

## **UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AMONGST THE ELDERLY AT A DAY CARE CENTER IN THE CITY OF SHKODER: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

This study depicts the term "quality of life" as understood by a group of elderly, daily visitors, in a day care centre in Shkodër. A phenomenological approach was employed in order to explore the experiences of older people and to comprehend the concept of quality of life as perceived by the subjects in this study. Sixteen interviews were conducted in total, eleven women and five men, and the age of the respondents ranged from 66 to 85 years of age. All respondents were retired, while one lived with her husband and two children, all others lived alone. Five central categories were obtained from the phenomenological analysis of experiences and understanding of the quality of life of the elderly visitors of the center. First, it was found the importance of having secure physical environment and income; many interviewees associated a good life with a sufficient monthly income as some say that their pension income is not even enough to pay for medicines and bills. The second category obtained was about relationships. For the elderly, interactions with others are seen as very important in determining their quality of life. For them, especially relationships with family and friends affect immensely to the quality of their lives. A third category obtained was about health and independence in mobility. Although, physical health is seen as the prevalent factor on the quality of life, mental health and continuing to be independent in performing the daily activities are seen as very important aspects for a good quality of life. The fourth category, usefulness goes together with productivity, as factors that make the elderly perceive their quality of life as most enjoyable. The sixth category that contributes to the identification of the quality of life as good or bad is the faith that they have in God.

**Keywords:** *quality of life, elderly, phenomenology*