

Theoretical Frameworks Explaining Quality of Life.



Dhekra Farida ZOUAHI *

University of May 8, 1945, Demographic Challenges Laboratory
(Algeria)

zouahi.dhekrafarida@univ-guelma.dz

Lilia BENSOUILAH

University of May 8, 1945, Self-Development and Good Governance
Laboratory (Algeria)

bensouilah.lilia@univ-guelma.dz

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Abstract:

This article aims to examine the major theoretical frameworks that have defined the concept of quality of life. The study reveals that one of the most notable approaches to understanding quality of life is Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which emphasizes that attaining quality of life depends on satisfying both fundamental and higher-level needs. Additionally, Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being highlights that quality of life is associated with factors such as autonomy, positive relationships, and finding meaning in life. Moreover, Lawton's theory focuses on the idea that an individual's quality of life perception is impacted by surrounding environmental and contextual conditions, reflecting the spatial and temporal dimensions in shaping personal well-being. On the other hand, Schalock presented a multidimensional approach, considering quality of life as the interaction of psychological, social, material, and health-related aspects, thereby providing a more comprehensive perspective on this concept.

key words: Quality of Life; Human Needs; Psychological Well-Being, Environmental Factors; Multidimensional Aspects.

Introduction:

Positive psychology has introduced the concept of quality of life as a modern perspective aimed at shifting the focus from the traditional

* Corresponding Author

emphasis on negative aspects and weaknesses to enhancing positive aspects and strengthening individual potential. The concept of quality of life is no longer confined simply to meeting basic and essential needs; rather, it extends to achieving happiness, satisfaction, and success, contributing to individuals' overall well-being. This approach reflects a more holistic view of quality of life, where psychological, social, and environmental factors intertwine to shape human experience and the pursuit of a more balanced and fulfilling life.

In this context, the concept of quality of life has gained significant attention in academic studies due to its importance in understanding individual and community well-being, as well as its role in identifying factors that influence psychological and social adaptation. This concept has become a central focus in fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and public health, with numerous studies conducted to explore the factors that contribute to enhancing quality of life at both individual and societal levels.

Considering this, various theoretical frameworks have delved in the concept of quality of life from different perspectives in order to reflect its multidimensional nature. This diversity has contributed to the development of multiple interpretations of the factors influencing quality of life at both the individual and societal levels in which it provides a deeper understanding of how to enhance well-being and achieve balance in people's lives.

This current article is conducted to review the key theoretical frameworks that have expounded quality of life through analyzing different theoretical perspectives that have contributed to the understanding of the factors affecting human well-being. This will be explored through the following question: **What are the main theoretical frameworks that explain quality of life?**

Sub-Questions:

- How does Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory explain the concept of quality of life?
- What are the dimensions identified by Schalock for quality of life?

- How did Lawton's theory address quality of life?
- How does Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being explain the concept of quality of life?

Research Objectives :

This research paper aims to investigate the main theoretical frameworks that explain the concept of quality of life by:

- Analyzing the psychological perspective, focusing on the role of human needs in shaping quality of life based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, while also identifying its key dimensions as outlined by Schalock.
- Examining the environmental approach to quality of life through Lawton's theoretical framework.
- Exploring the integrative perspective by assessing Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being.

Research Methodology:

This study adopts a **descriptive-analytical approach**, wherein various theoretical frameworks explaining the concept of quality of life are reviewed and analyzed. This approach aims to describe the diverse theories and perspectives that have addressed quality of life from multiple angles, including the psychological, environmental, and integrative perspectives, with a focus on analyzing the dimensions and concepts associated with the models of Maslow, Ryff, Lawton, and Schalock.

THE FIRST TOPIC :Study Terminology.

This part is devoted for the terminologies used in this study.

First requirement: Quality of Life:

This section is a general overview about quality of life.

First section: Definition of Quality of Life.

It is worth of noting that the concept of quality of life has received significant attention in health and social studies, as numerous research efforts aim to identify the factors influencing individuals' quality of life

and how to measure it. Consequently, definitions of quality of life vary, including the following:

Minayo et al. (2000) argue that the concept of quality of life is synonymous with health, while acknowledging that this concept needs to be understood more broadly (**Minayo et al., 2000, p. 11**).

Meanwhile, Costanza et al. (2007) propose the general assumption that quality of life refers to the extent to which human needs are met and the human perception of satisfaction (**Costanza et al., 2007, p. 277**).

Quality of life is defined as the extent to which an individual's life experience meets their desires and needs (both physical and psychological). (**Kerce, 1992, p.02**)

It is pretty clear from the various perspectives that quality of life is not limited to health alone but encompasses a set of interconnected factors related to self-perception, psychological fulfillment, and material needs. Quality of life can be seen as a multidimensional concept that includes health, psychological, and social aspects, influenced by several factors such as environmental conditions, culture, and prevailing value systems. Therefore, enhancing quality of life requires a comprehensive approach that considers these various dimensions to ensure individual and societal well-being.

THE SECOND TOPIC :The Theoretical Frameworks Explaining Quality of Life.

The concept of quality of life is a multidimensional notion that has received a considerable acclaim across various academic fields due to its fundamental role in measuring individual and societal well-being. This led to the emergence of different theoretical frameworks offering diverse interpretations. Some frameworks have focused on the psychological dimension of the individual, while others have stressed social, economic, and environmental factors influencing quality of life.

Various theoretical perspectives have sought to establish a framework for understanding quality of life, most notably **Maslow's** hierarchy of needs. Additionally, **Carol Ryff's** model of psychological well-being, as well as **Lawton's** theory, highlighting the impact of environmental and social factors on individuals' perception of their

quality of life. Meanwhile, **Schalock** presented a model that identifies a set of dimensions shaping quality of life.

First requirement: The Psychological Perspective Explaining Quality of Life.

This part will discuss the psychological perspective quality of life by presenting two fundamental models: Abraham Maslow's Human Needs Theory and Carol Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being, exploring how quality of life is shaped from a psychological standpoint.

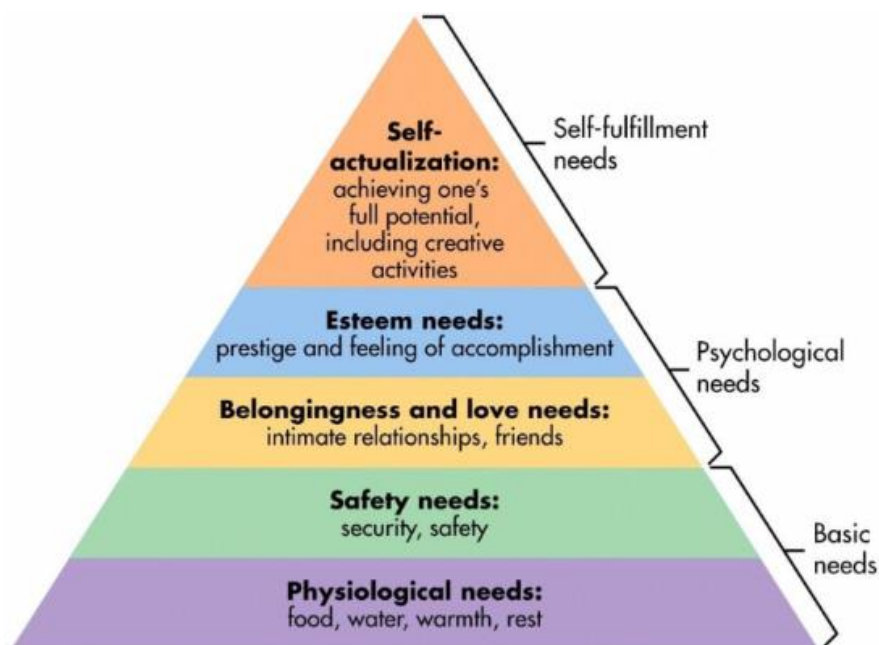
First section: The Basic Needs Theory of Abraham Maslow:

Maslow proposed the theory of human needs, which explains human motivation based on a hierarchical sequence starting with physiological needs, followed by safety, belongingness, esteem, and ultimately, self-actualization. According to him, fulfilling lower-level needs leads to a sense of quality of life and satisfaction.

According to Maslow, vital needs are the foundation for studying the subject of quality of life, as basic needs ascend in a hierarchical order based on the principle of relative strength. In his famous hierarchy of needs proposed in 1943, Maslow offered an explanation for the driving forces behind human behavior. He claimed that physiological needs are stronger than security needs, which are stronger than belonging needs, followed by esteem needs, and lastly, the distinctive needs he termed self-actualization. The progression from one need to another represents the fulfillment of that need, generating feelings of happiness and satisfaction (**Maslow, 1954, pp. 97-98**).

Maslow pointed out that (1943) self-actualization is the realization of an individual's potential and becoming what one is capable of becoming (**Jex, 2002, pp. 211-212**). The bellow figure illustrates Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Figure 01: Illustrates Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Source: (Saul, 2024, p. 05)

Maslow's theory addresses quality of life by linking it to the fulfillment of human needs in a hierarchical order. He proposed that quality of life is gradually achieved as lower-level needs are satisfied, allowing individuals to progress to higher levels. The process begins with the fulfillment of physiological needs (such as food and water), followed by safety needs (such as job and health stability), then belongingness needs (such as social relationships), esteem needs (such as respect and achievement), and finally, self-actualization, which represents the peak of personal growth and psychological well-being.

According to this theory, an individual's perception of quality of life is determined by the degree to which their needs are fulfilled. A deficiency at any level negatively affects overall well-being and satisfaction. Therefore, quality of life is seen as a cumulative and

interconnected process in which happiness and fulfillment are achieved progressively as an individual advances in fulfilling their various needs.

second section: Carol Ryff's Six-Factor Theory of Psychological Well-Being.

The concepts of a good life and psychological well-being have been a focal point of interest for researchers and thinkers, as quality of life has been associated with levels of happiness and self-satisfaction. In this context, Carol Ryff developed a theoretical model that emphasizes psychological well-being as a fundamental component in achieving quality of life.

Carol Ryff's theory revolves around psychological well-being. People have always sought to answer the question: What constitutes a good life? Often, a good life is directly associated with well-being and happiness (**Dirk et al., 2007, p. 473**).

Ryff's theory introduced the concept of psychological well-being, suggesting that an individual's perception of quality of life is reflected in their sense of happiness. Ryff identified six key dimensions that define psychological well-being:

1. Self-acceptance.
2. Environmental mastery.
3. Positive relationships.
4. Purpose in life.
5. Personal growth.
6. Autonomy (**Carol, 1995, p. 723**).

Figure 02: Represents the key dimensions of psychological well-being.



Source: Designed by the Researchers.

The above model demonstrates that achieving psychological well-being requires a balance between personal, social, and environmental factors. These dimensions influence individuals' ability to adapt to life challenges and enhance their sense of happiness and satisfaction. It also stresses the connection between personal growth and mental health, reinforcing the importance of psychological well-being as a fundamental element in improving overall quality of life.

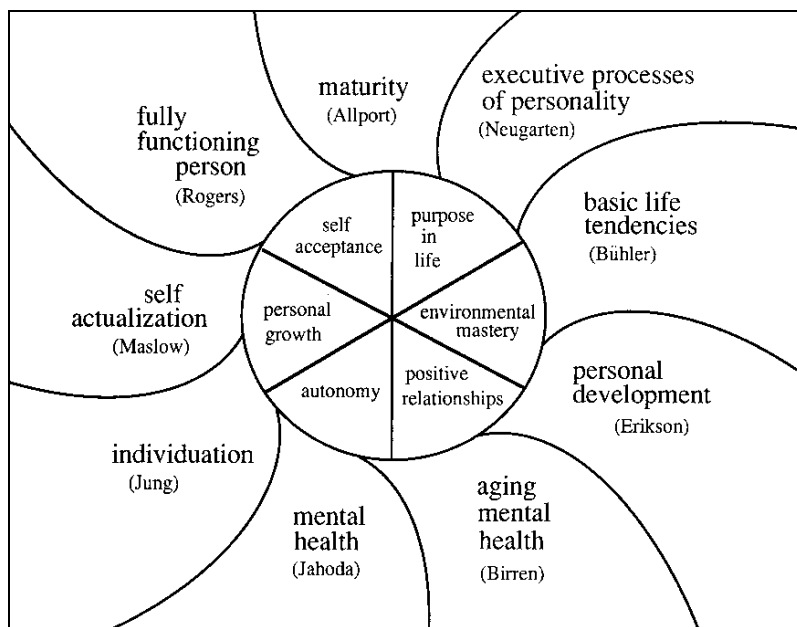
Carol Ryff addressed the concept of quality of life by focusing on the deep psychological dimensions that define an individual's well-being. She argued that quality of life is not solely dependent on meeting material needs or achieving temporary pleasure but rather on attaining psychological balance and personal development.

In the same line with Ryff, individuals who embrace self-acceptance, feel capable of managing their environment, maintain positive social relationships, have clear life goals, strive for personal growth, and enjoy autonomy are more likely to achieve a high quality of

life. Thus, her theory provides a psychological perspective on quality of life, emphasizing deep happiness, a sense of meaning, and personal accomplishment rather than merely external circumstances or economic factors.

Psychological well-being is considered a fundamental concept in the study of quality of life, as it focuses on the dimensions that reflect an individual's mental health, personal adaptation, and social adjustment. Carol Ryff introduced a comprehensive model of psychological well-being, linking various psychological, environmental, and social dimensions that influence quality of life. Which is what the following figure presents.

Figure 03: The Model of Psychological Well-being Dimensions According to Carol Ryff.



Source: (Carol & Singer, 2008, p20)

The above figure represents Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being, illustrating that psychological quality of life is not solely dependent on external circumstances but is shaped by a set of interconnected dimensions.

The model claims that achieving psychological well-being requires a balance between personal, social, and environmental factors. These dimensions influence individuals' ability to adapt to life challenges and enhance their sense of happiness and satisfaction. It also highlights the connection between personal growth and mental health, reinforcing the importance of psychological well-being as a fundamental element in improving overall quality of life.

The Third Requirement: The Environmental Perspective Explaining Quality of Life.

This section will explore the environmental perspective in explaining quality of life by examining how external environmental factors influence an individual's well-being, with a specific focus on Lawton's theory.

First Section: Lawton's Theory (1996).

Individuals' perception of their quality of life is a dynamic concept influenced by various factors, including the surrounding environment and life stage. Based on this idea, Lawton (1996) developed his theory of quality of life.

Table N01: Factors Influencing an Individual's Perception of Quality of Life According to Lawton's Theory

Spatial Context	Temporal Context
The surrounding environment affects an individual's perception of quality of life. The nature of the environment has both a direct impact, such as influencing health, and an indirect impact, which carries positive indicators, such as an individual's satisfaction with their living environment.	An individual's perception of the environmental impact on their quality of life becomes more positive with age. As a person grows older, they gain more control over their environmental conditions, leading to a more positive influence on their sense of quality of life

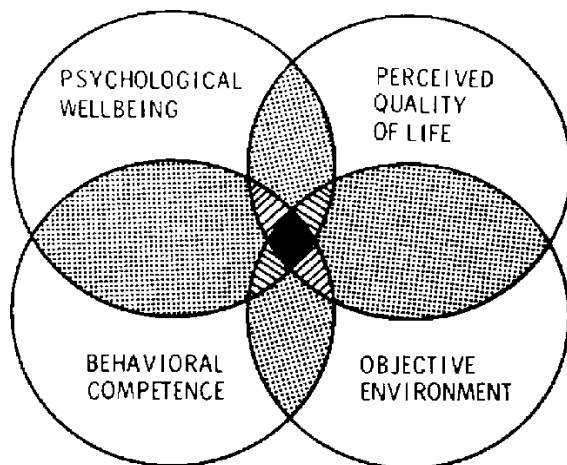
Source: (Souria, 2019-2020, p. 67).

Lawton's model of quality of life highlights the interplay among multiple interconnected dimensions that shape individuals' perceptions of

their quality of life. The model illustrates that perceived quality of life is formed through the interaction of the following factors:

- **Psychological Well-being:** Includes mental health, psychological adaptation, and self-satisfaction.
- **Behavioral Competence:** Refers to an individual's ability to adapt to their environment and make appropriate decisions for their daily life.
- **Objective Environment:** Represents external environmental factors such as living conditions, infrastructure, and available services. This is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 04: The Impact of Environmental Nature on an Individual's Perception of Quality of Life and its Effect on their Behavioral and Psychological Capacity.



Source: (Lawton,1996, p337)

The figure illustrates the interactive relationship between several factors that influence an individual's perception of quality of life, where perceived quality of life intersects with psychological health, behavioral capacity, and the objective environment.

This overlap indicates that quality of life is not merely a reflection of environmental conditions but is also influenced by an individual's psychological state and their ability to adapt to their surroundings.

The figure illustrates how environmental factors influence an individual's perception of quality of life by shaping behavioral abilities

and psychological well-being. As Lawton explains "On a bad day, the question 'How happy are you now?' might be mentally referenced a day or two back to include better days, thereby reducing the impact of current health symptoms or a negative mood" (Lawton, 1996, p. 337).

According to the above, Lawton's (1996) theory of quality of life underscores the interactive influence of environmental, health, behavioral, and psychological factors in shaping individuals' perceptions of their quality of life. He argued that quality of life is not determined solely by objective conditions, such as the physical environment, but is also influenced by subjective factors, such as psychological well-being and behavioral adaptability. More than that, he pointed out that perceptions of quality of life evolve over time, as individuals adjust their standards through social comparison, reassessing their lives based on past experiences or by comparing themselves to less fortunate individuals.

In accordance to this, this perspective mirrors the dynamic nature of quality-of-life formation through individuals' interaction with their environment and their ability to adapt to life changes.

The Fourth Requirement: The Integrative Perspective Explaining Quality of Life.

This section will address the integrative perspective in explaining quality of life by combining various theoretical approaches. It highlights how psychological, environmental, social, and economic factors interact to shape an individual's overall well-being, in accordance with Schalock's theory.

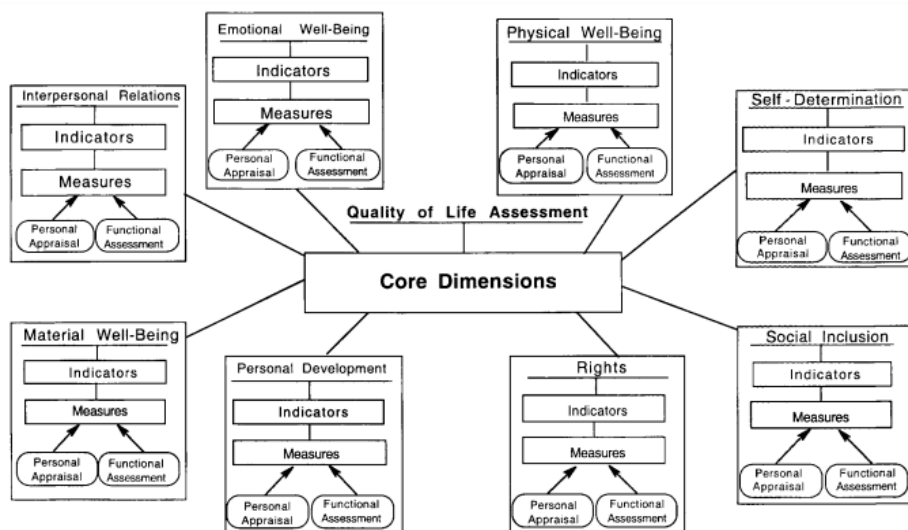
First Section :Schalock's Theory (2002).

The notion of quality of life is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond material aspects to encompass psychological, social, and legal dimensions. According to this perspective, Schalock (2002) proposed a theoretical model that seeks to identify the key factors that contribute to achieving quality of life.

Within his theory of quality of life, Schalock suggested a model that reflects the various conditions an individual desires or aspires to achieve in life. These conditions are linked to eight domains, defined by

three key indicators, with subjective indicators being the most dominant, as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure05: Represents the Domains of Quality of life According to Shalock's theory.



Source: (shalok, 2000, p.121)

The above figure illustrates the division of the eight dimensions into 24 subcomponents according to Shalock's theory. Thus, this diagram connects the subdimensions with dashed lines to indicate their interrelation.

- **Physical Dimension:** Refers to a person's physical health, including the ability to perform daily activities.
- **Psychological Dimension:** Relates to an individual's mental health, including emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.
- **Social Dimension:** Concerns a person's social relationships with others, including family, friends, and the community.
- **Environmental Dimension:** Encompasses a person's surrounding environment, including home, school, work, and society.

- **Spiritual Dimension:** Relates to an individual's spirituality, including beliefs, values, and meaning.
- **Economic Dimension:** Refers to a person's economic status, including income, employment, and assets.
- **Political Dimension:** Concerns an individual's political participation, including rights, responsibilities, and involvement in decision-making.
- **Cultural Dimension:** Refers to a person's cultural identity, including values, beliefs, and traditions.

Schalock introduced the concept of quality of life through a comprehensive model that integrates personal, social, material, and legal dimensions. He argued that quality of life is not solely determined by environmental or economic conditions but is shaped by eight fundamental domains: emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, material well-being, personal growth, physical well-being, self-determination, social inclusion, and human and legal rights.

According to the aforementioned author's light, quality of life is achieved when individuals find a balance between these various domains, enhancing their sense of satisfaction and happiness. The theory also highlights the interconnection between these dimensions, emphasizing that each domain influences the others in shaping the overall experience of a good life.

Conclusion:

Various theoretical approaches demonstrate that quality of life is not a fixed or uniform concept but rather a dynamic process influenced by the complex interaction between individual, environmental, and social factors. Each theory has sought to highlight different dimensions of this concept, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting human well-being. Thus, it can be concluded that:

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory:** Explains quality of life through the hierarchy of needs, where well-being is achieved by fulfilling basic needs (physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization).

- **Carol Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model:** Links quality of life to psychological factors, including autonomy, mastery, positive relationships, finding meaning in life, and personal growth.
- **Lawton's Quality of Life Theory:** Focuses on the impact of environmental and contextual factors (spatial and temporal) in shaping individuals' perceptions of their well-being.
- **Schalock's Multidimensional Approach:** Emphasizes the integration of psychological, social, material, and health-related aspects as a foundation for quality of life, reflecting a more holistic perspective.

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