

جودة الحياة لمرابطات القدس

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Quality of Life for Murabitat in Jerusalem

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المخلص:

المرابطات فلسطينية في القدس، والمعروفة باسم "جماعة نسائية معارضة غير نكورية وغير عنيفة خلقت إمكانيات جديدة للتعبيد السياسية والدينية للمرأة"، بهدف خاص هو الدفاع عن "الحرم الشريف" (Al-المسجد الأقصى)، يواجهون تحديات لا تطاق. يؤثر الاضطهاد المستمر على حياتهم بشكل سلبي ولا يمكنهم الحصول على فرصة للمشاركة في الدراسات العلمية المتعلقة بنوعية حياتهم للتوصل إلى حلول. لذلك، هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى معرفة نوعية حياة المرابطات في القدس، فلسطين. من بين ما يقرب من ١٠٠ من المرابطات في القدس، أجاب ٦١ منهم على أداة WHOQOL-BREF المعدلة ثقافياً للسكان الفلسطينيين من خلال إعدادات الإنترنت لقياس جودة حياتهم. أظهرت النتائج أنه على الرغم من جميع الصعوبات الحالية التي تواجهها المرابطات في القدس، إلا أنها تتمتع بمستوى متوسط من QOL بمتوسط. أخيراً، تقدم الدراسة توصيات لجميع البشر.

كلمات المصطلحات: المرابطات، جودة الحياة، القدس

ABSTRACT:

Palestinian Murabitat in Jerusalem, who are known as "a non-masculine, non-violent, dissident women's group that has created new possibilities for women's political and religious mobilization", with special goal of defending "the Haram al-Sharif" (Al-Aqsa Mosque), face unbearable challenges. Ongoing persecutions effect on their life negatively and they could not get chance to be involved in scientific studies regarding to their quality of life to come up with solutions. So, the present study aimed to find out the quality of life for Murabitat in Jerusalem, Palestine. Amongst almost 100 Murabitat in Jerusalem 61 of them has answered culturally adapted the WHOQOL-BREF tool for Palestinian population through online settings to measure their quality of life. Murabitat's quality of life was found as 3.09 (SD=.44) for 61 Murabitat which is considered as "moderate". Finally, the study offers recommendations to all human beings

Key Words: Psychological Flexibility, Quality of Life, Murabitat, Jerusalem.

1-Introduction

The protection of women rights, in all over the world, must be seen something essential for the development of communities, like any human beings. As the issue of glittering women was existed throughout history, even though today there are number of organizations concerning about women such as; The International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP), The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) to reach this main goal, but still there are millions of women who need helps and encouragement.

Challenges women face are zillion and among them are Murabitat in Jerusalem, Palestine who live under illegal occupation (PBCS reported that "Jerusalem and other Palestinian towns fell under Israeli military occupation in 1967" p.18, 2021). Murabata (marabouts) means people who practice "military obligation of defending Islamic frontier" (Jestice, p.542). However, in the present case, by Palestinian Murabitat it is meant disarmed women who protects Masjid al-Aqsa voluntarily against illegal occupation. Jerusalem is a remarkable historical city that has always attracted different civilizations. Nevertheless, over twenty-five different blockades and attacks, Jerusalem is subjected all attempts to alter its identity and

liveliness. It is the basis of three monotheistic beliefs and the holiest city for all. Also, it is the first direction to which Muslims turn to pray, the site from that Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) risen to heavens (PCBS, 2021).

While social study areas widened day by day in Palestinian context, there was not enough attention on Murabitat who lives hard life conditions under the illegal occupation in Jerusalem, Palestine (Amnesty International, 2018). The reports underline those policies of the occupation forces who do not respect for the needs of Palestinian women in Jerusalem and high educational achievements levels amongst women is sharply opposing with their increasing unemployment levels (ESCWA, 2020; & JICA, 2016).

Al-Aqsa Mosque is located in East Jerusalem which considered as the third holiest place in Islam, following "Masjid al-Haram in Mecca" and "Al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina". Most of Muslims feel this duty to protect the holy place, as an action called "ribat" and they prefer to practice their daily prayers in this holy mosque because they believe their prayers will be rewarded many times more than the ordinary prayers at their home. Those Palestinians who practice ribat feel that it is their responsibility to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque, on behalf of all Muslims from IOF" (Schmitt, 2020; & Ibrahim, 2021).

Murabitat in Jerusalem

In 2015, occupation forces outlawed Murabitat, a group of unarmed Palestinian Muslim women who use their voices to protect al-Aqsa Mosque from IOF into the holy place. Murabitat showed both innovation and steadiness within the area of Palestinian women's political involvement in resistance towards the illegal occupation. They bordered their resistance in a well-established, national and peaceful way. Also, they innovated by activating these terms for a special goal of defending "the Haram al-Sharif" (Al-Aqsa Mosque), briefly, they became new virgins of the Palestinian resistance (Toledo International Center for Peace, 2015; PASSIA, 2019; & Schmitt, 2020).

Ribat (action of Murabitat), is a concept rooted in Islamic culture as Ra Ba Ta (in Arabic) and it means teeing, attaching or fastening and it is defined as "to be lined up, posted, Contemporary Islam Author's personal copy stationed (troops); to line up, take up positions; to be moored (ship); to move into fighting positions". Murabitat is the term described for women who protects Al-Aqsa Mosque from the Jewish extremists who want to construct their temple via destroying the holy Islamic place (Wehr 1994).

Although the Islamic Movement played significant role to support Murabitat at al-Aqsa Mosque; there were some problems, like because of complications in political and religious of occupation settlers including the

increasing religious, symbolic, and nationalistic protests and irruptions of Jews have placed on the Har ha-Bayit. These Jews have supported for the demolition of al-Aqsa Mosque and rebuilding of their temple and these were worsened the situation. These far-right groups' increasing affect has played a serious role in the rise of Murabitat (Breger, Reiter & Hammer 2012).

Palestinian women and girls, mainly in West Bank and East Jerusalem, continue to face threats regarding to their protection, together with movement restrictions, arrests, night attacks, violence from settlers, land repossessions, destruction of homes and personal properties, emigrating, forcible transfers, every so often against backdrops of persistent settlement buildings (United Nations, 2015; B'Tselem, 2017; Gisha, 2018; & ESCWA, 2020).

There are times which Palestinians were watched while IOF are hitting, kicking, and pushing Murabitat (IslamOnline 2014; AlJazeera Mubasher 2015). The media made more visible for the world to see Murabitat's rituals, protest, their confrontations with soldiers to get their basic rights, and banishing from al-Aqsa Mosque. The most aggravating cases were when IOF were ripping off the hijabs of Murabitat. These persecutions were scandalous and abuses of women's holy honour and rights, and Muslims were infuriated (Toledo International Center for Peace, 2015). All these persecutions and ongoing illegal occupation

effects their quality of life negatively (Hammoudeh, Hamayel, & Giacaman, 2017; Rosenthal, 2020; & Occupied Palestinian Territory Protection Analysis Update, March 2022).

Quality of Life

Discovering the impact of physical and mental illness on general quality of life (QoL) has been attracted by researchers, in the last years (Theofilou, 2013). The “quality of life” term is most likely mentioned as “well-being”, also. Yet, there are several challenges to come up with a meaningful understanding of the QoL (and/or well-being) works. The first one is to determine what, accurately, these terms mean (Clarke, Marshall, Ryff, & Rosenthal, 2000; Farquhar, 1995). Scholars underlined the fact in which terms that is not defined well cannot be measured well, and so, cannot be improved (Guarnaccia, 1996). The World Health Organization, (1995, p.1)

defined QoL as;

“Individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept incorporating in a complex way the persons’ physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs, and their relationships to salient features of the environment

By physical health it is intended well-being in terms of somatic sensations or symptoms;

and by mental health it is meant having positive sense of well-being in a nonpathological forms of psychological distress; via social health it is proposed as having good social interactions; and by functional health it is meant to have self-care, flexibility, physical activity level and functioning of social role with family and work (Post, 2014). Guercio, and Mehta (2018), mentioned that QoL should be defined and assessed through considering numerous dimensions both cross-culturally and religiously.

Moreover, there are many strong evidences that show subjective health indicators, together with QoL measures, can predict mortality amongst numerous groups (Nilsson, Ohrvik, Lonnberg, & Hedberg, 2011; & McEwen et al., 2009). QoL measures have showed utility in investigating the experiences of people in very stressful conditions, such as refugees and migrants (Skevington, Sartorius, & Amir, 2004). Current studies have used QoL measures to know individuals’ health under military occupation or during wartime (Giacaman, et al., 2007; & Abu-Rmeileh, et al., 2011).

Also, Hammoudeh, Hogan, and Giacaman, (2013) examined the quality of life of Palestinians, in East Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza Strip with QoL measures that developed by the WHO. They stated that influence of IOF, illegal occupation and siege on Palestinian’s life quality were directly

measured in terms of their lived experience with political violence and persecutions. The results of their study indicated that normal Palestinians' life quality is low in terms of physical, psychological, and environmental domains and this is among the lowest rate of any other populations in the world (Mataria, et al., 2009; & Skevington, Lofty, & O'Connell, 2004).

Furthermore, physical barriers (like Separation Wall and Qalandia-checkpoints) restrained accesses to families, relatives, friends, and health-care services in Jerusalem that influenced on Palestinian women's quality of life negatively. Most of the women stated harmful environments (together with scurrility, sewage sludge, water problem and ongoing persecutions) because of ongoing occupation, increased urban spread and insufficient accesses to governmental services; financial situations, insecurity of food, psychological trauma, environmental exposures, and stress (Hammoudeh, Hamayel, & Giacaman, 2017; Rosenthal, 2020; & Occupied Palestinian Territory Protection Analysis Update, March 2022).

Quality of Life in Islamic Perspective
Spirituality and religion are linked to happiness of human beings (Ellison, 1991; Francis & Robbins, 2000; & Wills, 2009). Since Palestinian Murabitat belongs to Islamic culture it is needed to define broadly the idea of Islam and understand what is categorized as a quality of life from Islamic perspectives. Islam appeared in the Arabic chersonese in

the sixth century and it spread to many cultures and countries including the Roma, Persia, India, Chine and so on. This led to the development of new ways of living, and governing across "different parts of successive Islamic empires" (Tiliouine, & Meziane, 2012). Lewis (1993) states:

"...For the Muslim, the Islamic revelation is not a beginning but a completion, the final link in a chain of revelations – and the Islamic community is thus not a new creation but a revival and improvement of something that had existed long before. The history of Islam therefore did not begin with Muhammad; it included the history of the earlier prophets and their missions, and something also of the peoples to whom they were sent" (p. 117).

Furthermore, it is mentioned that, Islam accepts three different but closely related views; "a will to submit to a set of moral and cultural rules" as a key for happiness. It supports a proper human inheritance. Also, it describes the position of the believers regarding the Absolute unity amongst humans. Therefore, Islam is a revealed religion, a social and historical miracle (Boisard. 1979, pp. 35–37; Eryılmaz 2015; Joshanloo, 2013; & Skinner 2010). So, believers must believe in "Allah (subhana we teala), the messengers of Allah (p.b.u.t.), angels, Hereafter, fate and the scripture" (An-Nisa, 4/136).

El Azayem and Hedayat-Diba (1994), stated that performing Islamic rules and regulations lets human beings to achieve a "balanced and

healthy physical, psychological, social and spiritual state". To serve for Allah (subhana we tealala) is the source for a happy life (Haque

2004; Joshanloo 2013; Skinner 2010).

Quality of life has a significant cultural element that should not be ignored to understand its' some of the basic principles from Islamic perspectives (Tiliouine, & Meziane, 2012). Islam has an entire structure of rules and regulations to guide human beings regarding how to live this life from its all perspectives. So, surely there is information in the Qur'an and Sunnah (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.) about quality of life as well. QoL is explained through happiness. It is found that Islamic ethics make strong the effects of religiosity value on the happiness in human life (Amalia, Riani, & Julia, 2016). Glorious Qur'an includes explanations about how humans can be happy with Islamic principles (Joshanloo, 2013).

Certainly, the achievement of happiness on the earth and in the hereafter for human beings is explained in relation to the following the divine laws; fulfilling His (subhana we tealala) commands is necessary for people to be happy (Nasr 2003; & Sajedi 2008). Moderation is a golden rule in Islam which led for well-being of human beings. Worships do not mean only performing the daily prayers, giving charity, fasting in Ramadan, and going to Mecca pilgrimage, but it also, includes all aspects of life, like living in harmony with

yourself, community and even with nature. For Ibn Masquawayh, Aristotle thinks happiness is based on some conditions like "the presence of health, righteous beliefs, intelligence, a reasonable mood, wealth, a high social status, and success". The more humans obtain these blessings, the more happiness they accumulate. The other views mentioned happiness as a moral sense like "wisdom, purity courage, and justice". These blessings are the foundations of a continuing happiness (Ibn Masquawayh, died in 1030). Moreover, the principles of Islamic belief led humans to "feel self-confident" because, they have no doubts in Allah's (subhana we tealala) existence and supremacy and believers place their trust in Him (subhana we tealala). According to Glorious Qur'an, 'Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction' (Al-Rad, 13/28). Thus, Islam is equal to surrendering to Allah's (subhana we tealala) will which means happiness (Haque 2004; Husain 1998).

Although, all these researches (Hammoudeh, Hogan, & Giacaman, 2013; Mataria, et al., 2009; Skevington, Lotfy, & O'Connell, 2004; Schmitt, 2020; & Ibrahim, 2021 and etc.) give detailed understanding on Palestinian women's situation in Jerusalem, still there were some gaps like there was not any of them that mentioned Murabitat's quality of life, nor studied quality of life from Islamic

culture in Palestinian context. So, the present study aimed to find out Murabitat's Quality of Life in Jerusalem, Palestine. The present study searched answers for following question: "What is the mean score of The Quality-of-Life Test for Murabitat in Jerusalem?" The study is the one of the first studies in the Palestinian context in terms of its' scope to study Murabitat's quality of life in Jerusalem.

Research Design

The present study used quantitative design that is "Descriptive Research" and the quantitative data was analyzed via SPSS-26 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-26. version). During the present study Murabitat in Jerusalem were given the WHOQOL-BREF that is used to measure their QoL via Google Form. Inform consent was obtained from Murabitat and their names was removed from questionnaires during entering data to guarantee confidentiality issue.

Participants

The total number of Murabitat in Jerusalem is around 100 who visits Masjid Al-Aqsa for the intention of ribat at least once a week. Among them 61 of Murabitat answered fully the quality-of-life questionnaire. Mean of age of the participants was found as 37 for 61 Murabitat in Jerusalem, Palestine, and 30 of them have graduated from high school, 18 of the have Bachelor Degree, 2 of them have Master Degree, one of them have Doctoral Degree, and 4 of the rated themselves as having other educational levels and 24 of Murabitat rated their average income in Jerusalem as "No Salary", and 1 of them rated as less than 100 \$, 15 of them rated as between 100 to 200 \$, 3 of them rated as between 300-500 \$ while only two of them rated as more than 500 \$. To guarantee confidentiality the names removed from the data. Informed consent was obtained from the participants through online settings.

Instruments

To reach the objectives of the study, the researcher used quality of life questionnaire to collect data which was culturally adapted the WHOQOL-Brief (to measure Murabitat's Quality of Life). The four domains were measured that are: "physical (J3, J4, J10, J15, J16, J17, and, J18) psychological (J5, J6, J7, J11, J19 and J26), social relationships (J20, J21, and, J22) and environmental (J8, J9, J12, J13, J14, J23, J24 and, J25)", via a set of 26 statements which can be self-administered. There are three negatively phrased items (J3, J4, and,

J26). Answers to each questions have a 5–point Likert scale, asking “how much, how satisfied or how completely” the participants feel regarding domains being examined. Moreover, researches showed good validity and reliability evidences for the WHOQOL–Brief, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found more than 0.7 and for the 24 items internal consistency was found more than 0.4 (Dalky, Meiningert & Al–Ali, 2017). In the present study, reliability; Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found as 0.84 with 26 items and validity was found more than 0.63. The operational definition for QoL is as “The individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns” (WHO, 1995, p. 1).

Procedure

Data Collection; First of all, since the present study was supported by Al–Aqsa University, Gaza, the researcher got a letter of facilitation from Al–Aqsa University to assist in the permission to implement the study via online settings with Murabitat in Jerusalem, Palestine. After rapport building with Murabitat, they received inform consent and test of QoL via Google Form and Watsup social message platform. The results were obtained via Google Form.

Data Analysis; After getting the data via google form, the data was transformed in to excel file and from excel file to SPSS to make

analysis. Through Descriptive statistic demographics of participants with mean and standard deviation of each item was calculated.

Quality of Life for Murabitat in Jerusalem

The research question was “What is the mean score of The Quality–of–Life Test for Murabitat in Jerusalem?” Descriptive statistic was conducted to explore general mean score and standard deviation. The mean score for domains were as following; physical 2.76, psychological 3.31, social relationship 3.25, and environmental 3.03. General mean score for Murabitat’s quality of life was found as

3.09 (SD=.44) for 61 Murabitat, which is considered as “moderate”, minimum mean score was 1.98 (J15: How well are you able to get around physically?) and maximum

mean score was 3.83 (J11: Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?), (see Figure 3.1).

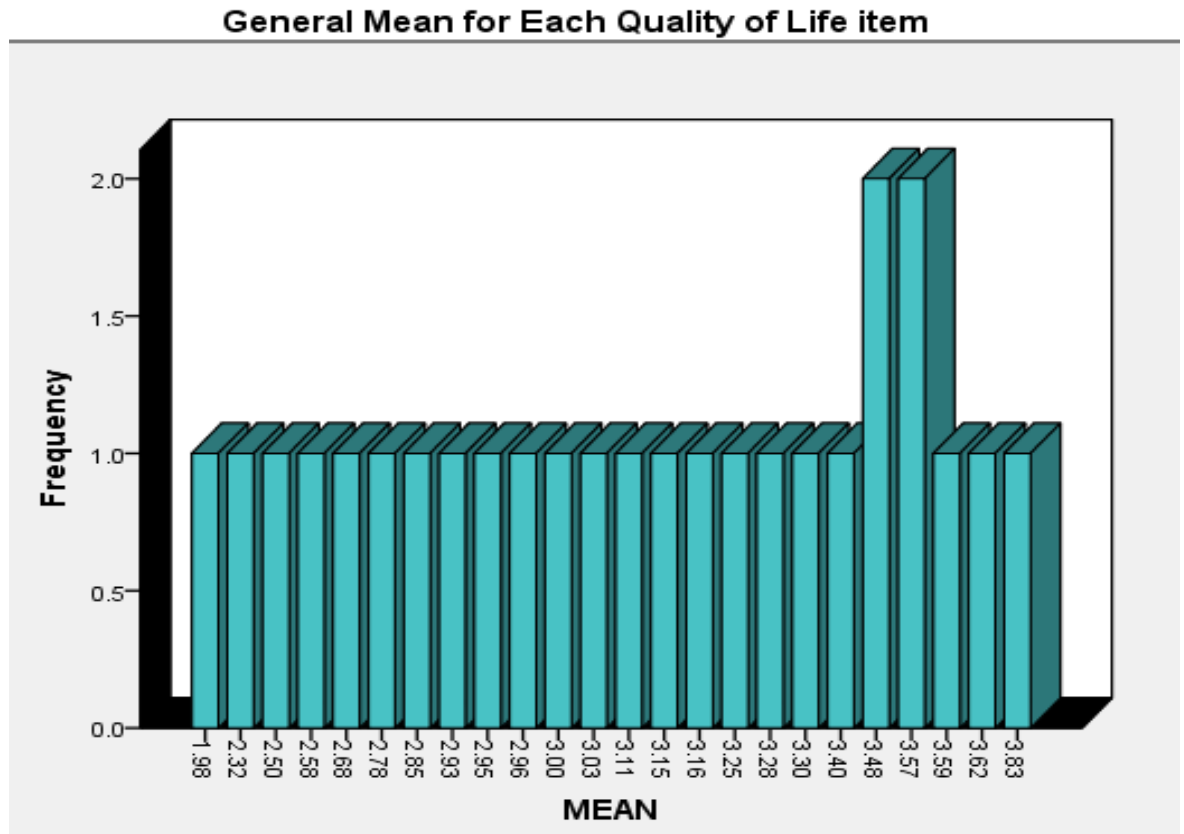


Figure (3.1): Mean for each Quality-of-Life item.

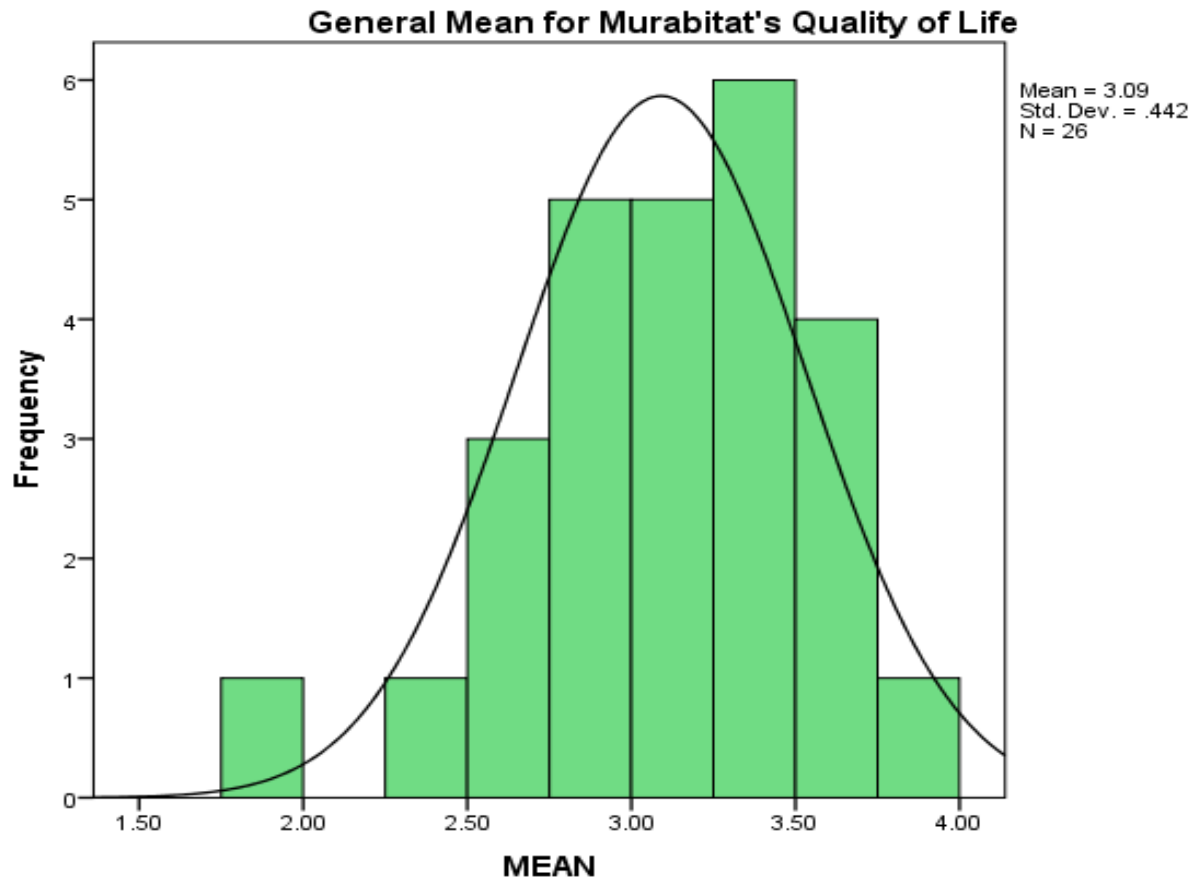


Figure (3.2): Mean for Murabitat's Quality-of-Life.

The purpose of the existing study was to examine quality of life for Murabitat in Jerusalem. The findings of the quantitative data prompted that, Murabitat in Jerusalem have moderate level of QoL (mean:3.09 sd:0.44) in four domains “Physical health, Psychological, Social Relationship, and Environmental”. The highest mean score was 3.83 that falls under psychological domains that was asking for (J11): “Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?” and this result is different than previous studies which claimed that because of ongoing occupation, increased urban spread, financial situations, insecurity of food, psychological trauma, and stress Palestinian women in Jerusalem have

negative quality of life, while despite of all these challenges still Murabitat try to have at least a moderate quality of life level (Hammoudeh, Hamayel, & Giacaman, 2017; Rosenthal, 2020; & Occupied Palestinian Territory Protection Analysis Update, March 2022).

Furthermore, the lowest mean score was 1.98 which falls under physical domain that was asking for (J15): “How well are you able to get around physically?” which was in line with results of Hammoudeh, Hamayel, & Giacaman, (2017), Rosenthal, (2020), & Occupied Palestinian Territory Protection Analysis Update, (March 2022) in supporting that Physical barriers (like Separation Wall and Qalandia-checkpoints) restrained accesses to families, relatives, friends, and

health-care services in Jerusalem that influenced on Palestinian women's quality of life negatively.

Results of existing study showed that despite of ongoing persecution and violations of basic human rights in Jerusalem Murabitat keep continue to have quality life even with a moderate level (Toledo International Center for Peace, 2015). Moreover, as Eldar (2015) and Cohen (2015) mentioned these Murabitat are well educated. These findings are different than studies of Skevington, Lotfy, and O'Connell, (2004), Mataria, et al., (2009), and Hammoudeh, Hogan, and Giacaman, (2013), who stated that life quality of Palestinian women in Jerusalem is low in terms of "environmental and psychological domains". This might be due to their Islamic culture which perceive having "balanced and healthy physical, psychological, social and spiritual state" to serve for Allah (s.w.t.) as source of happy life (El Azayem & Hedayat-Diba, 1994; Haque 2004; Joshanloo 2013; Skinner 2010).

Ultimately, although Murabitat in Jerusalem who are known as group of young and/or old women who travel to Al-Aqsa Mosque every day for gathering, praying, studying and defending the holy place against IOF and struggling by settler controls (Ihmoud, 2019), who practice ribat by feeling that it is their responsibility to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque, on behalf of all Muslims from IOF" (Schmitt, 2020; & Ibrahim, 2021), face the most unbearable hardships like being beaten, kicked, pushed, ripped off the hijabs by IOF just because asking for their basic human rights and banished from al-Aqsa Mosque and abused of women's holy honour and rights (Islam Online 2014; Al Jazeera Mubasher 2015), have moderate quality of life level in four dimensions "Physical health, Psychological, Social Relationship, and Environmental", and this might be because of their life perspective who see their life as meaningful, they have strong reason to live for which is to "protect Al-Aqsa Mosque" (Sophie, 2011), and this is called as ribat; to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque from the Jewish extremists who want to construct their temple via destroying the holy Islamic place (Wehr 1994). As a limitation of the study; results in this study are accurate to the degree that participants understand the instructions clearly and were willing to express them honestly.

The present study recommended that there is need for additional researches used for more elaborations and descriptions for the

uniqueness of Murabitat's quality of life and solutions for their problems, since as minors they face intolerable hardship in their daily life, just because they search for their basic human rights. Lastly, The International Law and other related human right supporters should recognize the burden of Murabitat and stand by them at least to provide their basic rights.

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