

## Quality of Life of Resident Elderly Foreigner in Surin Province

**SinghaJantriwong**

Lecturer, Social Development Program, SurindraRajabhat University, Thailand  
E-mail: singha05@yahoo.com

### Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research was to study the quality of life of resident elderly foreigner in Surin province. The sample studied was 30 resident elderly foreigners. They were selected through a purposive sampling method. The instruments consisted of an interviewing form, which was reliable in significant statistic at .05 (I.O.C. formula)

The qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. The results revealed that the samples had two domains; external domain and internal domain. The external domain included economic, cultural social, knowledge, environment, and social welfare. The internal domain included physical health, mental health, and behavioral health. The overall opinion was that most agree in health, and social culture. So, the resident elderly foreigner needs to be encouraged to have annual health checking, activities participation, social role promotion, environmental cleaning, and providing social welfare just as Thai people. Academic officers and government can use all of these suggestions for greater efficiency.

**Keywords:** Quality of life, Elderly, Resident foreigner, Surin province

### 1. Introduction

World population has been experiencing significant ageing—a process resulting from rising proportions of older people in the total population—since the mid-twentieth century. Changing proportions of aged populations had started earlier in the more developed regions and is beginning to take place in many developing countries. This became more evident on a global scale around the time of the International Conference on Population and Development which took place in 1994 in Cairo, Egypt. Awareness of population ageing was further advanced by the Second World Assembly on Ageing, which took place in Madrid, Spain, in 2002. The demographic projections at that time showed evidence of an unmistakable trend of continued ageing, which would no doubt continue throughout the twenty-first century. As this report makes clear, however, the intensity and depth of ageing will vary considerably among countries and regions (United Nation. 2013:10-15)

Ageing has profound consequences on a broad range of economic, political and social processes. First and foremost is the increasing priority to promote the well-being of the growing number and proportion of older persons in most countries of the world. Indeed, the Madrid International Plan of Action (MIPAA), adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, emphasized that older persons should be able to participate in and benefit equitably from the fruits of development to advance their health and well-being, and that societies should provide enabling environments for them to do so. While much attention has been given to the fiscal and macro-economic challenges represented by population ageing, which governments must certainly confront and prepare for, MIPAA also recognized the crucial importance of intergenerational interdependence, which needs to be redefined as the population distribution shifts to more older persons and relatively fewer children. (NCPOP. 2009 :34)

In Thailand, the data from Office of Immigration (2013) present the data about immigration from 2008–2013 was found that the highest immigration was 193,166 people in 2011, next were 181,789 people in 2012, and the lowest immigration rate was 132,120 in 2013. Especially in 2012, including non-immigration long staying people about 51,550 people, and tourist were about 136,886 people. More over, some research about foreign aging; “The Study of Senior Foreign Tourists’ Spending Behavior in Thailand” reported by Kevin Wongleedee (2011: abstract). The findings reveal that the majority of senior foreign tourists are between 60-65 years old. The majority have income in the area of \$20,000-\$50,000 per year. Most of them are European tourists and only a few are senior Asian tourists. Most of them prefer to travel as a couple or small group. Their main interest is Thai natural beauty and historical sites. Shopping and Thai food are not the main reason for coming to Thailand. Their expenses per trip are less than \$5,000. The majority spends about 1-3 weeks per trip.

Some writer's opinions talk about farangs living in Thailand, anonymous posts on a news group recently seemed overly cynical and negative. However there is a lot of truth which can be verified by discussions with expats or 'farangs' (slang for Caucasians) who live or have lived in Thailand for extended periods. Hopefully it may serve to help others, including the many who are disenchanting with life in their own countries. Some think, after spending an idyllic fortnight's holiday in Thailand (and possibly falling in love with a Thai), that they can find happiness and contentment in this 'tropical paradise'. Sadly, it's a dream that rarely comes true. However, people usually want to make their own mistakes rather than believe the 'tales of woe' of others that have gone before them. (Bangkok Post. 2016: July 5)

“Quality of life” is a term used to indicate how happy a person is in comparison to others. A problem arises with the innate subjectivity of any definition of happiness. In other words, what it means to one person is not necessarily what it means to another. This makes the comparison of the quality of life of people from two different communities very difficult to establish. Quality of life may relate to far more than just ownership of or access to material possessions, although this may be the factor most often regarded in some societies as a measurable indication. Other communities may place more emphasis on other aspects such as individual or community beliefs and values. A materialistic society may regard economic issues as the most important, while a very religious or spiritual society may hold political or societal aspects of life in higher regard. In some cases, quality of life means a rejection of consumerism or even rejection of westernized values. It is important to distinguish between a choice of a simpler life as opposed to a life bound by poverty and simple survival (Wikipedia, 2013).

Depending on the issue, and problems unique to the foreign elderly in Surin, there were questions specifically about their quality of life. These were important to study and justify this research project.

## 2. Research Objectives

This research has the objective of studying the quality of life of resident elderly foreigner in Surin province.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Samples

The sample studied was 30 resident elderly foreigners who lived in Surin province. They were selected through a purposive sampling method. All of them, had been living in Surin provenance for over 5 years.

#### 3.2 Research Instruments

The research instrument consisted of an interviewing form, which was reliable in significant statistic at .05 (I.O.C. formula). The qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

The following were the stages of data collection:

##### 3.3.1 Phase 1: Preparing Data Collection

1) Surveying about foreigners elderly in Thailand and Surin province from various documents and data statistic office to get some basic data and general data such as; the amount of them, their time period living, their status of living, their education and knowledge perception, their occupation, their environment, their social welfare or etc.

2) Have a meeting between researchers and staff to analysis and create the contents of research which included of two aspects of quality of life of resident elderly foreigner. There were internal factors and external factors. The content collecting was by an interviewing form. Then, proving and developing it absolutely. The interviewing form would be examined by three professors, and would be reliable in significant statistic at .05 (I.O.C. formula)

##### 3.3.2 Phase 2: Field Data Collection

1) Have a meeting between researchers and staffs. In the meeting, train in how to use the questionnaires.

2) Send survey researcher and helpers off to do their surveying of the sample.

3) Have a follow up meeting between researchers, and staffs, to analysis the whole data gartering. Organizing the result of research, conclusion, Data collecting will be analyzed by qualitative, and making a research reporting.

4) Have a conference for the government administration, community leaders, elderly foreigners, academic officers, students in higher education, and general people. In the meeting, present the research, criticize and discuss it in every sampling area.

5) Garther all of data and information from the conferences, and improve the research report into its final form.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by content analysis. It was also shared with others for their opinions. The content validity of the data was examined by three experts and had the IOC of 0.97. Comments were also provided by the experts and participants who worked with elderly care.

#### 4. Research Results

The results were presented according to the research objectives as follows:

4.1 The quality of life of resident elderly foreigner in Surin province included Two domains. There were The internal domain included physical health, mental health, and behavioral health. The external domain included economic, cultural social, knowledge perception, environment, and social welfare.

4.2 Suggestions regarding the foreign elderly was to promote annual health checking, participation in activities, social role promotion, environmental cleaning, and providing social welfare. Academic officers and government can use all of these suggestions for greater efficiency.

#### 5. Discussion

The concern for the foreigner should be a local issue throughout Thailand. Those who live permanently in Thailand effectively deserve some responsibility of the local governments of Thailand. There may be those who would have liked to acquire Thai citizenship but that is a very difficult process. Since forange and other expats living in Thailand are not citizens the most significant burden falls on them to provide for themselves in many ways that affect quality of life. Based on some knowledge of American relationships with their citizens living outside America, there will be little cooperation or support from American resources for their citizens living in Thailand. The same is true in reverse for Thai citizens living in the United States. Unless the Thai has been working within in the economy of the United States, the Thai will most likely need to supply whatever health and living expenses in whatever way he/she can. In the United States virtually all health and living needs are provided as a result of employment or former employment. Please note that the vast majority of expats, especially Americans of which I have some experience, come to Thailand as part of a retirement plan. For this reason they primary resource for health and living requirements is based on the health benefit and come from their previous employment. Those foreign people who work in Thailand often are employed within the Thai economy but are paid by other countries, possibly their own, but not Thailand. Under this system of retirement for foreign people, the vast majority retirees in Thailand will be men. Some will be women but, among the women, most will be spouses of the retired men. The foreigner men will have both wealth benefits as well as income based on previous employment. Those foreign men without their own wealth and income provisions simply do not retire to another country, or potentially slip into homeless status in Thailand, (Kavin Kinsella and David R. Phillips. 2010:25)

The social factors that enter into quality of life will be up to the relationships the foreigner retiree has made on his own. First, there are clubs and organizations primarily serving the interests of the foreign community. Examples are a cinema club(FGC) the Democrats Abroad,organized sports fans, English language theater, and other opportunities for both minor as well as in-depth interaction with fellow expats. Even in smaller communities there are bars and restaurants that are a center of community for various ethnic groups. Using Surin as an example, there is a significant Nordic and Germanic community with restaurants specializing in Finish food, for example. Another source of interpersonal relationships that quality of life depends on is the relationship that many older expats, especially men, establish over many years with Thai women. Remember that the vast majority of expat men, like the rogue male elephant, are alone in Thailand and seek companionship. Sometimes men create a new family of their own within the

Thai community. This can become central to a good quality of life for many expat men. Some men who are already familiar with Thailand prior to retirement may actively seek that kind of relationship with Thai women and their families. This aspect of expat lifestyle is a subject that calls out for more and better research. (United Nation. 2015:28)

**6. Conclusion**

The number of elderly is increasing gradually, both in number and as a proportion of world population. This ageing population will cause unavoidable problems for many countries, including Thailand. In Surin province however, although the overall number of elderly is increasing, the proportional increase in younger age groups is greatly overshadowing that of the older. As modernization has accelerated across the region, there had been affected by many resident elderly foreigners in Thailand, and Surin province.

This research studies a sample of elderly foreigners in Surin province focusing on their quality of life. The results revealed that the samples had two domains, external domain and internal domain. The external domain included economic, cultural social, knowledge, environment, and social welfare. The internal domain included physical health, mental health, and behavioral health. The overall opinion was that most agree in health, and social. So, the resident elderly foreigner need to promote annual health checking, activities participation, social role promotion, environmental cleaning, and providing social welfare as Thai people, as figure 1.

Thus, the government and community must work together in order to assist with help regarding the problems of the quality of life of the elderly. Especially, resident elderly foreigners who have increased within Thai society. How can they remain happy and engaged in a good life in Surin Province?



*Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Research*

**7. Recommendations**

The following are some recommendations based on the research results:

7.1 Resulting from our academic study, we have new data and information about the quality of life of resident elderly foreigners in Surin, Thailand. So, the data could be applied to further study of this topic.

7.2 Regarding policy, the government now has new suggestions for relations with their elderly foreigner residents. New efficiency can result.

## References

- Elderly Foreigner in Thailand. (2016). Bangkok: Bangkok Post, (Sunday, 21<sup>th</sup>)
- Kevin Kinsella and David R. Phillips. (2010). *Global Aging: The Challenge of Success*. New York: Population Bulletin. (Vol.60 No.1)
- Kevin Wongleedee. (2011). *Spending Behavior in Thailand*. Bangkok: Colledge Population Study, Chulalongkorn University.
- M. InceYenilmez. *Consequences of Population Aging*. Izmir: Department of Economics.
- NCPOP.(2009). *Public Perceptions of Older People and Ageing*. London: National Centre for the Protection of Older People.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Working and ageing*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union.
- United Nation.(2009). *World Population Ageing*. New York :United Nations publication.
- United Nation. (2012). *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing*. Madrid: United Nations publication.
- United Nation.(2013). *Population and Development*.Cairo:Programmed of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population (vol.1).
- United Nation.(2010). *AgeingReport*. New York:United Nations publication.
- Report on the fortieth session of the Commission on Population and Development* (2007). New York;Economic and Social Council.
- World Ageing Population*. (2016). [online] [www.http://blog.nationmultimedia.com/print.php?id=13464](http://blog.nationmultimedia.com/print.php?id=13464). Search on July 5.
- Quality of Life*. (2013). [online] from [www.http://wikipedia.qualityoflife.com](http://wikipedia.qualityoflife.com)