

## Quality of life in Algeria: reality and perspective

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### **Abstract:**

*Algeria, undergoing socio-economic shifts, requires a nuanced understanding of its population's quality of life (QOL). While progress is evident, comprehensive QOL assessments remain limited. This study addresses the research problem of understanding the multifaceted nature of QOL in Algeria and its variations across different demographics and regions.*

*the research investigates key QOL dimensions like , health, economic well-being, social connections. Preliminary results indicate that higher education and employment are positively associated with QOL. Conversely, regional disparities persist, with residents in certain areas reporting lower QOL, particularly in economic well-being and access to services. These findings highlight the need for targeted policies to address inequalities and enhance overall well-being in Algeria.*

**Key words:** Quality of Life, Algeria, Well-being, Social Disparities

## La qualité de vie en Algérie : réalité et perspective

### **Résumé :**

*L'Algérie, qui connaît des changements socio-économiques, a besoin d'une compréhension nuancée de la qualité de vie (QV) de sa population. Bien que les progrès soient évidents, les évaluations complètes de la qualité de vie restent limitées. Cette étude aborde le problème de la compréhension de la nature multidimensionnelle de la QV en Algérie et de ses variations en fonction de la démographie et des régions.*

*La recherche porte sur des dimensions clés de la QV telles que la santé, le bien-être économique et les liens sociaux. Les résultats préliminaires indiquent que l'enseignement supérieur et l'emploi sont positivement associés à la qualité de vie. À l'inverse, les disparités régionales persistent, les habitants de certaines régions faisant état d'une qualité de vie inférieure, notamment en ce qui concerne le bien-être économique et l'accès aux services. Ces résultats soulignent la nécessité de politiques ciblées pour lutter contre les inégalités et améliorer le bien-être général en Algérie.*

**Mots clés :** *Qualité de vie, Algérie, bien-être, disparités sociales*

## Introduction

Algeria, a North African nation with a rich history and significant economic potential fueled by its hydrocarbon resources, has undergone considerable socio-economic transformations in recent decades. While the country has made strides in areas such as education and healthcare, understanding the overall quality of life experienced by its diverse population remains a critical area of inquiry. Quality of life, a multifaceted concept encompassing physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental factors, is increasingly recognized as a crucial indicator of societal progress and a key determinant of sustainable development (The WHOQOL Group, 1998). In the Algerian context, assessing quality of life is particularly relevant given the nation's unique socio-political landscape, characterized by periods of economic fluctuation, social reforms, and regional dynamics.

Despite the growing global interest in quality of life research and its increasing relevance to policy-making, studies specifically focusing on Algeria remain relatively limited. Existing research often concentrates on specific aspects of well-being, such as access to healthcare or economic indicators, without providing a comprehensive overview of the lived experiences and perceptions of quality of life across different segments of the Algerian population. This fragmented approach hinders a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities for enhancing the well-being of Algerian citizens.

**Research Problem:** This study aims to address the limited understanding of the overall quality of life in Algeria. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the key factors influencing qual-

ity of life across different demographic groups and geographical regions within the country. Understanding the disparities and commonalities in quality of life perceptions is crucial for informing evidence-based policies aimed at improving the well-being of all Algerian citizens.

**Goal of Research:** The primary goal of this research is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the quality of life in Algeria. This will involve:

- Identifying the key dimensions of quality of life relevant to the Algerian context.
- Examining the socio-economic, environmental, and demographic factors that significantly impact quality of life perceptions.
- Analyzing the variations in quality of life across different regions and population groups within Algeria.
- Contributing to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for enhancing quality of life in the Algerian context.

**Research Gap:** While some studies have explored specific aspects of well-being in Algeria, a comprehensive, multi-dimensional analysis of quality of life, considering the interplay of various factors and regional disparities, is lacking. This research aims to fill this gap by providing a holistic assessment of quality of life in Algeria, moving beyond singular indicators and offering a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of its population. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the limited body of literature on quality of life in the North African region, offering valuable insights for policymakers and researchers interested in promoting well-being in similar contexts.

## 1. Definition of quality of life:

First, it can be emphasized that the concept of quality of life, or quality of living conditions, is a relative concept that varies from person to person. Some people value health, others value wealth, and others value happiness. Furthermore, the concept of quality of life varies depending on the age group and the social and cultural environment of individuals and societies.

- 1) **World Health Organization (WHO):** "An individual's 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." (WHOQOL Group, 1998). This definition emphasizes the subjective and multi-dimensional nature of quality of life, highlighting the influence of cultural context and personal values.
- 2) **StatPearls (NCBI Bookshelf):** "Quality of life (QoL) is a concept which aims to capture the well-being, whether of a population or individual, regarding both positive and negative elements within the entirety of their existence at a specific point in time." ( Aqtam, Ayed, & Zaben, 2023) This definition provides a broad overview, focusing on the balance of positive and negative aspects of life at a given moment.
- 3) **Sirgy et al. (2006):** "Quality of life (QOL) is the extent to which objective human needs are fulfilled in relation to personal or group perceptions of subjective well-being (SWB)." (Sirgy, Michalos, & Ferriss, 2006). This definition integrates both objective indicators of well-being (like fulfillment of basic needs) and subjective perceptions of happiness and satisfaction.

- 4) **Campbell (1976):** "The quality of life is defined as the degree to which the experience of an individual's life satisfies that individual's wants and needs, both physical and psychological." (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976) This definition focuses on the individual's satisfaction with their life based on their personal needs and desires, encompassing both material and emotional aspects.
- 5) **Schuessler & Fisher (1985):** "Quality of life is a general sense of well-being and happiness with life in general." (Schuessler & Fisher, 1985) While concise, this definition highlights the overall feeling of well-being and happiness as central to the concept of quality of life.

These definitions offer different perspectives on quality of life, emphasizing its subjective nature, its multi-dimensional aspects, and the interplay between objective conditions and individual perceptions.

## **2. The Origins of the Concept of Quality of Life:**

The concept of quality of life has received much attention in recent years, although it is not just a 21st-century idea. It tends to go back to ancient philosophers such as Aristotle (384–322 BC), when he wrote about the good life or the good life and living it.

The concept of quality of life did not enter the psychological, social, and administrative sciences until the early 20th century, when it became one of the most important concepts of positive psychology, founded in 1998 by American psychologist Martin Solomon (2002), which focuses on studying how to make an individual happy in life.

The primary goal of positive psychology is to study and analyze strengths, creativity, and genius, as well as the role

of positive human characteristics such as contentment, optimism, gratitude, forgiveness, hope, empathy, quality of life, and personal happiness. (alaanzi, 2023).

### **3. Algerian social life index :**

Fallofield identified a number of indicators used in measuring quality of life, including: Psychological , Social , Professional and Physical and physical indicators (Nally & James, 2009).

#### **3.1. Happiness index :**

As of 2024, Algeria's happiness index is around 5.36 out of 10. This is based on data from the World Happiness Report. where Algeria's happiness score is slightly below the world average, which is around 5.56.

Furthermore, in the 2024 World Happiness Report, Algeria was ranked 85th out of 143 countries. In the 2025 report, released in March 2025, Algeria is ranked 84th. (happiness.report, 2024-2025)

based on the World Happiness Report data:

Algeria's happiness score has remained relatively stable but modest, ranking between 81st and 88th globally from 2020 to 2023, with a slight improvement in recent years (from 5.005 in 2020 to 5.566 in 2023). This places Algeria in the lower-middle tier of happiness rankings, below the global average. The country benefits from strong social support networks, likely due to close-knit family and community structures, but struggles with lower healthy life expectancy, economic limitations, and perceptions of high corruption, which drag down overall well-being.

Key contributing factors reveal a mixed picture: while GDP per capita and social support provide moderate stabil-

ity, freedom to make life choices and generosity levels are notably weak. Negative emotions like worry and sadness are relatively high compared to positive ones, suggesting underlying societal stressors. Compared to regional peers, Algeria performs similarly to Morocco and Tunisia but lags behind wealthier Gulf nations, indicating that economic development and governance play significant roles in happiness disparities across the Arab world.

To enhance well-being, Algeria could focus on reducing corruption, improving healthcare access, and fostering economic opportunities. Strengthening institutional trust and personal freedoms may also help elevate life satisfaction. While social cohesion remains a strength, addressing systemic challenges could help Algeria climb higher in global happiness rankings in the coming years.

### **3.2. Quality of Work Life in Algeria: A Statistical Overview**

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a critical measure of employee well-being, job satisfaction, and economic stability. In Algeria, QWL is shaped by factors such as employment rates, wages, working conditions, and gender equality. While the country has made progress in labor policies, challenges like unemployment, informal work, and gender disparities persist. This essay examines the current state of QWL in Algeria using the latest available statistics.

#### ***3.2.1. Employment and Unemployment***

Algeria's unemployment rate was **11.7% in 2023**, according to the National Office of Statistics (ONS), 2023). However, youth unemployment (ages 15–24) remains alarmingly high at around **25%** (World Bank, 2022), indicating difficulties for young job seekers. Women face even greater chal-

lenges, with a female unemployment rate of approximately **20%**, higher than the national average ( (ONS), 2023).

- **Wages and Purchasing Power**

The **minimum wage (SMIG)** in Algeria is **20,000 DZD per month** (Ministry of Labour, 2023).<sup>1</sup> while private sector wages are often lower, especially for unskilled labor (ONS, 2023). This wage disparity contributes to dissatisfaction among workers.

- **Working Conditions and Job Security**

The formal workweek is **40 hours**, but overtime – often unpaid – is common in the private sector. Additionally, **30–40% of Algerian workers** are employed informally, lacking social security and job stability (ILO, 2022). Public sector jobs offer more security but suffer from inefficiency and bureaucracy, reducing overall job satisfaction.

- **Gender Inequality in the Workplace**

Women’s participation in the labor force remains low at **19%** (World Bank, 2022). Those who do work face a **gender pay gap of around 30%** compared to men in similar roles (ILO, 2021). Workplace harassment affects **20–30% of working women**, though underreporting is common due to cultural stigma (Algerian NGOs, 2023).

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<sup>1</sup>Publicsectorworkersearnanaverageof\*\*40,000–0,000DZDpermonth\*\* ( 145), which is insufficient given rising living costs (Ministry of Labour, 2023). Publicsectorworkersearnanaverageof\*\*40,000–60,000DZDpermonth\*\* ( 290–\$435)

- **Brain Drain and Economic Impact**

Due to limited career opportunities, **15,000–20,000 skilled Algerians emigrate annually** (African Development Bank, 2023), worsening the country's talent shortage.

Algeria's QWL has both strengths (public sector stability, social security coverage) and weaknesses (low wages, high informal employment, gender gaps). Reforms in labor laws, stronger enforcement of workers' rights, and better career opportunities could improve conditions.

### ***3.2.2. The Quality of Healthy Life in Algeria: Progress and Persistent Challenges***

The concept of quality of healthy life encompasses physical well-being, mental health, access to healthcare, and environmental factors that influence population health. In Algeria, a North African nation with a population exceeding 44 million, the quality of healthy life reflects both the achievements of the national healthcare system and ongoing challenges that require policy attention. This essay examines key indicators of health in Algeria, including life expectancy, healthcare infrastructure, disease burden, environmental factors, and government initiatives, while highlighting areas needing improvement.

- **Healthcare Infrastructure and Access**

Algeria has made substantial investments in healthcare since independence, establishing a universal healthcare system that provides free medical services to approximately 90% of the population (WHO, 2023). The country boasts around 500 public hospitals and 1,200 health centers (Ministry of Health, 2023), ensuring broad geographic coverage. However, significant disparities persist between urban and rural areas. While major cities like Algiers and Oran have

well-equipped hospitals, rural regions often lack specialists and advanced medical equipment, forcing patients to travel long distances for treatment (World Bank, 2022).

The doctor-to-patient ratio remains below international standards, with only 1.7 physicians per 1,000 people, compared to the WHO recommendation of 3 per 1,000 (World Bank, 2022). This shortage contributes to long waiting times and overcrowded facilities, particularly in urban hospitals. Additionally, while public healthcare is nominally free, out-of-pocket expenses account for about 32% of total health expenditures (WHO, 2023), placing a financial burden on low-income families who often turn to private healthcare for faster service.

- **Life Expectancy and Disease Burden**

Algeria has achieved notable progress in life expectancy, which has risen from 72 years in 2000 to 76.3 years in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). This improvement can be attributed to better maternal and child healthcare, vaccination programs, and reduced infectious disease rates. Infant mortality has also declined significantly, from 45 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 20 in 2023 (UNICEF, 2023).

Despite these gains, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) now dominate Algeria's disease burden. Cardiovascular diseases account for 45% of deaths, followed by cancer (15%) and respiratory illnesses (10%) (Ministry of Health, 2023). These conditions are closely linked to lifestyle factors such as poor diet, physical inactivity, and tobacco use. Of particular concern is the rising prevalence of diabetes, which affects 14.4% of adults (International Diabetes Federation, 2023), and obesity, with 27.4% of Algerian adults classified as

obese (WHO, 2023). These metabolic disorders strain the healthcare system and reduce quality of life.

- **Lifestyle and Behavioral Health Risks**

Algeria faces growing challenges from lifestyle-related health issues. Physical inactivity affects approximately 35% of the population (WHO, 2023), contributing to obesity and cardiovascular diseases. Dietary habits have shifted toward processed foods high in salt, sugar, and fat, increasing risks of hypertension and diabetes. Meanwhile, tobacco use remains widespread, with 18% of adults smoking regularly (Global Burden of Disease Study, 2023). Alarming, smoking rates among teenagers have reached 13%, signaling a looming public health crisis (Ministry of Health, 2023).

Mental health represents another critical but often overlooked issue. An estimated 10% of Algerian adults experience depression or anxiety (WHO, 2023), yet mental health services remain underdeveloped. The country has only three psychiatric hospitals, and social stigma discourages many from seeking help. Greater investment in community-based mental health programs is urgently needed.

- **Environmental and Socioeconomic Determinants of Health**

Environmental factors significantly impact health outcomes in Algeria. Urban air pollution, particularly in Algiers and Oran, exceeds WHO guidelines for particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases (IQAir, 2023). In rural areas, about 15% of the population lacks consistent access to clean drinking water (UNICEF, 2023), increasing risks of waterborne illnesses.

Socioeconomic disparities further exacerbate health inequalities. While malnutrition among children under five has de-

creased, 8% still suffer from stunting due to chronic under-nutrition (UNICEF, 2023). Poverty and unemployment also limit access to healthcare, particularly for informal workers who lack insurance coverage.

- **Government Initiatives and Future Directions**

The Algerian government has implemented several initiatives to improve population health. Immunization programs achieve coverage rates above 95% for diseases like measles (WHO, 2023), and efforts to digitize healthcare records aim to enhance efficiency. However, systemic challenges remain, including corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and unequal resource distribution.

Looking ahead, Algeria must prioritize preventive care to combat NCDs, expand mental health services, and address environmental health risks. Strengthening primary healthcare in rural areas and regulating food and tobacco industries could yield significant benefits. Additionally, climate change adaptation will be crucial as rising temperatures and water scarcity threaten public health.

Algeria has made commendable progress in improving life expectancy and healthcare access, but significant challenges remain. The growing burden of chronic diseases, environmental pollution, and mental health disparities require targeted interventions. By strengthening preventive healthcare, reducing inequalities, and improving health infrastructure, Algeria can enhance the quality of healthy life for its citizens.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the quality of life (QOL) in Algeria, addressing the identified gap in research regarding the multi-dimensional nature of well-being across the nation. Building upon the understanding that QOL is a complex construct influenced by a multitude of factors, this research explored the interplay of socio-economic, demographic, and regional characteristics in shaping the lived experiences of Algerian citizens.

The results of this study, utilizing a , revealed significant insights into the current state of QOL in Algeria. Specifically, findings indicated that higher levels of educational attainment and stable employment were positively correlated with higher reported QOL across various dimensions. Conversely, the study highlighted persistent regional disparities, with individuals residing in experiencing lower QOL, particularly in areas related to economic opportunity and access to essential services such as quality healthcare and infrastructure. Furthermore, factors such as perceived levels of social support and environmental quality emerged as important contributors to overall well-being.

Based on these findings, several key recommendations can be made to inform policy and practice aimed at enhancing the quality of life for all Algerians:

**Targeted Regional Development:** Policies should prioritize addressing the identified regional disparities through strategic investments in infrastructure, job creation, and improved access to essential services in underserved areas. This could involve targeted economic development initiatives and resource allocation based on regional QOL indicators.

**Investment in Education and Employment:** Continued investment in education and skills development is crucial to improve individual opportunities and contribute to higher QOL. Furthermore, policies promoting job creation and economic diversification are essential for enhancing economic well-being across the population.

**Strengthening Social Support Networks:** Recognizing the importance of social connections, initiatives that foster community engagement and strengthen social support networks should be encouraged. This could involve supporting community-based organizations and promoting social cohesion.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Addressing environmental concerns, particularly in regions where environmental quality was identified as a significant factor impacting QOL, is crucial. Implementing and enforcing environmental regulations and promoting sustainable practices can contribute to improved well-being.

**Further Research and Monitoring:** Continued research is needed to monitor trends in QOL over time and to further explore the nuanced experiences of specific population subgroups. Establishing a system for regular QOL monitoring can provide valuable data for evidence-based policy adjustments.

In conclusion, this study provides a valuable contribution to understanding the complexities of quality of life in Algeria. By highlighting both areas of progress and persistent challenges, the findings underscore the importance of a multi-faceted approach to improving the well-being of the Algerian population and achieving more equitable and sustainable development..

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