Elderlies, the following questions which are validated by professionals were asked:

1. Ano ang trabaho para sa'yo?
2. Para sa'yo, ano ang kahulugan ng pagiging kaibigan?
3. Para sa'yo, paano nagiging tahanan ang isang bahay?
4. Kung ikaw ay magiging tao na iyong minimithi, ano ano ang ugali o pagkatao ang gusto mong magkaroon?
5. Ano ang mga bagay o pangyayari na iyong nakamit na ikinatuwa mo?
6. Ano ang tagumpay para sa'yo?
7. Ano ang kahulugan ng buhay para sa iyo?
8. Anu-ano o sinu-sino ang/mga pinaka importanteng bagay, pangyayari o tao sa buhay mo?

#### *Participants*

Participants were purposively selected with the inclusion criteria, ages 60 and above, a cut-off value of 60 is more appropriate in Philippines given the generally lower life expectancy compared to other developed countries (Pettersson & Schmöcker, 2010). Participants were mentally competent with mild up to intact intellectual capacity, based on the Short Portable Mental Status Questionnaire (SPSMQ) (See Appendix I). To guarantee that the participants were well-adjusted with their environment, they must have been settled in the institution for at least six months since elderlies have had a chance to adjust in the new environment for at least six months (de Guzman et al., 2012). 7 Filipino institutionalized elderlies who fits the criteria was interviewed since Creswell (2007) suggested that it is needed to interview more than 5 individuals to fully develop the possibilities of experiences.

#### *Instruments*

A three-part research instrument was utilized in this qualitative study to gather data and information about the Quality World of the elderlies. Data collection tools included a Robotfoto, drawing and semi-structured interview.

#### *Robotfoto*

Robotfoto (See Appendix II), a Dutch term which pertains to the preliminary sketch of participants. This sketch is composed of spaces provided to establish reference point of the elderlies under study (de Guzman, 2009). These include the elderly's age, civil status, gender, number of years inside the institution and few more that will help the elderlies establish reference point.

#### *Drawing*

The second part of the study is the use of drawing. The researchers asked the institutionalized elderlies to draw about what's the first thing that comes to their mind when they hear the word "Important". According to Hopperstad (2010), a drawing affords experiences to be recorded and is more suited to 'showing' what the world consists of rather than 'telling' about movements and actions (Kress, 2003) and served as an expressive technique. The drawing was validated by the participants through their own elaboration and after they draw, and if there was a need to clarify, questions followed.

#### *Interview*

The last part of the data collection was conducted with a semi-structured interview, planned around the two areas of Quality World with open-ended questions (See Appendix III) that left room for open responses. In general, the interviews focused on the participants' perception of their real world and ideal world.

#### *Data Gathering*

##### *Pre-Data gathering*

Permission was sought from different private and NGO institutions in Luzon for the conduct of the study through sending letter of request to allow its patients to participate in the study (See Appendix IV). Along with the permission of the institution, the staff identified elderlies who fit the criteria and who, during the time of the data gathering, was available for the interview. Elderlies who are chosen by the staff to participate but does not fit the given criteria was not interviewed. Informed consent was given to each of the interviewees to indicate their willingness to participate in the study (See Appendix V).

#### *During Data gathering*

The first part of the data gathering was Robotfoto and it was given to each of the participant which covers their sociodemographic and questions to establish the baseline characteristics of the elderly inside the institution. The second part was making a drawing component. The participants were asked to draw their picture of their Quality World. After the drawing, they were asked to explain and elaborate what's in the drawing and if there was a need for clarifications, follow-up questions were raised to elicit more information. The third part was the interview. Interview questions were asked to the participants. Along with the key questions, follow-up questions were raised for clarifications in order to understand subjects' responses. Each interview lasted for about 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews were audio taped since the participants gave their permission.

#### *Post-Data gathering*

Clarifications were upraised in order to confirm the information that the participant told the researchers. They were provided with a contact information for any follow up concerns and clarifications. After the study, all data and information gathered from the institutionalized elderlies will be disintegrated. Softcopies of the data and information gathered will be saved in a flash drive while hardcopies will be shredded. Rest assured that no data and information will be posted on social media.

#### *Mode of Analysis*

Data and the information gathered was analyzed through thematic analysis; it is a widely used qualitative analytic method within psychology and yet, it is poorly defined and rarely recognize (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The recorded interview was transcribed being mindful of remuneration and confidentiality (Estable, MacLean & Meyer, 2004) and assembled together with the drawing components made by the participants for clustering into several themes. With this background, the researchers were able to discern patterns of how the respondents viewed their Quality World (de Guzman et al., 2007) This study utilized the six phases of analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) and made use of Qualyzer which is a software that helps qualitative data to transform into a quantifiable data that can be used for a comparative assessment. The different phases are indicated below:

##### *Phase 1: Familiarizing with the data gathered from the institutionalized elderlies*

During this phase, the researchers took notes and marked ideas that helps them in coding the data. Since the researchers worked with a verbal data which was audio recorded, data was transcribed into written form in order to conduct a thematic analysis. It is important that the transcript retains the information needed from the verbal account, and in a way, which is "true" to its original nature can change the meaning of data.

##### *Phase 2: Generating ideal codes*

This phase involves the production of initial codes using Qualyzer Software from the data gathered of the institutionalized elderlies. Codes classified a feature of the data that appears interesting to the researchers, and refers to the most basic element, or fragment of the raw data that were assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon which is being institutionalized.

##### *Phase 3: Searching for themes from the data gathered from the institutionalized elderlies*

In this phase, analysis was re-focused at the broader level of themes rather than codes. Researchers sorted the different codes into potential themes. Basically, the researchers started to analyze codes, and consider how different codes combine to form an emerging theme

##### *Phase 4: Reviewing themes*

During this phase, it was evident that some candidate themes doesn't fit the study, while others might collapse into each other. Other themes might need to be broken down into separate themes.

##### *Phase 5: Defining and naming themes*

At this point, researchers refined and defined themes that will be presented for the analysis, identified the "core" of what each theme is about and determined what aspect of the data gathered each theme captures. Rest assured that the researchers will go back to the institution before naming and defining them to confirm and validate the themes to the institutionalized elderlies since data gathered are from them.

### Phase 6: Producing the report

The task of the write-up of a thematic analysis, is to tell the complicated story of the data from the institutionalized elderlies in a way which convinces the readers of the difference and of the analysis. It is important that the analysis provides a short, clear, and interesting rationalization of the story – within and across themes that were validated by professionals.

### Ethical Considerations

The authors asked permission for the research from several institutions and secured appropriate permits from the Colegio signed by the authorities were given. Participants' right of autonomy assures independent decision making based on thorough information about a research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Concerning this thesis, all the participants received informed consent with description of research purpose, methods, discussion topics and way of results presentation before the interviews. The researchers went through main points of the informed consents once more before the interviewees signed the form. Researchers assured that informed consent was treated as a process rather than one-time instrument. Institutionalized elderlies were debriefed after the data gathering, they were mindful that interview may take on the responsibility of a therapeutic encounter and if it will lead to a possible confusion with the therapeutic encounter, researchers assured that the information and proper support from a psychologist for the elderlies were available when necessary and all expenses will be paid by the researchers. Since the nature of qualitative data is full of indications to the identity of the participants, proper care is required to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the data and information gathered from the elderlies are kept.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After careful analysis of the elderlies' transcribed interview, themes emerged by which institutionalized elderlies described what is most important to them, hence their Quality World. However, before Quality World comes their Perceived World. Each person's perceived world is his own reality. Since people come to every circumstance with different knowledge and experience, and therefore different values, their perceptions of the real world are different. Thus, they live their lives in their perceived worlds. Choice theory explains that the reason people perceive much of reality so differently from others has to do with another important world, unique to each of them, called the Quality World. Choice Theory rests on the belief that all human behavior is chosen, and that people choose their behaviors to satisfy five basic needs that are common to all humanity. Most individuals know nothing about their basic needs. What they know is how they feel, and they always want to feel as good as they could.

### Belonging

The institutionalized elderlies gave emphasis on creating significant relationships as they struggle with the change of their living arrangement away from their family. One of the participants said that, "Friend is always a friend in need and a friend indeed. You are my friend but are you a friend indeed? Kailangan tumutulong talaga, kailangan nakikita yung essence of help." (E, 72) and "Gusto ko talaga yung may magmamahal sa akin na tunay na pagmamahal." (B, 77). Despite the distance, the importance they give to their family is still evident "Courtesy among brothers and sisters, even in your parents extend your courtesy to them. There should be a panel of courtesy na you have to respect not because they're your parents but you believe in their advocacies since bata ka." (E, 72). It is very significant for the elderlies that they have someone inside the institution whom they get comfort and support to, considering that according to Choice Theory, satisfying the need for love and belonging is the key to satisfying the other four needs. Belongingness is a multifaceted phenomenon that entails various aspects (de Guzman, 2007) and the idea of belonging is fundamental in understanding on how people give importance to their lives. Living inside an institution is an adjustment that elderlies experienced. Being away from home and their usual environment, means that they are away from their source of strength that somehow leads to sadness. However, this feeling is outweighed by their new experience. The elderlies try to fill the absence of their family with their newly found family inside the institution. They long for people inside the institution to be their new family whom they get support to. Belonging is a psychological need to love and care for other individuals and to believe that institutionalized elderlies are loved and cared for in family relationships and friendships that provide them with a sense of belonging. To belong, they must connect with people by being involved, caring and sharing themselves.

### Surviving

In the present study, one of the emerging themes is Surviving. Elderlies are incapable of being an employee since they are institutionalized but they still see work as something that will help them survive, "Para mabuhay ka ng maigi, saka magkaroon ng sariling pagkain, lahat ng bagay na gusto nyo magkakaroon ka, pero pag walang kang trabaho, wala, patay ang buhay mo." (D, 83) and since they are institutionalized, physical needs is provided by the institution. Institutionalized elderlies' take on survival by generating other people and making sure that their legacy will still live. One participant said that "Kailangan masaya kayo para humaba buhay niyo." (C, 90). This participant is the one who is in-charge of the visitors and interviewers in entertaining them for her, surviving can be achieved when an individual is happy. According to Choice Theory, individuals are genetically set to struggle to survive. To survive, it requires the desire to work hard, carry on, do whatever it takes to ensure survival, and go beyond survival to security. Survival includes individual's physical needs for food, water, air, safety, shelter, warmth, and health. Survival also extends to needing security and having sufficient income to pay for basic needs.

### Potentiality

Based on the data gathered from the institutionalized elderlies, this theme emerged. Interview with the elderlies demonstrates that they value their sense of self-worth. One of the elderlies said that "when the management respect your achievement in terms of promotion. You have to be promoted because you deserve it. It's not a gift, it is punishment because promotion sometimes you fail it kasi mahirap maging promoted talaga." (E, 72) and "Kailangan may victories ka in all cases of life" (F, 68). The need to be capable and to be able is Power in Choice Theory. It is an inner sense of achievement, accomplishment, pride, importance, and self-esteem and an outer sense of being heard, respected, feeling competent and attaining recognition. Having a sense of achievement and seeing it as a success helps them with their self-esteem as evident in their answers being institutionalized would not stop the elderlies from giving importance on having victories in life.

### Ability

The last theme that emerged is Ability. During the interview, one of the elderlies mentioned that "Every time there's always death. The end of life." (E, 72). But even though they accept their mortality, they don't see it as something negative. They view it with hope as one of the elderlies said "Siguro sa ngayon, andon ako sa twilight zone ika nga nila. Well, 69 years, I still have a good number of years" (F, 68). Choosing and accepting one's fate isn't something that is easy, but the institutionalized elderlies learned to accept it reality and faced the aftermath of their choices. As the elderlies gradually see reality unfold before them, they also tend to see the fact that death is inevitable for everyone. Freedom comes from the sense that each of us is a choosing individual. Being able to choose and create the direction and meaning of our lives, we experience freedom in the sense of being able to learn, grow, and look forward to life.

People attempt to meet psychological needs through the most important pictures they have in their minds, which Glasser refers to as "Quality World" (Henderson, Robey, Dunham et al., 2013). This Quality World is composed of the most important people, belief, experience, things, events, and possessions. As stated by Glasser (2013), people have their own Quality World that is unique to them. The study showed that despite the differences of institutionalized elderlies, similar ways on how to fulfill their needs were revealed. In fulfilling psychological needs, people attempt to do it through the most important pictures they have in their minds. Institutionalized Elderlies act the way they do because they are continually trying to satisfy their basic human needs. The five basic needs built into people's genetic structure have been identified as survival, belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1998). Understanding and applying the five basic needs as a way to improve quality of life has been studied in recent years (Frey & Wilhite, 2005).

Based from the institutionalized elderlies' interview, four human needs were shown as their general motivation which are Belonging, Survival, Power, and Freedom. However, the need for Fun did not appear on the result. According to Frey and Wilhite (2005), fun is the psychological need for enjoyment—the desire to enjoy a job, to have a sense of humor, to engage in a hobby, to have interests, and to feel excitement about a work project or leisure time activity. Fun may not be included in their general motivation because being institutionalized means that their resources are limited. Through the four themes that emerged, care providers are invited to make activities focused on

enjoyment, pleasure, relaxation, laughter, and learning at the start of admission, proper orientation to the institutionalized setting and socialization activities. Those activities may be the key in creating a positive and supportive environment which may help the institutionalized elderlies with their need of fun.

This study was undertaken to provide a comprehensive picture of the institutionalized elderlies' Quality World and the institution would have a brief view on the needs of the elderlies, figure out which are met, and which aren't, and help them fulfill the needs of the elderlies that may result in acceptance and contentment of the elderlies' life in the institution. The study would also provide help not just to the families of institutionalized elderlies, but also to the families who, despite of giving importance to familism, consider placing elderlies inside the institution, knowing that it'll benefit the elderlies more. Based on the gathered information and experiences from conducting this study, due to the scarcity of the studies about elderlies and Quality World, researchers recommend to the future researchers to consider exploring the Quality World of Filipino elderlies who aren't living inside an institution and compare and contrast with the differences and similarities to this present study.

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