

A Study on Quality of Life in Male to Female Transgender

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine Transgenders' quality of life. Samples were 120 Transgenders in Chonburi province, Thailand, derived from accidental sampling. The research instrument was WHOQOL - BREF - THAI, which was a measuring tool of quality of life developed from the concept of 'quality of life' with Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability 0.8406, and the validity of 0.6515 when compared to WHOQOL - 100 (Thai edition) which was formally recognized by WHO.

The results were:

1. Overall, Transgenders in Chonburi province as samples reflected a middle quality of life. And when considering each aspect, it was found that most aspects had a middle quality of life except for environmental aspect with a good quality of life. It corresponded to the results of the classification of Transgenders by gender (transgendered or not transgendered) and marital status (single or in relationship) which had a good quality of life in environmental aspect.
2. When considering the point average of Transgenders 's quality of life classified by occupation, the result said that office workers had better quality of life than others with the middle quality of life.
3. When considering the point average of Transgenders 's quality of life in Chonburi province classified by life span, the overall revealed that every life span had a middle quality of life. And when looking at particular aspect, it is said that the life span of 36 - 40 had a good quality of life in most aspects except for social relationship with a middle quality of life.

Keywords: Transgender , Quality of life

Introduction

In the past, the records of western travelers, missionaries or even scientists often mentioned behavior across gender and homosexuality as “dirty”, “abnormal”, and “unacceptable”. The only acceptable behavior is “Female” and “Male”. However, these studies have had a major shift in the 20th century.

Anthropologists have been interested in studying issues of homosexuality as follows: Transgenders are women born in men’s bodies, however in their minds they know are women and would play and act like women since they are young.

The norm of the society such as men must wear pants and be strong, but when the body and mind are not in unison, this creates conflicts. Therefore, plastic surgery is the only hope to get transgenders out of the conflicts within their minds and society.

Although Thailand is known as a haven for people with a variety of sexual norms, Thai transgenders have been a chronic problem in Thai society. They believe that they must transform themselves to be women as much as they can. They are led to believe that a woman will get more rights and opportunities in Thai society and will not be looked down on as a clown.

As mentioned, it can be seen that the concept of sex education has changed. Sex change operations for women and men are acceptable. However, there is no study in terms of quality of life and their social status after the sex change.

Researchers are interested in studying the quality of life of transgenders. This study will be a practical guide for teachers, counselors, psychologists as well as individuals who wish to help improve the life of transgenders in the future.

Research objective: To study the quality of life of transgenders.

Expectation: Knowing of the quality of life of transgenders.

Hypothesis: How are the factors in physical, psychological, social relationships, environmental related to the life of a transgender?

Area of Research:

1. Population comprised of transgender in Chonburi province.

The population in the study is a random sampling of 120 people.

The variables studied:

1. Variable criteria includes the physical, psychological, social and environmental relationships

2. Variable predictive factors are age, gender, occupation and status.

Theory in research

Having a high quality of life is defined as having a good life, happiness and satisfaction in physical, mental, social, and emotional aspects. There are 4 categories for values and life goals of the individuals.

1. Physical domain is the recognition of a person's physical condition which affects their daily lives, such as being in a good health, being well, no pain or even being able to deal with pain.

2. Psychological domain is perceived as self- image, self-esteem, self-confidence, concentration, memory and decision-making.

3. Social relationship is perceptions of their relationships with others; both getting help from others and assisting others in society which including their intimate relationship.

4. Environment is the awareness how surroundings affects their lives such as they can live freely, safely and stably.

Instrument used in research

The World Health Organization Quality of Life in Thai edition (WHOQOL - BREF - THAI) which is a measurement of the quality of life. It has been developed from the concept of quality of life by evaluating the mental habits (Subjective) which is embedded in culture, society and environment.

The World Health Organization Quality of Life in Thai edition has been developed from the World Health Organization Quality of Life of 100 items by selecting only 1 question each from 24 categories includes 2 questions from the section on quality of life and general health overall. Besides, the researcher has revised and updated the WHOQOL-BREF and tested it to meet the standard.

Data collection

1. The focus group was questioned by the researcher.
2. Screening all questions and answers which helped with analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

Quality of life scores ranging between 26-130 points.

When they combined scores of all focus groups, the score can be compared with the level of quality of life as follow:

26-60 points represents poor quality of life.

61-95 Points represents moderate quality of life.

96-130 points represents good quality of life.

The levels of quality of life are separated into different categories as below.

Categories	poor	Moderate	Good (Quality of life)
1. Physical	7 - 16	17 - 26	27 - 35
2. Psychological	6 - 14	15 - 22	23 - 30
3. Social relationship	3-7	8-11	12-15
4. Environmental	8 - 18	19 - 29	30 - 40
The average quality of life is	26 - 60	61 - 95	96 - 130

Conclusions

Basic Data Analysis

Table 1 General data analysis.

Information	Amount(persons)	Percentage
Sex		
- No sex reassignment surgery yet	104	86.7
- Had sex reassignment surgery	16	13.3
Total	120	100
Occupation		
- Self-employed	16	13.3

- Labor	26	21.7
- Student	17	14.2
- Hospitality	15	12.5

Table 1 General data analysis.(continue)

Information	Amount(persons)	Percentage
- Cabaret Show	41	34.2
Total	120	100
Status		
- Single	90	75.0
- In relationship	30	25.0
Total	120	100
Age		
- 20-25	44	36.7
- 26-30	40	33.3
- 31-35	26	21.7
- 36-40	8	6.7
- 41-45	2	1.7
Total	226	100

Table 1 shows there are more transgenders who have not done the sex reassignment surgery than ones who have done it. Moreover, the study shows there are more singles than ones in a relationship.

The majority of them work in show business and are between the age of 20 to 25.

Table 2 Average score analysis for the quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi Province.

Categories	Average score	Level of the quality of life
- Physical domain	25.6	moderate quality of life
- Psychological domain	22.1	moderate quality of life
- Social Relationship	10.8	moderate quality of life
- Environment	31.9	Good quality of life
Overall	90.35	moderate quality of life

Table 2 shows that the transgenders have an average rating of moderate quality of life overall in physical, mental, social relationships and the environment.

Average score analysis of the quality of life by sex and status as shown in Table 3-6.

Table 3 shows the average score of the transgender's quality of life in Chonburi who have not had their sex changed yet.

Categories	Average score	Level of the quality of life
- Physical domain	25.5	moderate quality of life
- Psychological domain	22.2	moderate quality of life
- Social Relationship	10.8	moderate quality of life
- Environment	31.9	Good quality of life
Overall	90.3	moderate quality of life

Table 4 shows the average score of the transgender's quality of life in Chonburi who have had their sex changed.

Categories	Average score	Level of the quality of life
- Physical domain	26.0	moderate quality of life
- Psychological domain	21.7	moderate quality of life
- Social Relationship	10.8	moderate quality of life
- Environment	31.8	Good quality of life
Overall	90.4	moderate quality of life

Table 3 and 4 show the quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi (both ones who have had a sex change, and ones who have not had the operation) have average rating of a moderate quality of life except for the environmental quality of life which is above moderate.

Table 5 the average quality of life of single transgenders in Chonburi.

Categories	Average score	Level of the quality of life
- Physical domain	25.2	moderate quality of life
- Psychological domain	22.0	moderate quality of life
- Social Relationship	11.0	moderate quality of life
- Environment	31.8	Good quality of life
Overall	89.9	moderate quality of life

Table 5 the average quality of life of single transgenders in Chonburi

Categories	Average score	Level of the quality of life
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- Physical domain	25.2	moderate quality of life
- Psychological domain	22.0	moderate quality of life
- Social Relationship	11.0	moderate quality of life
- Environment	31.8	Good quality of life
Overall	89.9	moderate quality of life

Table 6 the average quality of life of transgenders who are in relationship in Chonburi.

Categories	Average score	Level of the quality of life
- Physical domain	26.8	moderate quality of life
- Psychological domain	22.9	moderate quality of life
- Social Relationship	10.0	moderate quality of life
- Environment	32.1	Good quality of life
Overall	91.8	moderate quality of life

Table 5 and 6 show the quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi who both are single and in relationship have average rating of a moderate quality of life except for the environmental quality of life which is above moderate.

Table 7 the average quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi by occupation.

Categories	Occupation											
	Corporate Employees		Self-employed		Labor		Student		Hospitality		Cabaret Show	
	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level
Physical	29.2	Good	26.6	Moderate	24.7	Moderate	23.6	Moderate	27.0	Good	25.6	Moderate
Psychological	24.0	Good	22.5	Good	22.2	Good	21.6	Moderate	21.9	Moderate	22.0	Good
S-Relationship	12.4	Good	10.8	Moderate	11.5	Moderate	11.7	Moderate	10.5	Moderate	9.9	Moderate
Environment	33.8	Good	34.6	Good	32.0	Good	31.1	Good	31.9	Good	30.8	Good
Overall	99.4	Good	94.4	Moderate	90.4	Moderate	88.0	Moderate	91.3	Moderate	88.3	Moderate

Table 7 shows the average quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi Province by occupation has a rating of a moderate quality of life overall excluding private companies' whose employees have a good quality of life.

Considering in physical factors, almost every profession has a moderate quality of life excluding private companies' employees and the hospitality workers who have good quality of life.

Besides, the majority of professionals have a good quality of life in psychological factors except for students and hospitality workers who have a moderate quality of life.

In the social relationships, we found that nearly all professions have a moderate quality of life except private companies' employees who have a better quality of life. However, all occupations have a good environmental quality of life.

Table 8 the average quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi Province by age

Categories	Age									
	20-25		26-30		31-35		36-40		Hospitality	
	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level	Score	Level
Physical	24.4	Moderate	26.6	Moderate	25.7	Moderate	27.0	Good	25.0	Moderate
Psychological	21.9	Moderate	22.9	Moderate	21.2	Moderate	23.5	Good	19.0	Moderate
S-Relationship	10.8	Moderate	11.4	Moderate	10.1	Moderate	10.1	Moderate	10.0	Moderate
Environment	30.6	Good	33.4	Good	31.2	Good	32.9	Good	33.0	Good
Overall	87.6	Moderate	94.3	Moderate	98.3	Moderate	93.5	Moderate	87.0	Moderate

Table 8 shows the average quality of life of transgenders in Chonburi Province is moderate in every age range.

Almost all ages have a moderate quality of life in physical and psychological factors except the 36-40 age range that has a good quality of life. On the other hand, the quality of life in social relationships at every age is moderate and in environmental at all ages are good.

The result of the research

The study of the lives of transgenders in 4 aspects; physical, psychological, social relationships and environmental, the researchers found that the key issues that should be discussed and detailed are the following.

1. The transgender in Chonburi Province are the focus group. They have a moderate quality of life overall, except in the environmental quality of life which is good. This means the focus group feels or perceives that they live freely, independently, securely and have stable lives. They can commute, work, and get benefits from health and social work services.
2. For the research in quality of life of transgenders by occupation, we found that the private companies' employees have the better quality of life when compared with other professions. They feel more secure in their jobs than others.

3. Considering the average quality of life of transgenders by age range, the majority have a moderate quality of life. However, we found that in the 36-40 age range they have a good quality of life in almost every aspect except for the social relationship which is moderate.

Suggestions

The researchers would like to offer a few suggestions for practice and research in the future:

1. Study in different kinds of focus groups ,such as Gay/Lesbian, by using the same query.
2. Study with a larger focus group in order to find more variety.
3. Should set a new benchmark which will help to apply the results and the relationships in variables factors.

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