



**THE ASSESSMENT ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE BY
THE RESIDENTS LIVING IN A SLUM IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM AREA: CASE STUDY OF BALBALA,
DJIBOUTI**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning**

**Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
International Islamic University Malaysia**

November 2017

ABSTRACT

In these recent decades, the world is moving towards urbanization. In today's increasingly global and interconnected world, urban population have skyrocketed and represents more than the half of the world's population. The latest United Nations report on human settlements estimate that over one third of the urban population in developing countries live in slums. The proportion is estimated to be much higher in sub-Saharan Africa such as Djibouti. The slum improvement program is considered one of the most successful ways to evaluate and upgrade the quality of life in urban areas. The assessment on the quality of life by the residents living in a slum improvement program area, which is Balbala, was the only way to assess the residents' perception about their living conditions and improve it. There has been no prior study conducted on the assessment of the quality of life of an urban slum area in Djibouti by analyzing their satisfaction level on housing, transportation, environment, safety, infrastructures, public facilities, employment, economy as well as finance. The main objective of this study is to examine the satisfaction level of Balbala slum dwellers on their living conditions. The target population of the study is Balbala residents who have experience about the living conditions of Balbala inhabitants. This research, using statistical methods, collected data from 207 residents. The result of this study shows that the quality of life in the Balbala slum is very low and that the residents are not satisfied about their living conditions. Based on the findings, the average overall means shows that the inhabitants of Balbala slum are dissatisfied about their living conditions.

الملخص

لقد شهد العالم ازدياداً مضطرباً في حركة التحضر، وبشكل خاص في العقود الأخيرة. ولقد ازداد تعداد السكان في المناطق الحضرية بوتيرة متسارعة حتى وصل تعداد سكان الحضر إلى أكثر من نصف سكان العالم، نتيجة للعولمة التي أدت إلى زيادة في الترابط والتواصل ما بين المجتمعات. ولقد أشار تقرير حديث من الأمم المتحدة عن المستوطنات البشرية إلى أن ثلث سكان المناطق الحضرية في الدول النامية يعيشون في أحياء عشوائية، وتعتبر نسبة سكان العشوائيات عالية في دول جنوب الصحراء الكبرى وخاصة جيبوتي. ويعتبر برنامج تحسين الأحياء العشوائية واحداً من أنجح الوسائل لتقييم ورفع مستوى المعيشة في المناطق الحضرية. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى تقييم مستوى معيشة قاطني المناطق المشمولة ببرنامج تحسين الأحياء العشوائية، حيث لم يتم إجراء أي دراسة سابقة لتقييم مستوى المعيشة في المناطق العشوائية المشمولة ببرنامج تحسين الأحياء العشوائية في جيبوتي. ولهذا الغرض تم اختيار منطقة "بالبالا" في جيبوتي. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد مستوى رضا سكان "بالبالا" عن ظروف معيشتهم من خلال دراسة العناصر الآتية: مستوى رضا السكان عن السكن، ووسائل النقل، والبيئة، والأمن، والبنى التحتية والمرافق العامة، وفرص العمل، والأوضاع الاقتصادية لدى قاطني هذه المنطقة. والفئة المستهدفة من هذه الدراسة هي سكان "بالبالا" الذين لديهم دراية كافية بالظروف المعيشية لقاطني المنطقة موضع الدراسة. لقد تم اختيار 207 أشخاص من قاطني المنطقة ليمثلو -بوصفهم- عينة للبحث، وتم توزيع استبيان؛ لجمع البيانات وتحليل إجابات المشاركين في الاستبيان باستخدام الأساليب الإحصائية. وأظهرت نتيجة هذه الدراسة أن مستوى المعيشة في "بالبالا" منخفض جداً، وأن السكان غير راضين عن ظروف معيشتهم.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, all Praises be to “ALLAH” (SWT) Almighty who helped me to complete this research successfully and gave me the strength and patience throughout this project. Secondly, I would like to thank my parents for their endless love, support and encouragements. Thanks both of you for allowing me to realize my own potential. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my dear supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Mohamed Osman for her support, useful critiques during this research work and patient guidance. Also, I would like to express my greatest gratitude for my examiner Asst. Prof. Dr. Suzilawati Rabe.

Additionally, my thanks go to my sponsor, especially to the Minister of Higher Education and Research of Djibouti, whom without them this research would have never seen the light of the day. Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Fozia. Her support, encouragement, quiet patience and unwavering love were undeniably the bedrock upon which the past two years of my life have been built. I would also like to thank my wife for standing beside me throughout my writing period. She has been my inspiration and motivation to improve my knowledge and move my career forward. She is my rock and I dedicate this research to her.

To my beloved daughter Rahma, I would like to express my thanks for being such a good girl always cheering me up and making me smile, even if we are far away from each other. I want to express my gratitude and deepest appreciation to you my lovely sweet daughter, for your great patience and understandings and for being such a nice, beautiful Muslim girl. Thanks to all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	2
1.3 Problem Statement.....	3
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Research Objectives	5
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.7 Scope of Study	6
1.8 Structure of Thesis.....	6
1.9 Summary.....	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Definition of Terms: Slums and Squatters	8
2.3 Different Types of Slums	11
2.3.1 Inner-City Slums	11
2.3.2 Slums Estates	12
2.3.3 Squatter Settlements.....	12
2.4 Theories of Slums Upgradings Programmes	12
2.4.1 Self-Help Approach	13
2.4.2 Participatory Slum Upgrading Program Approach.....	14
2.5 Quality of Life	14
2.6 Theoretical Perspective	18
2.6.1 Happiness and Life Satisfaction Approach.....	18
2.6.2 The Needs Satisfaction Approach.....	19
2.6.3 Life Satisfaction Based on Need Hierarchy Theory	19
2.7 Qol Framework Through Modeling Approach.....	20
2.8 Measuring Quality of Life	21
2.9 Summary.....	24
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Research Population	25
3.3 Sample Size	25
3.4 Research Design	26
3.5 Primary Data Collection	29
3.6 Data Analysis.....	30
3.7 Summary.....	30

CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY OF DJIBOUTI CITY	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Profile of the Study Area	31
4.3 The Available Slum Improvement Program in Balbala	32
4.3.1 A Component of "Social Development and Local Governance"	32
4.3.2 "Infrastructure" Component that Aims to Open up Neighbourhoods	33
4.3.3 A Component of "Proximity Equipment"	33
4.4 Inventory of the Current and Available Infrastructures in Balbala Slum.....	33
4.4.1 Water Supply and Distribution	34
4.4.2 Sewerage System	34
4.4.3 Solid Waste Management	35
4.4.4 Electricity Supply.....	35
4.4.5 Information and Telecommunication System	36
4.4.6 Drainage System	36
4.5 Conclusion	39
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.....	40
5.1 Introduction	40
5.2 Sample Descriptive Statistics	40
5.3 Descriptive Profile of the Satisfaction Level of the Residents	45
5.3.1 Satisfaction Level on Housing Provison.....	45
5.3.2 Satisfaction Level on Safety	46
5.3.3 Satisfaction Level on Transportation	47
5.3.4 Satisfaction Level on Environment.....	48
5.3.5 Satisfaction Level on Public Facilities.....	49
5.3.6 Satisfaction Level on Infrastructure.....	50
5.3.7 Satisfaction Level on Employment	50
5.3.8 Satisfaction Level on Economic and Finance	51
5.4 Respondents' Satisfaction Against their Socio-Economic Background.....	52
5.4.1 Household Income Against Housing Satisfaction Variables	52
5.4.2 Household Size Against Housing Satisfaction Variables	54
5.4.3 Age Against Housing Satisfaction Variables.....	55
5.4.4 Gender Against Housing Satisfaction Variables.....	56
5.5 Summary of Findings	57
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
6.1 Introduction	60
6.2 Discussions	60
6.3 Result of Research Questions and Recommandations	61
6.3.1 Research Question 1	61
6.3.2 Research Question 2	62
6.3.3 Research Question 3	63
6.4 Limitation and Future Research	65
6.5 Implication.....	66
6.6 Conclusion	67

REFERENCES.....	68
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	71
APPENDIX B: FRENCH VERSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Disciplines related to the QOL studies	16
Table 3.1	Dependent Variables and Independent Variables	27
Table 4.1	Inventory of the current and available infrastructures of Balbala	37
Table 5.1	The Frequencies table of demographic questions	42
Table 5.2	Satisfaction level on housing provision	45
Table 5.3	Satisfaction level on safety	46
Table 5.4	Satisfaction level on transportation	47
Table 5.5	Satisfaction level on environment	48
Table 5.6	Satisfaction level on public facilities	49
Table 5.7	Satisfaction level on infrastructures and utilities	50
Table 5.8	Satisfaction level on employment	51
Table 5.9	Satisfaction level on economic and finance	52
Table 5.10	Household income and housing satisfaction correlation	52
Table 5.11	Household size and housing satisfaction correlation	54
Table 5.12	Age and housing satisfaction correlation	55
Table 5.13	Gender and housing satisfaction correlation	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 A model relationship between domain satisfaction and life satisfaction 21

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research is to study the current condition of Balbala District slum (Djibouti) through a participatory approach of slums improving program. In this first chapter, the study background and the research problem is presented as this study's base. Also, the research questions and objectives along with the scope will be stated. Lastly, the contribution of this research into the knowledge will be expressed.

In the current decades, the world is moving toward being urbanized. The most recent United Nations report regarding human settlements provide an estimations that more than one third of urban population in developing countries lives in slums (UN-Habitat, 2013). The proportion is estimated to be much higher in Sub-Saharan Africa, at over two-thirds of the urban populations (Mesple-somps, Sandrine Pasquier-doumer, Laure Guenard, and Charlotte.2016).

Nowadays, the housing issues become the most discussed topic by the political, financial and social planners. As a town planners, it is in our responsibility to study, assess, evaluate and participate to the improvement of the living standards of our cities especially on housing. In the last decades, the housing challenges and slum issues have attracted the attention of many researchers, from the urban planning field to the financial aspects as well as the law and regulations.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The concept of slums are not a new fact, it has been the result of the early time of the urban sprawl, especially during the era of urbanization and industrialization. The term "squatters" is regularly characterized as an informal settlements in urban areas that lack of appropriate housing and shows a low living conditions. These types of settlements have attracted the attention of many peoples, which then led to the question of upgrading it (Control, 2015).

Slums or squatters improvement program is defined as a procedure through which the urban informal houses are step by step enhanced, legalized and integrated into the city itself, by legalizing land matters. It requires to take care of the low class families, which is mostly the urban slum dwellers through the provision of the basic infrastructures and services such as economic, social, institutional, and community services. In this judgment by (Bank, Review, Approaches, & Jaitman, 2013) define the basic urban infrastructures and services as follows: legalizing and securing land tenure, infrastructures (water, electricity etc...), social (crime or education) and economic. Besides, it is also stated by (Bank et al., 2013) that one of the main elements of slum improvement program is legalizing and regularizing properties and conducting secure land tenure system to the residents.

Recently, there were many research studies conducted by housing experts, academicians and the non-governmental agencies in developed and developing countries on slum upgrading program and the methods to upgrade the quality of life of the slums inhabitants in the world (Astuti, n.d.). Some of the successful slums upgrading projects in the developing countries were the case of South-Africa and Brazil, which the goal was the provision of urban services and access to the land respectively (Arcila, 2008). In Djibouti, the Balbala slum is one of the areas that remain unexplored and still untouched even though a recent study investigate whether

the slum upgrading program does improve the living standards of the residents which has been conducted by the research institute for the development of France in collaboration with Dauphine University of Paris (Mesple-somps, Pasquier-doumer, Guenard, & Dial, 2016).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the most recent estimations, Djibouti has 939 298 inhabitants along with a population growth rates of 2.8% (DISED, 2012). Based on the above estimation, the Djiboutian populations are predominately urban (85%), with over 65% of the total population concentrated in the capital city of less than 0.04% of arable land, with Per capita GDP estimated 3,051 dollars, making the nation a middle-income country. This, however, does not reflect the inhabitants' living conditions (Mesple-somps et al., 2016).

Due to a high level of unemployment and lack of financial institutions, having an affordable and decent house remains difficult to the most of urban households. In 2012, 42% of the populations were living in extreme poverty, the same proportion as in 2002 (DISED, 2012). Moreover, according to the World Economy, Djibouti unemployment rate is estimated at 60% from 2013 to 2016. Thus, the Balbala district slums dwellers are considered as the poorest population in the country and cannot afford to own or rent a decent or formal houses.

Balbala district slum comprises a number of quarters with cheap and temporary barracks located 8 km from the city center. It is a residential area for the low-earners class, with an estimated 200,000 population. The area is described by a deficiency of infrastructures, public facilities and urban services, as well as a poor living conditions due to the high density level. Different actions have been taken to upgrade the

situations, but yet until today none of them have been succeeded due to a non-consideration of the inhabitants' characteristics and values (Ogusa, 2007).

Therefore, there is an increasing and urgent need to implement a slum improvement program to enhance the quality of life of the inhabitants based on their need and perceptions.

The Balbala district slums is characterized by an illegal occupation of land, unplanned neighborhood, lack of infrastructures and urban services and high poverty rate as well as a high level of unemployment (Mesple-somps et al., 2016).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions arise from the problem statements which need to be answered:

1. What are the current available slum improvement program for the study area?
2. What are the current condition of the infrastructures and services in Balbala district slum?
3. What are the inhabitants' perceptions about their living condition in Balbala slums?
4. How the improvement program has to improve the living conditions of the residents?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) To study the slum improvement program in the case study area (Balbala, Djibouti)
- b) To identify the current required and available infrastructures and urban services in Balbala district slums.
- c) To assess the inhabitants' perception on their living conditions in Balbala slums.
- d) To suggest recommendations to improve and upgrade the living condition of Balbala slums.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study about upgrading Balbala slum living condition is important in different ways:

- Firstly, it is an advantages for Balbala slums dwellers and the whole public as the finding of this study can be used to upgrade and improve the living condition of Balbala slums inhabitants.
- Then it helps the policymakers and politicians as well as the administrators and researchers, who are involved in slum upgrading program to form policies by considering the inhabitants' perceptions.
- This study will participate to the improvement of the field of urban planning and the findings of this research will be useful for the future researchers and to be taken into considerations in order to improve the quality of life of the residents.

- Furthermore, it will benefit the construction industries as well as the private or public developers to know the current public needs and will help the provision of the appropriate facilities, infrastructures and services.
- Lastly, it will be part of the existing literature and knowledge about the field and support the future research and researchers.

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY

The goals of this work are to study and assess the Balbala slum living conditions based on the inhabitants' perceptions. Therefore, the limitations of this research are:

- The scope of the study area is limited into Balbala slum district located at 8 km from the city center.
- This study is not able to cover the whole dwellers of the slums in the district of Balbala because of time constraints. Therefore, there is a limited number of a person who is questioned and chosen randomly in the slum.
- The study regarding the primary data collection was limited in a short period of time in mid-July 2017.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The study is organized into four stages as background and theoretical study, data collection, findings and analysis, and conclusions and recommendations. The first stage contains chapters one. Chapter one introduces the subject, elaborates problem statements, presents the research objectives, highlights the raised research questions, define the significance and the scope of study.

The second stage contains the chapter two. Chapter two deals with the study of various literatures related to the topic from which the definitions are formulated. It also reviews other researches undertaken related to the subject.

The third stage also contains one chapter which is chapter three. Chapter three discusses about the methodology used by the researcher. It is about the data collection methods or the information gathering process which the research undertook in this study.

The fourth stage is the analysis and findings stage which is under chapter four. The chapter four provides the background and details of the study area. In this chapter, the data is analyzed using various analysis techniques and the results are obtained.

The final stage or the fifth stage is under chapter five. Chapter five gives the conclusions from the results obtained and it gives the recommendations for improving the living conditions and the quality of life of Balbala slum dwellers.

1.9 SUMMARY

This first chapter has introduced the subject and gives the background of this study. The main problems are stated and the research questions are raised. The objectives of the research are stated which set the focus for the research. The contribution of the study to various fields is also given. The scope of the study is also explained along with the way in which this research is arranged. The next and second chapter will deals with the existing literature review of the existing literature and works related to the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the root and the origin of this study. The main focus of the literature review is to provide the necessary background of the topic and to assess the previous related works to the same topic. Therefore, this chapter provides an overview about the term ‘slum’ or “squatter” and the quality of life “QOL” as well as the relevant terminologies to broaden the scope and understanding of the subject. Moreover, it presents the assessment of the living conditions of a given slum (Balbala slum) and discusses the slum improvement programs from theoretical perspective through examining, analysing and explaining what previous researchers contributed to the topic. However, this chapter highlights the different categories of slums as well as the theories of slum improvement programs. And finally, this chapter will also highlights the theoretical perspectives of the quality of life and its measurements.

2.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS: SLUMS AND SQUATTERS

UN-HABITAT defines a slum household as a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following: *Durable housing* (a permanent structure providing protection from extreme climatic conditions), *sufficient living area* (no more than three people sharing a room), *access to improved water* (water that is sufficient, affordable and can be obtained without extreme effort), *access to improved sanitation facilities* (a private or public toilet shared with a reasonable number of people) and *Secure tenure* (de facto or de jure secure tenure status and protection against forced eviction) (Challenge & Slums, n.d.).

Slums are frequently used to catch all concepts that describe a broad range of low income settlements. Basically, slums refer to housing was once of good condition but since getting worse and often been subdivided and rented out to low income groups (UN HABITAT, 2003). In contrast, squatters can be defined as areas of substandard housing built on illegally subdivisions originated through legal landowners subdividing their plots and selling them without complying with all relevant laws (Brown-Luthango, Reyes, & Gubevu, 2016).

According to poverty assessment in many less developed countries (LDCs), slums definition derived based on qualitative poverty information (UN HABITAT, 2002).

“A contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognized and addressed by the public as an integral or equal part of the city”(Daniel, Wapwera, Akande, Musa, & Aliyu, 2015).

Other similar definition, for example the Cities Alliance Action Plan (1999) describes slums as follows: “Slums are neglected parts of cities where housing and living conditions appallingly poor. Slums range from high-density, squalid central city tenements to spontaneous squatters settlements without legal recognitions or right, sprawling at the edge of cities. Slums have various names, favelas kampungs, bidonvilles, tigurios, and bastees yet share the same miserable living condition”(Huchzermeyer, 2000).

However, UN HABITAT (2003) describes slums as a highly populated area grouped by substandard housing. The meaning summarize all high densities and low standard of housing scheme with a lot of social illness among the settler. Therefore, according to Eckstein (1990), slums can usually be view from these three main elements which

are low standard of physical structure with a limited space which having low quality of social and behavioural (MacPherson, 2013).

Thus, the definition of the term “slum” further explain in the (UN HABITAT, 2003) include the traditional meaning that is, housing areas that were once respectable or even desirable, but which have since worsen as the original dwellers have moved to new and better areas of the cities. The condition of the old houses has then declined, and the units have been progressively subdivided and rented out to lower-income groups (Mgele, 2073).

The quality of dwelling in such settlement varies from the simplest hut to permanent structure, while access to water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services and infrastructures are usually limited and basically the settlement are referred to by a wide range of names and include a variety of tenure arrangements (Minnery et al., 2013).

Oxford advanced learners Dictionary, international student’s edition define slum as an area of a city that is a very poor and where the houses are dirty and in bad condition.

Eckstein (1990) reported that slums can be divided into two groups which are:

- Slums of hope: “progressing settlements, which are characterised by new, normally self-built structure, usually illegal (squatters) that are in, or have recently been through, a process of development, consolidation and improvement; and
- Slums of despair: “declining neighbourhoods in which environmental conditions and domestic services are undergoing a process of degeneration.

Finally, slums and squatters are one of the main issues that the developing and less developed countries struggling to solve. Slums can be defined as a highly congested

urban areas marked by deteriorated, unsanitary buildings, poverty and social disorganization, while the squatters is defined as land settled on, especially public or unoccupied land, without right or title. A slum is a heavily populated urban informal settlement characterized by substandard housing. Squatter settlements are any collection of buildings where the people have no legal rights to the land they are built upon. Simply put, *slums* refer to the environmental aspects of the area where a community resides, while *squatters* refer to the legality of the land ownership and other infrastructure provision.

The characteristics of the slum and squatter might be different from one another but they both shelter the lowest class of the society. They provide housing for many of the world's poorest people and offer basic shelter, even though it does not follow the normal standard of the UN-HABITAT. The slums and squatters provide a minimum protection against natural forces (rain, sun, etc...) and security as well as health (wild animal and criminals). These are their similarities.

2.3 DIFFERENTS TYPES OF SLUMS

2.3.1 INNER-CITY SLUMS

Basically, inner city slums gave birth to the concept of the slums whereby the process begin within prosperous residential area of cities; undergo deterioration as their original owners move out to new area which more decent living environment. This is a common place and predictable consequence of the growth and expansion of cities, evident by both an increase in the central commercial and manufacturing areas and activities, and the increasing total number of migrants looking for employment opportunities. (UN HABITAT, 2003).

2.3.2 SLUM ESTATES

Slum estates embrace tied workers' housing that was built by employers, usually state industries, for the use of work force during the period of their employment. These estates suffered even more than public housing estates from lack of any form of occupant involvement in their management and maintenance, leading to their rapid deterioration. For example, now that industry is no longer responsible for the provision of housing, units have been abandoned and left to private residents who facing unemployment are unable to maintain them. As a result, they face the possibility of serious deterioration (UN HABITAT, 2003).

2.3.3 SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

Squatter settlement can be defined as people who occupy land or buildings without the permission of the owner. Squatting, like living in conventional slums provides a solution to the housing needs of those that cannot afford, or even find, alternative formal accommodation. Squatter settlement are generally found in the towns and they exclusively built their settlement on public land which easily can result to invasion towards the land. They may be located under bridges and flyovers, on vacant plots of land between buildings, or on pavements and dry-season riverbeds. Therefore, squatter settlements provide variety in their legal status while squatter settlements begin with an illegal occupation of land, over time some form of security of tenure, if not formally recognized legal title, can be transferred to the residents (UN HABITAT, 2003).

2.4 THEORIES OF SLUMS UPGRADINGS PROGRAMMES

The word upgrading usually refers to an effort to improve living conditions in particular urban areas characterized by poor quality housing and inadequate