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COMMUNITY APPROACHES TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN MALAYSIA

Edited by Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir



Community Approaches to Poverty Alleviation in Malaysia

Edited by
Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir

MySDG Academy

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Ipoh Model Farm Harvesting Event of Indian Community in
Kampung Tai Lee, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia

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Foreword

Hon. Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis@Fakharudy

*Chairperson, All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on
Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG)*

The MySDG Conference 2024 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, marks a significant milestone in our collective journey toward addressing poverty in Malaysia. We are publishing two volumes of all the papers presented at the conference – Book 1: *Poverty Conversations in Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia: The APPGM-SDG Findings from Ground Realities* and Book 2: *Community Approaches to Poverty Alleviation in Malaysia*.

These books encapsulate the profound insights, research, and discussions that emerged from this pivotal event. Over two days, esteemed speakers and participants from diverse backgrounds came together to explore the multi-faceted challenges of poverty, particularly among Sabah communities, and to chart a path towards a more inclusive and equitable Malaysia.

The two volumes delve into the complexities of poverty, shedding light on the various dimensions beyond mere income levels. They emphasise the importance of infrastructure and basic facilities as foundational elements for alleviating poverty. The recognition that access to clean water, electricity, education, healthcare, and transportation are not just basic human rights but essential building blocks for sustainable development is a key theme throughout these two books.

Moreover, the need for improved Federal-State relations and better coordination between different levels of government emerges as a crucial factor in effectively addressing poverty. The discussions highlight how coordinated efforts between Federal, State, and local authorities can lead to more coherent and impactful solutions for local communities.

The role of Members of Parliament (MPs) in development work at the grassroots level is also a central focus. MPs are seen as vital advocates for their constituents' needs, facilitating the implementation of development programmes and initiatives. However, these books also candidly address the significant obstacles that hinder these efforts, such as the lack of resources and funds, and the scarcity of accurate data to identify social issues and challenges faced by local communities.

In response to these challenges, the recommendations presented empowered local authorities to make informed decisions for their communities' specific needs. This is seen as a pathway to more effective and sustainable outcomes. Additionally, the utilisation of accurate ground-level data to inform policies, resource allocation, design, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes are emphasised as critical strategies for uplifting the socio-economic status of the vulnerable.

These books also underscore the importance of empowering MPs in development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Strengthening the capacity of elected representatives to engage with their constituents, advocate for their needs, and oversee the effective delivery of services are fundamental to ensure that no one is left behind in our pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development.

As you engage with the experiences, insights and recommendations within these pages, I hope you will be inspired to join us in translating these ideas into tangible actions. Through the power of collaboration, creativity, innovation and technology across sectors and communities, we can together create a future where poverty is alleviated, and every citizen has the opportunity to thrive and prosper.

These books are a testament to the unwavering dedication and passion of all those involved in the MySDG Conference 2024. They serve as a reminder that the journey towards a more just and equitable society is ongoing, and our commitment to building a Malaysia where every citizen can realise their full potential remains steadfast.

Introduction

Denison Jayasooria

Head of Secretariat, All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) and President of the Society for the Promotions of SDGs

Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir

MySDG Academy Officer and Conference Coordinator for MySDG Conference 2024

Poverty remains a pervasive and complex issue in Malaysia, despite the country's steady economic growth over the past decades. Although official poverty rates have declined, significant disparities persist, particularly among marginalised communities, rural populations, and migrant workers.

MySDG Academy hosted an SDG Conference on Poverty in Kota Kinabalu on 11 and 12 May 2024. Arising out of the papers presented are two publications. The first is *Poverty Conversations in Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia: The APPGM SDG findings from ground realities*.

This book is the second entitled, *Community Approaches to Poverty Alleviation in Malaysia*, delves into the multifaceted challenges of poverty in the country, offering critical insights into local efforts aimed at combating poverty, guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as concrete community solutions in addressing poverty concerns.

Drawing on a range of case studies, research findings, and community-led interventions, this book presents a comprehensive overview of how different sectors of society—governments, NGOs,

academic institutions, and local communities—are addressing poverty across Malaysia. From urban centres to rural villages in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah, the chapters in this book explore the intersection of socio-economic development, education, agriculture, and entrepreneurship in alleviating poverty.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The structure of the book is designed to guide readers through the diverse experiences and innovative approaches in Malaysia's poverty reduction efforts. Each part focuses on a specific aspect of poverty, providing real-world examples and research that highlight both the successes and persistent challenges faced by communities across the nation.

There are seven parts and a total of 19 articles. Many of the articles are written by research teams although we have highlighted only the lead writer as the contributor.

Part 1: Understanding the Landscape of Poverty contextualises the poverty landscape in Malaysia, focusing on the broader socio-economic trends that have influenced poverty levels. Chapter 1, for instance, explores the nexus between Malaysia's policies and the global SDG 1 (No Poverty) initiative. It examines the importance of spatial planning, policy implementation, and the need for a fresh analytical framework to understand poverty at both the individual and household levels. This section sets the stage for readers by emphasising the complexity of poverty and the role of national development plans like the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) in addressing these issues.

Part 2: Navigating Challenges in Poverty in Sabah focuses on poverty in Sabah as the state with some of the highest poverty rates in Malaysia

and the challenges related to education and infrastructure are particularly severe. Chapters 4 and 5 highlight how rural children in Sabah struggle with access to basic education due to poor infrastructure, lack of internet access, and limited resources. These barriers are exacerbated by poverty, leading to low motivation and high dropout rates. Additionally, the traditional waste management practices in Pulau Mabul demonstrate how poverty can hinder sustainable environmental solutions, as communities lack the resources and technology to implement modern waste management systems.

Part 3: Navigating Challenges in Poverty in Peninsular Malaysia focuses on poverty in Peninsular Malaysia as the book shifts to the complexities of poverty within different localities and among migrant workers. Chapter 7 discusses how exploitative labour practices and gaps in social protection systems perpetuate poverty among migrant workers, making them particularly vulnerable to economic instability. This section offers a critical analysis of Malaysia's legal and social frameworks and their role in either alleviating or exacerbating poverty among marginalised groups.

Part 4: Leveraging Agriculture to Overcome Poverty focuses on agriculture as a cornerstone of rural livelihoods in Malaysia, particularly in states like Sabah. This section highlights community-led agricultural projects, such as the “Social Lab” initiative in Tambunan, which empowers local farmers through sustainable agricultural practices. Chapters 8 and 9 demonstrate how agriculture can serve as a pathway out of poverty, particularly when bolstered by academic and NGO interventions that align with SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger) and 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Part 5 and 6: Economic Empowerment to Overcome Poverty focuses on entrepreneurship and skill development emerging as key strategies for poverty alleviation in rural communities. In Chapters 10 and 11, the book explores how rural communities are leveraging marketing knowledge and entrepreneurial training to foster economic independence. These initiatives are critical for empowering marginalised groups, particularly women, as highlighted in Chapter 13, which focuses on how entrepreneurial interventions have helped rural women in Malaysia develop resilience and adaptability in the face of economic challenges.

Part 7: Empowering through Tourism and Education to Overcome Poverty emphasises the role of tourism and education in poverty alleviation. Case studies from Sabah and Kelantan reveal how community-based tourism ventures and educational projects have created new economic opportunities for rural communities while also fostering resilience. Chapter 16, for instance, illustrates how rural tourism in Kadamaian and Kiulu has contributed to local economic development, while Chapter 19 highlights a small yet impactful educational project in Tuaran, Sabah, aimed at improving the quality of education and combating poverty in the region.

This book on community approaches to poverty alleviation underscores the importance of a holistic, community-driven approach to poverty reduction. The diverse case studies and research presented in this book illustrate that while poverty alleviation requires targeted policies and large-scale development efforts, grassroots initiatives led by local communities, supported by NGOs and academic institutions, are equally vital. The book aims to inspire policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to continue exploring innovative solutions to the complex and evolving challenge of poverty in Malaysia.

LESSONS LEARNT

The faces of poverty

Arising out of these chapters is the face of poverty in Malaysia. Who are the poor? They could be described as the poverty communities who are still in a disadvantaged stage. Among them are the indigenous rural people especially children and exploited migrant workers due to labor policies. This is the focus of many of the chapters.

The concerns of rural children of Sabah are the focus of chapter 4. They live in remote villages and the challenges in addressing educational needs. On the other hand, chapter 5 highlights the issues facing the small island people of Pulau Mabul. Here is a case study of local communities' efforts to manage plastic waste and derive wealth from it. The concerns of migrant workers are the focus of discussion in chapter 7. Here the emphasis is on the moral and legal framework for equal work opportunities including pay, working conditions and protection of migrant workers similar to local workers.

Challenges in addressing poverty

One could state that in Malaysia reaching the last mile in addressing poverty is both the distance from the major urban location and the lack of infrastructure such as road and digital connectivity especially for the interior of Sabah and Sarawak.

Chapter 9 highlights the major challenges facing rural villages in Sabah in undertaking community business related to marketing their produce. Enhancing technology literacy and infrastructure is seen as a clear ways to address these challenges.

Initiatives in addressing poverty

Very often the focus on poverty research is on the causes of poverty and the measurement of poverty. However, in this book, the focus of

the majority of the articles is what is being done at the ground level in addressing and overcoming poverty. These ground stories are illustrating the significance of partnerships and focus attention on small projects at the ground level in impacting change. Listed below are six key initiatives: -

Education as the pathway to break poverty

Chapter 3 contains stories of perseverance in education living in a hostel away from home or taking a bus from the interior to pursue education. Another two initiatives undertaken at the grassroots in enhancing the quality of education which has had a significant impact. This is illustrated in chapter 18 at a learning centre in an Orang Asli community in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan and another in chapter 19 at a primary school in Tuaran, Sabah.

Here are stories of those who were able to break the cycle of poverty through education and overcoming the obstacles. Education has been the biggest impact in breaking the cycle of poverty within a generation.

Community Farming and social lab

Chapter 8 describes the initiative of a community-based farming project as a “social lab”. Established by a private company in a rural village. This is a learning center on agriculture especially on vegetable growing as food security and self-sufficiency. The project was funded by APPGM SDG small grants project impacting ten local farmers.

Strategic partnership with academic institutions

The example of a smart partnership with an academic institution and a local poor community namely Kg Bambang Lama Ulu Tuaran in Sabah is highlighted in chapter 9. While this is a community farming project the partnership has enhanced modern farming, crop

diversification and water management which has impacted positively the livelihoods in the village.

Training for sustainable rural economic self-reliance

Training and capacity building is seen as a major step forward in overcoming poverty. This is the focus of Chapter 11 with an emphasis on business-related skills and digitization skills. It is a focus on shifting beneficiaries to becoming self-sustaining entities. The conceptual thought is well developed by Amartya Sen's *capability approach* which is related to human development. According to Sen "poverty is understood as deprivation in the capability to live a good life, and *development* is understood as capability expansion"¹.

Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Initiatives

Arising during the Covid lockdown dates is Mitchen which provided free meals for those affected by the lockdown as well as creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities which became empowering to those in need. It built resilience and a sense of community rather than dependency and isolation. This is well captured in chapter 12

Building the capacity of rural women through training in entrepreneurship has empowered them in the East Coast of Malaysia, a focus in chapter 13. Likewise in chapter 14 with rural communities in Sabah. There are implications for gender equality in this program. Building resilience is a better way than just handouts and these women are able to demonstrate this in spite of the many challenges they face.

¹ Sen's Capability Approach. <https://iep.utm.edu/sen-cap/>

Tourism-related social enterprises

Tourism-related projects show some alternative development community-based initiatives in improving socio-economic well-being. Chapter 16 draws an example from Sabah; Chapter 17 in Kelantan. Therefore, tapping local knowledge and local natural resources as a vehicle for economic wellbeing.

WORD OF APPRECIATION

A special word of appreciation and thanks goes to all the 19 chapter writers for their valuable contributions in understanding poverty and how they illustrated the APPGM-SDG findings and interventions. Thanks also to the Communications team at the MySDG Academy as well as the proofreader of this volume, Mohammad Shazie Zaini Mohd Shahril Firdaus Siva.

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Mohd Ikhwan Bin Aziz is a distinguished author and scholar specializing in talent management, with a PhD in the field. Currently serving as a dedicated faculty member at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), he plays a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of leaders and professionals. Dr. Aziz's commitment extends beyond academia, as he actively collaborates with the community to devise sustainable development solutions aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, he serves as the Director of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) at UMK, leveraging his expertise to foster entrepreneurship and economic growth in the region.

Mohd Sadiq bin Md. Shaffie is a motivated and self-driven to improve himself, passionate in learning more about economics and helping the society to become better. His goal is to be an educator and help younger generations to rise in education equality.

Muhammad Fairuz Bin Bukari, dedicated 12 years to Universiti Selangor (UNISEL), working in various administrative departments and faculties, and also served as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Student Affairs, Faculty of Business, and Faculty of Education & Social Sciences. In 2018, he resigned and co-founded an intensive SPM academy for *Tahfiz* students. Initially joining *Koperasi Anak Kedah Berhad* and NGO Pertubuhan Wawasan 3B Daerah Kuala Muda (PW3B) to make friends, he soon became involved with multiple NGOs in Kuala Muda, such as MRA, the Veterans' Association, YADIM Volunteers, PEMADAM and the AADK Squad. He is now a full-time entrepreneur and social educator.

Nathaniel Maikol is a specialist with expertise in soil science, bioindustrial science, and animal health and productivity. He received a Master of Science in Soil Science from Universiti Putra Malaysia, with a research emphasis on ammonia volatilization and nitrogen use efficiency in rice cultivation to improve soil fertility for sustainable crop production. He is currently working for a Ph.D. in Environmental Science with a focus on enhancing Local Paddy Production.

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Sathiswaran Uthamaputhran, a distinguished senior lecturer at University Technology Malaysia, emerges as a beacon of inspiration in the realm of entrepreneurship education. With a profound commitment to nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among students,

his contributions extend far beyond the confines of the classroom. His endeavours lie a fervent passion for entrepreneurship—an enthusiasm that permeates every facet of his professional journey.

Sinoretha Sining is a 24-year-old Dusun from Sabah, Malaysia, is currently pursuing her master's degree at UKM while serving as a graduate research assistant. Her academic pursuits are complemented by active engagement in international organisational activities, particularly advocating for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sinoretha is known for her outgoing nature and her dedication to voicing SDG issues within local communities and among international students in Asia. She believes in leading by example, striving to embody the values she advocates for.

Velan Kunjuraman is a seasoned senior lecturer who has excelled in academia since 2013. He is an active writer, having authored numerous manuscripts published in prestigious journals (SSCI, Q1-Q4) and presented at international conferences. His significant contribution to academia lies in his successful coining of the term "social transformation" within the realms of sociology of tourism and community development. While his primary interests and expertise are in sociology and tourism studies, he has also authored articles and books covering various socio-based domains, including cultural, ethnic, and developmental aspects.

Yap Yin is a retired Associate Professor from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) since 2009. He has served as a technical advisor on macroeconomic matters at the State Planning Unit of Sarawak. In 2003, he was a member of the research committee for the Ministry of National Unity. His research interests include national unity, the social capital of Malaysia and the development of environmental sustainability models for the country.

Yuzainy Janin, is a lecturer attach with the Hospitality Management Programme of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah. His teaching experience that spans reaching to two decades mainly focused (but not limited) on management aspect of hospitality, specialising in information technology (IT) and its applications. With a background in tourism, Yuzainy has involved in various research and consultation projects on tourism and local community both national and internationally. He is keen to explore the multifaceted tourism and hospitality industry from a localised standpoint.

Part 1:
**Understanding Poverty and Socio-
Economy Development**

Chapter 1

Unravelling The Nexus: Exploring Malaysia's Research Trends in Advancing UN SDG 1

Mohamad Ikhrum Mohamad Ridzuan, Azizan bin Morshidi, Noor Syakirah Zakaria & Rizal Zamani Idris

ABSTRACT

This study examines Malaysia's poverty rate with respect to SDG poverty reduction targets, the specific policies and programs implemented to address poverty within the SDGs' framework, and the challenges and obstacles faced by Malaysia in achieving SDG targets for poverty reduction. Despite Malaysia's significant achievements in reducing the aggregate poverty rate from 8.9% in 1995 to 1.7% in 2012, the country still faces pockets of poverty in rural areas, specific states or regions, ethnic groups, and urban areas. This underscores the importance of targeted spatial planning and policy implementation to eradicate poverty effectively. Utilising a bibliometric analysis of the SCOPUS database, the study identifies key indicators of poverty in Malaysia based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, Malaysia's alignment with SDG Poverty Reduction Targets comprises its poverty eradication programme, which has successfully reduced the incidence of poverty from 49.3% in 1970 to 8.7% in 1995, and then to 0.4% in 2016. Despite this overall reduction in poverty, the reality of relative poverty and the poverty gap is increasing, indicating the need for a more comprehensive approach to address poverty and inequality. The Malaysian government has prioritised the provision of job opportunities, household income, infrastructure, and facilities. However, challenges remain in identifying infrastructure and facilities capable of providing maximum services for all levels of society, particularly in rural areas. The bibliometric analysis highlights the expanding sphere of SDG-poverty reduction research in Malaysia, which reflects the country's intricate socio-economic landscape, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The growing academic output and impressive citation metrics indicate a strong scholarly interest in addressing poverty through various approaches. However, the emerging nature of this field warrants further exploration of the socio-legal and political factors that impact poverty alleviation efforts. By concentrating on local context and incorporating grey literature into research, discussions can be enhanced, enriching the applicability of poverty reduction strategies and contributing to global sustainable development discourses.

INTRODUCTION

The current discourse surrounding poverty and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries, such as Malaysia, has generated a sense of urgency within scholarly investigation. As researchers delve into the multifaceted dimensions of this complex issue, a rigorous examination of existing literature becomes essential to elucidate prevailing themes, identify gaps in knowledge, and discern potential avenues for impactful intervention (Bosco et al., 2018).

At the core of this academic inquiry is a profound recognition of the persistent challenges that hinder progress towards poverty alleviation and the attainment of SDGs. Within the context of Malaysia, a nation characterised by a juxtaposition of rapid economic growth and enduring socio-economic disparities, the research problem assumes a critical significance. Scholars endeavour to navigate the intricate web of factors contributing to the perpetuation of poverty in Malaysia, encompassing structural inequalities, inadequate access to essential services, and systemic barriers to socio-economic mobility. Additionally, the integration of SDGs into the national agenda emphasises the necessity of aligning policy frameworks and development initiatives with the overarching objectives of sustainable development and inclusive growth. The best knowledge of the authors, there are very limited bibliometric analysis studies have been

conducted on the domain of SDG-related poverty in Malaysia research outputs (Applanaidu et al., 2021; Yu & Huang, 2021).

The use of bibliometric analysis as a methodological approach has proven to be an indispensable tool for identifying trends, patterns, and thematic concentrations within the existing body of literature (Paul et al., 2021). By systematically retrieving and analysing bibliographic data, researchers aim to map the landscape of scholarly inquiry, delineate seminal contributions, and identify emerging areas of research interest. Conducting a bibliometric study within the domain of poverty and SDGs in Malaysia, researchers seek to enhance scholarly understanding, inform evidence-based policy formulation, and stimulate transformative action towards the realization of sustainable development objectives. This rigorous academic endeavour is poised to facilitate nuanced insights, encourage interdisciplinary dialogue, and galvanise collaborative efforts aimed at addressing the pressing challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in the Malaysian context (Ashari et al., 2022). To provide a clear understanding, a detailed examination of the information collected on SDG's poverty in Malaysia-related studies is presented.

In conformity with the research question formulation methodology utilised by Bhattacharjee et al. (2022), four primary research questions have been formulated, namely:

RQ1: What are the prevailing bibliometric tendencies (performance) with respect to the domain of poverty and SDGs in Malaysia?

RQ2: What are the present and prospective thematic tendencies (intellectual structure) associated with the domain of poverty and the SDGs in Malaysia?

Thus, the novel aspect of this research is the organised and comprehensive bibliometric review, which delineates the current state of knowledge regarding studies on SDG's poverty in Malaysia. Mukherjee et al (2022) highlighted the importance of incorporating novelty and value in a review and emphasised the need to unroll the veracities and address idiosyncrasies in a particular domain of research. These insights informed the rationale behind the chosen review approach. The authors aim to achieve the following research objectives based on the overarching research questions:

RO1: To identify the publication and citation trends in the domain of poverty and SDGs in Malaysia.

RO2: To identify the most influential publications (articles, outlets) on the domain of poverty and SDGs in Malaysia research context.

RO3: To identify the most prolific contributors (countries, authors) to the literature on the domain of poverty and SDGs in Malaysia research.

RO4: To trace the existing thematic knowledge clusters in the intellectual structure of the domain of poverty and SDGs in Malaysia research.

This article is organised into five parts. In the opening section, the intent of this analysis is outlined. The second section offers a comprehensive examination of existing literature. The third and fourth sections delve into a detailed analysis of the reviewed literature, highlighting the constraints of this evaluation and identifying areas that warrant further investigation. The concluding section offers a summary of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of Agenda 2030 in 2015. The SDGs, consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets, represent a global commitment to sustainability made by the 193 member states of the UN. Bali Swain & Yang-Wallentin (2020) have emphasised the need to operationalize the SDGs and evaluate the relevance of indicators. Stafford-Smith et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of considering interlinkages and interdependencies among the goals. In the vast and diverse landscape of developing countries, where the sprawling cities and rises over rural areas that bear witness to the struggles and resilience of their inhabitants, the fight against poverty is waged by unwavering determination. At the forefront of this formidable struggle is UN Sustainable Development Goal 1, a beacon of hope amidst the darkness of deprivation and despair (Zamzuri et al., 2023). In countries such as Malaysia, where prosperity coexists with inequality, poverty studies have become a focal point for academic inquiry, igniting intellectual passion for transformative change. In Kuala Lumpur's bustling streets and Malaysia's peaceful rural villages, scholars have delved into the complexities of poverty, unravelling its many manifestations, dissecting its underlying causes, and envisioning paths toward a more just and equitable future (Shah et al., 2023). Armed with rigorous empirical research, they navigate the intricate contours of socio-economic disparity, probing the intersections of policy, governance, and sociocultural dynamics that shape the lives of the marginalised and vulnerable. Through each research endeavour, they strive to amplify the voices of the marginalised, shed light on the shadows of neglect, and sow the seeds of empowerment and liberation. In the halls of academia, in which scholarly discourse reverberates, the pursuit of poverty eradication transcends mere academic interest, assuming the dimension of a moral imperative, a testament to the collective conscience of humanity, and a testament to the enduring resilience of the human spirit (Bosco et al., 2018).

The socioeconomic landscape of Malaysia is intricate and multifaceted, with the issue of poverty manifesting in numerous dimensions, casting a shadow over the aspirations of millions of people. With a population of over 32 million, Malaysia boasts a middle-income economy fuelled by robust industrialization and vibrant trade networks (Hasan et al., 2023). However, beneath the veneer of prosperity, there are pockets of entrenched poverty, particularly prevalent in rural areas and among marginalised communities. According to official statistics, the national poverty rate stood at 5.6% in 2019, which represented a decline from previous years, but nonetheless underscored the persistent challenges that beset the nation. Structural inequalities, disparities in access to education and healthcare, and uneven economic development exacerbate the plight of marginalised communities, perpetuating cycles of intergenerational poverty (Ayompe et al., 2021). The rural-urban disparities further compound this issue, with rural populations often bearing the brunt of inadequate infrastructure, limited employment opportunities, and uneven distribution of resources. Ethnic minorities, including indigenous groups and migrant workers, also face heightened vulnerability to poverty due to systemic discrimination and exclusionary policies. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, pushing many households into precarious financial situations and amplifying socioeconomic disparities (Ab Rahman et al., 2023). In light of this, empirical research plays a crucial role in elucidating the complexities of poverty in Malaysia, informing evidence-based policy interventions, and galvanizing collective action towards inclusive and sustainable development.

Poverty in Malaysia is a multifaceted issue that demands various initiatives for resolution. The country has taken steps to improve the condition of the Bottom 40 Percent (B40) group by implementing measures such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (Shahar et al., 2019). However, discrepancies between government policies

and organisational practices continue to pose challenges. Homeless individuals are at risk of developing mental health issues due to extreme poverty, which underscores the need for proper care and attention. Research conducted by the Consortium of B40 Research (CB40R) has shed light on the health disparities faced by the low-income population in Malaysia, including noncommunicable diseases and nutritional challenges. Despite rapid economic growth in Malaysia, only 0.86% of the population is considered multidimensionally poor based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index, which raises questions about the relevance of the measurement for the country (Dauda & Nik Hasan, 2018). Poverty in Malaysia is a multifaceted issue affecting various demographic groups, with rural areas being disproportionately affected. The removal of subsidies has led to a decline in income and consumption among rural households compared to urban households. Low socioeconomic status (SES) among older adults is associated with poor dietary habits, nutritional deficiencies, and high rates of chronic diseases, particularly in rural areas. The Consortium of Low-Income Population Research has emphasised the health challenges faced by the low-income population, including issues related to non-communicable diseases, mental health, and nutritional deficiencies (Shahar et al., 2019). Cost-effective strategies are necessary for improvement. Efforts to combat poverty in Malaysia are crucial and require interventions that address the socioeconomic disparities affecting health outcomes and quality of life among vulnerable populations. Strategic government interventions, proactive training measures, and collaborative efforts between stakeholders are essential to bridge the gap between aspirations and practical outcomes (Bahron, 2018).

The government of Malaysia has consistently pursued poverty eradication strategies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since gaining independence, with a commitment to equitable growth at its core. The country's developmental framework has always emphasised the combination of economic growth with

equitable distribution, which has guided various policies aimed at multifaceted development, including rural advancement, industrial diversification, and ethnically inclusive economic reform (Chin & Yong, 2019). These policies have contributed to income enhancement and poverty reduction, particularly in underdeveloped states, where region-specific initiatives have led to visible reductions in poverty levels. Although challenges in equitable infrastructure distribution correlate with poverty distribution, the government's strategies focus on strategic spatial development to bolster national anti-poverty efforts (Jayasooria & Othman, 2023). Research suggests that while government development spending alone may not significantly impact poverty, judicious fiscal management tends to correlate with a gradual reduction in poverty levels. Given the stark development contrast between the Central and Eastern regions as well as Sabah and Sarawak, the government dthe importance of evenly dispersing socio-economic prospects (Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, the government's dual focus on creating job opportunities and fostering infrastructure development, alongside methodical planning and policy execution, is vital for achieving the poverty reduction goals set by the SDGs.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) in Malaysia holds great potential for addressing poverty and aligning with the objectives of UN Sustainable Development Goal 1 (UNSDG 1). This initiative underscores Malaysia's commitment to combating poverty and promoting inclusive development through parliamentary engagement and multistakeholder collaboration (Salleh et al., 2023).

One of the significant roles of the APPGM-SDG is its potential to foster legislative reforms and policy frameworks that are conducive to poverty alleviation. By leveraging parliamentary influence and advocacy, the group can champion initiatives aimed at enhancing social protection mechanisms, expanding access to basic services, and

promoting equitable economic opportunities (Jayasooria & Othman, 2023). Through parliamentary debates, hearings, and consultations, the APPGM-SDG can amplify the voices of marginalised communities and advocate for policies that address the root causes of poverty, such as income inequality, unemployment, and lack of access to education and healthcare.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) functions as a platform for fostering cross-sectoral collaboration and facilitating knowledge exchange on matters pertaining to poverty (Zakinuddin, 2023). By bringing together policymakers, civil society organizations, academia, and private sector actors, the group can facilitate discussions, share best practices, and spark innovative approaches to poverty reduction. By means of collaborative ventures, such as joint research projects, capacity-building workshops, and community engagement programs, the APPGM-SDG can leverage the collective expertise and resources of a variety of stakeholders to implement targeted interventions that address the multidimensional nature of poverty (Rahman et al., 2023).

However, the efficacy of the APPGM-SDG in addressing poverty hinges on several critical factors. First, the group must ensure the meaningful participation and representation of marginalised groups, including women, indigenous people, and persons with disabilities, to guarantee that policies and interventions are inclusive and responsive to diverse needs (Jayasooria, 2021; Salleh et al., 2023). Furthermore, the APPGM-SDG should prioritise the implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of its initiatives and ensure accountability and transparency in decision-making processes.

Despite the considerable potential of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) in addressing poverty in Malaysia, its ultimate success hinges on sustained political will, robust stakeholder engagement, and unwavering commitment to

equity and social justice (Yusof & Sanusi, 2021). Leveraging parliamentary leadership and cultivating collaborative partnerships, the group can play a pivotal role in advancing UNSDG 1 and achieving Malaysia's aspiration of an inclusive and sustainable future.

METHODOLOGY

Mukherjee et al. (2022) proposed that a clearly defined body of research involving physical units of publications, bibliographic citations, and measurement of these items is referred to as bibliometrics. Bibliometric analysis, employing a quantitative approach, can provide a comprehensive overview and graphical representation of the accumulated scientific advancements in the domain under study. According to Aspiranti et al. (2023) bibliometric analysis assists academics in understanding current performance trends and the intellectual structure of a specific field, while also revealing the intricate nuances.

Bibliometric analysis has been employed to systematically evaluate the 'anatomy of knowledge' which can now be supplemented with visual representations due to advancements in software analytic Bhukya et al. (2022). In a seminal tutorial on bibliometric analysis, Donthu et al. (2021) present a suite of techniques, including performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis is designed to assess the impact of scientific output generated by various research constituents in a field, such as researchers, journals, institutions, and nations. Science mapping, on the other hand, enables researchers to depict the structure and dynamics of scientific disciplines. Two main categories comprise the bibliometric toolbox: performance analysis and science mapping (Bhukya et al., 2022).

The use of specific tools from the bibliometric analysis toolbox Donthu et al. (2021) was employed by the authors to map the performance trends and knowledge structure of SDG-related poverty studies in Malaysia within the final corpus of the literature. The following section

will provide a detailed description and elaboration of the methodological and procedural choices made by the authors for the three stages and six substages of the SPAR-4-SLR protocol adopted for this bibliometric analysis (Paul et al., 2021).

SPAR 4 SLR Protocol

To implement rigor, reliability, transparency, and objectivity in this bibliometric analysis, the SPAR-4-SLR protocol has been utilised by the author Paul et al. (2021). The methodological choices and explanations for their application are provided in the following manner.

Assembling

The process of assembling this review protocol involves two steps: identification and acquisition.

The focus of this bibliometric review is on SDG-related poverty studies in Malaysia. The authors developed research questions to investigate the domain's performance trends and intellectual knowledge structure. The sources used in this review were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings, as these sources are typically subjected to rigorous peer review and are evaluated based on originality. Additionally, the authors selected sources based on their quality, using the Scopus journal list, which includes over 44,000 journals, making it a more comprehensive and exhaustive database than other literature sources.

Acquisition

The acquisition sub-stage involves providing information about the databases/sources utilised to obtain bibliometric data, the search period, the terminologies employed for structured keyword searching, and the articles retrieved in the initial search. For this study, Scopus was selected as the search mechanism, as it is widely recognised as a premier source for bibliometric data. To capture as many relevant documents as possible, the beginning of the search period was left

intentionally open, while the final search was conducted on April 20, 2024. To develop a search string for the final set of keywords, the authors examined previous literature reviews related to SDG-related poverty studies in Malaysia. Following this, the authors consulted with two academic experts in the marketing field to refine the keywords, resulting in the final set presented in Table 3. To account for variations in the keywords, an asterisk (*) symbol was employed during the Boolean search, which aligns with the approach recommended by Bhukya et al. (2022). The refined and proofread search string was executed on Scopus using the 'title, abstract, and keywords' option, which yielded 69 documents. This sample size is deemed appropriate for bibliometric analysis, as stated by Rogers et al., (2020) and Bornmann et al.(2012).

For this bibliometric review, researchers accumulated 69 pieces of published literature relevant to SDG-related poverty studies in Malaysia from Scopus until April 2024. Authors used the following search terms: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (sdg OR sustainable AND development AND goal) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (malaysia) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (poverty) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (poor) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (despair) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (deprivation)).

Arranging

The process of organising and purifying the literature for this review protocol involves two distinct stages. The first stage, organization, involves the coding of bibliographic information, which includes the article title, journal title, author name, author keywords, number of citations, and publication year (see Figure 1.1).

The second stage, purification, involves the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the documents and articles being considered. Non-English language articles were excluded from the purification process. In terms of inclusion, all documents were considered, as they typically undergo a complete peer review process.

Additionally, only 'journal' and 'conference proceedings' were included as sources, as they are deemed the most credible (already mentioned in the identification stage). The subject areas of Business, Management and Accounting; Social Sciences; Economics, Econometrics and Finance; Arts and Humanities; Psychology and Decision Sciences were also selected to ensure a comprehensive review of relevant articles.

A data-cleaning process was also conducted, which involved screening articles by reading abstracts, titles, and keywords to remove irrelevant, erroneous, and duplicate entries (Veloutsou et al., 2022). This final sample remains 69 documents (Donthu et al., 2021).

Evaluation

The evaluation subsection of the review protocol delves into the examination and agenda proposal strategies. For the analysis method, this review utilises an inductive approach, which involves generating ideas from existing data patterns. The analysis employs a series of bibliometric analysis tools, classified into performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis is conducted to illustrate and depict publication and citation trends, classify the most influential publications, authors, and countries.

Science mapping is performed using methods such as co-authorship analysis (for authors and countries), which involves examining the interactions among academics in a research field, and co-word (or keyword co-occurrence) analysis, which focuses on exploring the existing or future relationships among topics in a research domain by considering the written content of the article. These science-mapping techniques are used to unpack thematic knowledge clusters and identify avenues for future research.

The author deployed software such as Microsoft Excel to conduct content analysis and descriptive analysis (a variant of performance

analysis), Bibliometrix-R to conduct co-authorship analysis, and to construct and exemplify the network of clusters (themes) emerging from the co-word (or keyword co-occurrence) (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

In the final stage of the review protocol, the authors reported the limitations and conventions of their review. The authors utilised a combination of figures, tables, and narratives to present their findings. However, the authors also acknowledged that their results may be limited by the accuracy and completeness of bibliometric data from Scopus, as well as the scope of analysis that can be conducted through bibliographic data-based methods such as science mapping and performance analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1.1. Document Profile (RO1)

DESCRIPTION	RESULTS
Main Information About Data	
Timespan	2004:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	60
Documents	69
Annual Growth Rate %	3.53
Document Average Age	3.64
Average citations per doc	11.28
References	0
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	449
Author's Keywords (DE)	239
AUTHORS	
Authors	252
Authors of single-authored docs	13
Authors Collaboration	
Single-authored docs	13
Co-Authors per Doc	3.77
International co-authorships %	31.88

Document Types	
article	39
book	2
book chapter	11
conference paper	9
note	1
review	7

Table 1.1 presents the scholarly works focused on reducing poverty in Malaysia in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2004 to 2024. The findings indicate a diverse range of publication sources, totalling 69 documents from 60 authors, which fosters interdisciplinary engagement. The annual growth rate of publications stands at 3.53%, reflecting a consistent expansion in research output over the years. Although this growth is modest, it demonstrates a sustained interest in poverty reduction in alignment with the SDGs, which may align with the global and national progress made in this field.

A field that has an average document age of 3.64 years and an average citation rate of 11.28 per document is considered to be relatively young and influential. The citation rate is particularly commendable, indicating that the research outputs are not only current but also impactful, fostering further discussion and inquiry within the academic community. However, the absence of references could be due to an anomaly or a database retrieval issue, as references are an essential component of scholarly communication.

Furthermore, 252 authors have contributed to these documents, with 13 of them being single authored. The number of single-authored documents may indicate individual expertise and leadership within this niche field. The data from collaboration metrics indicate that there are 3.77 co-authors on average per document, which is higher than the average for many fields, suggesting a thriving collaborative atmosphere. International co-authorships account for 31.88% of the

total, which is a strong indication of global collaboration, thereby enhancing the research's international applicability and relevance. When analysing the types of documents, articles were most prevalent, comprising 39 of the totals, which is a typical finding in scientific discourse. The inclusion of book chapters (11) and conference papers (9) highlights the research's academic and practical dimensions, while reviews (7) demonstrate the ongoing critical review of the existing literature, which is essential for advancing understanding and identifying future research directions.

According to the data, the body of literature on SDG-related poverty reduction in Malaysia is dynamic and evolving, with substantial engagement, cooperative efforts, and international involvement. These factors collectively support the notion that scholarly work in this field is current and holds considerable sway within the academic community.

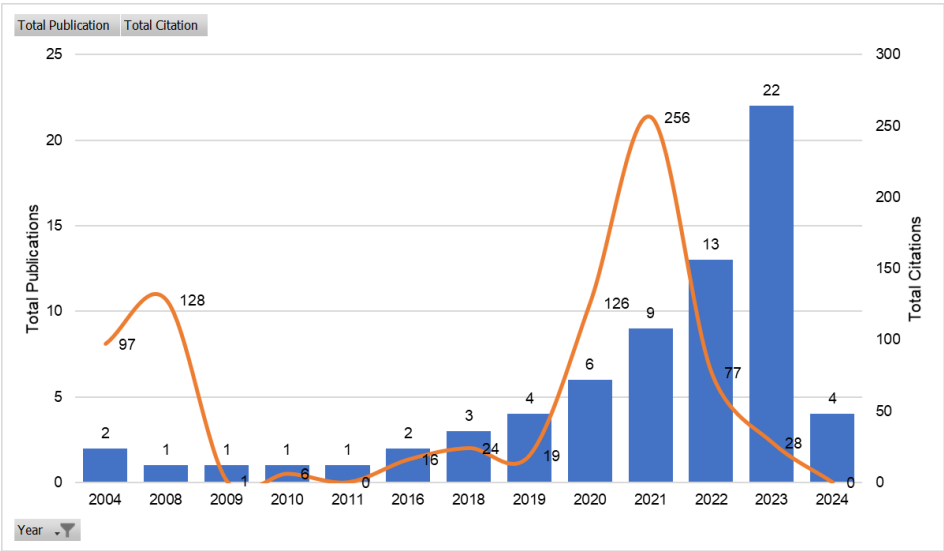


Figure 1.1. Annual Publication Growth and Citation (RO1)

Figure 1.1 depicts the annual tally of total publications over the past two decades. In the early 2000s, there was a modest beginning of scholarly activity, with a significant peak in 2021, possibly indicating a

surge in research interest or a response to specific policy or academic initiatives. The line chart, on the other hand, illustrates the progression of citations received over the years. It is noteworthy that there was a delayed response in citations to publications, which is a common occurrence in bibliometric trends. The peak in citations in 2020 may signify a high-impact research period or the accumulation of earlier works exerting their influence in the academic sphere. A bibliometric analysis reveals that the correlation between the number of publications and citations serves as an indicator of the research community's engagement with a particular topic. The sudden increase in 2020 suggests that research outputs from previous years have gained substantial attention, which may have an impact on subsequent research or policymaking. The rise in publications in 2021 necessitates further contextual interpretation. This may be attributed to a national or global emphasis on poverty reduction strategies that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, the high publication count may be a consequence of increased funding or collaborative research initiatives.

The decline in citations observed in 2024 must be considered in the context of time. Citations typically serve as an indicator of the academic community's acknowledgment and integration of research findings into broader discussions. Given that bibliometric data is accumulative and dependent on the dissemination and adoption of research outcomes, the citation figures for 2024 are likely to be incomplete. Bibliometrics is not merely a count of output; it reflects the dynamics of research impact and dissemination. The bar and line graph should be read in conjunction with a narrative that incorporates academic, socioeconomic, and policy-driven influences on research activity. The graph in question elucidates the dynamic state of research on SDGs in the context of poverty reduction in Malaysia, as evidenced by the peaks in publications and citations, which suggest an increase in scholarly communication and impact. The data points underscore the field's liveliness and responsiveness to both global and

regional imperatives aimed at eradicating poverty. Nonetheless, any analysis must be mindful of the inherent lag in bibliometric indicators and the necessity for comprehensive data, particularly for more recent periods.

Table 1.2. Documents by Countries (RO3)

Country	Articles	SCP	MCP	Freq	MCP_Ratio
MALAYSIA	41	30	11	0.594	0.268
NIGERIA	2	0	2	0.029	1
USA	2	0	2	0.029	1
AUSTRALIA	1	0	1	0.014	1
BANGLADESH	1	1	0	0.014	0
BRUNEI	1	1	0	0.014	0
COLOMBIA	1	1	0	0.014	0
INDONESIA	1	0	1	0.014	1
JAPAN	1	1	0	0.014	0
PHILIPPINES	1	0	1	0.014	1
PORTUGAL	1	0	1	0.014	1
SRI LANKA	1	0	1	0.014	1
UNITED KINGDOM	1	1	0	0.014	0

Table 1.2 presents a bibliometric analysis of publications related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerning poverty, categorized by country. The evaluation was based on specific indicators, including the total number of articles, single-country publications (SCP), multiple-country publications (MCP), frequency (Freq), and MCP ratio. This study offers valuable insights into SDG-related poverty reduction in Malaysia. The country has 41 articles, indicating a strong domestic focus on this topic, which could be attributed to the heightened national interest in SDG targets and recent implementation of policies aimed at poverty reduction. The higher number of SCP (30) compared to MCP (11) signifies that a substantial amount of research is being conducted within Malaysia's borders, possibly reflecting specific local context considerations in addressing poverty unique to the country.

The MCP Ratio of 0.268 for Malaysia indicates that, although collaboration occurs, the majority of the work is carried out within national boundaries, potentially suggesting the need for increased international collaboration to improve the depth and scope of the research. This notion aligns with recent efforts towards global partnerships under SDG 17.

In contrast, Nigeria and the USA, with fewer articles, have an MCP Ratio of 1, indicating that all their work in this area is part of international collaborations. This could be indicative of countries' approaches to poverty reduction, which may rely more on global partnerships and comparative analyses, or it could suggest that their contributions to this field are often part of broader international initiatives. The values of Freq, indicative of the proportion of multi-country collaborative efforts, place Malaysia at 0.594, suggesting that a considerable portion of Malaysian research engages with international authors, despite the predominance of the SCP. This aligns with the global interconnectivity emphasised in the SDG framework and the growing awareness of the universality of poverty-related challenges, necessitating cross-border knowledge exchange.

The representation of articles from countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, and Japan, all with MCP ratios of 1 or 0, reflects either a completely collaborative approach or isolated research activity, respectively. For countries with a ratio of 1, involvement in collaborative research underscores the global scope of the SDG challenges and the importance of sharing insights and solutions. The data highlight the significance of both regional and international research initiatives in tackling poverty-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These figures imply that Malaysia has devoted considerable resources to domestic research aimed at reducing poverty. Nevertheless, enhanced international cooperation is still needed, as it could provide fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to address the challenges faced. This is particularly

important in the face of the dynamic nature of poverty, as demonstrated by the intricate socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to respond to these changes through well-informed policymaking and academic research.

Table 1.3. Annual Publication of Documents (RO2)

Year	iY	TP	%	Cumm. TP	Cumm. %	NCA	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h-index	g-index	Citation sum within h-Core	Citable Year	m-index
2004	2	2	3.08%	2	3.08%	3	2	97	48.50	48.50	2	2	97	21	0.095
2008	1	1.54%	3	4.62%	1	1	128	128.00	128.00	1	1	1	128	17	0.059
2009	1	1.54%	4	6.15%	1	1	1	1.00	1.00	1	1	1	1	16	0.063
2010	1	1.54%	5	7.69%	1	1	6	6.00	6.00	1	1	0	6	15	0.067
2011	1	1.54%	6	9.23%	1	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0	14	0.000
2016	2	3.08%	8	12.31%	3	2	16	8.00	8.00	2	2	2	16	9	0.222
2018	3	4.62%	11	16.92%	6	3	24	8.00	8.00	2	3	3	22	7	0.286
2019	4	6.15%	15	23.08%	14	4	19	4.75	4.75	2	4	4	16	6	0.333
2020	6	9.23%	21	32.31%	25	6	126	21.00	21.00	4	6	6	124	5	0.800
2021	9	13.85%	30	46.15%	47	7	256	28.44	36.57	4	9	9	251	4	1.000
2022	13	20.00%	43	66.15%	58	7	77	5.92	11.00	4	8	8	69	3	1.333
2023	22	33.85%	65	100.00%	78	10	28	1.27	2.80	4	4	4	20	2	2.000
Grand Total	65	100.00%				238	44	778	11.97	17.68				21	

The information provided in the Table 1.3 shows the trajectory of publications on SDG-related poverty in Malaysia, highlighting various essential metrics that illustrate both the extent and influence of research in this area. In terms of Total Publications (TP), a noticeable upward trend is evident in the number of publications from 2004 to 2023, which suggests a growing academic interest and research production in this field. The substantial increase in recent years could be reflective of the heightened focus on SDGs owing to global policy directions and the amplification of poverty issues caused by recent economic challenges, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As for the Citations (C/P and C/C/P), the citations per publication and citations per cited publication exhibited significant variability. Notably, there has been an increase in citations in recent years, indicating that research is gaining traction and relevance within the academic community. The growing number of citations can be associated with the urgency to address poverty in light of current events and extensive government efforts to achieve the SDGs. The h-index and g-index are metrics used to measure the productivity and impact of a published work, respectively. A stable h-index across years, with a fluctuating g-index, suggests a consistent impact within a core set of articles, with

an occasional broader influence in specific years. This pattern may indicate seminal works that continue to influence new research with periodic bursts of broader impact, as certain studies have gained attention.

The citable year indicator, along with the m-index (adjusted h-index for the number of years since the first publication), suggests that the field is maturing and consistently contributes to the academic discourse on poverty in Malaysia. An increasing m-index over time indicates that the rate of impactful publications is growing, likely driven by evolving research agendas and policy interest. The percentages of non-cited articles (NCA) and publications (NCP) offer valuable insights into the level of research engagement. While some articles remained uncited, the overall trend of declining percentages of NCA and NCP could suggest an improvement in research quality or relevance.

These results also emphasise the significance of domestic and international collaboration, as evidenced by the varying percentages of non-collaborative articles. The dynamics of research collaboration can be attributed to Malaysia's strategic focus on SDG goals and the need to address poverty through multidisciplinary and multinational initiatives. Bibliometric data reveal a growing and influential body of literature on SDG-related poverty in Malaysia that aligns with the country's initiatives and challenges in this domain. This increase is consistent with global and national priorities for addressing poverty, indicating a responsive and progressive research environment that contributes to the global discourse on poverty reduction and SDGs.

Table 1.4. Prolific Authors and Titles (RO3)

No.	Author(s)	Title	Source Title	TC	C/Y
1	Ashari H.; Abbas I.; Abdul-talib A.-N.; Mohd Zamani S.N. (2022)	Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development Goals: A Multigroup Analysis of the Moderating Effects of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Research Frontiers and Way Forward	Sustainability (Switzerland)	37	12.33
2	Bahron H. (2018)	Research Frontiers and Way Forward	IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science	2	0.29
3	Amin H.; Hassan M.K.; Shaikh I.M. (2023)	Waqf-based qardhul hassan financing preference in Malaysia: an exploratory study	International Journal of Ethics and Systems	2	1.00
4	Alam M.M.; Wahid A.N.M.; Siwar C. (2018)	Resilience, adaptation and expected support for food security among the Malaysian east coast poor households	Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal	5	0.71
5	Shuhidan S.M.; Lokman A.M.; Hamidi S.R.; Kadir S.A.; Syahirah S.; Alam	Unfolding emotions for creating happiness and quality of life in Malaysia's low-income community using text mining	Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology	0	0.00
6	Isham N.H.M.; Rahman H.A.; Zain I.N.M. (2022)	Community Perception and Assessment of Public Toilets in Kuala Lumpur Among Users of KTM Commuter Public Toilet	Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences	0	0.00
7	Ayompe L.M.; Schaafsma M.; Egoth B.N. (2021)	Towards sustainable palm oil production: The positive and negative impacts on ecosystem services and human wellbeing	Journal of Cleaner Production	109	27.25
8	Hafidzi N.A.; Tarmidi Z.; Adi Maimun N.H.; Hassan N.; Mat Noor N.A.; Ariffin	ASSESSING SUSTAINABILITY LEVEL from SOCIAL ASPECTS for AFFORDABLE HOUSING in MALAYSIA USING SPATIAL INDICATORS	International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences - ISPRS	1	0.17
9	Latip A.R.A.; Othman N.; Sa'at N.H.; Aziz N.; Muhamad R. (2023)	ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ECER HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES	Journal of Sustainability Science and Management	0	0.00
10	Halim S.; Huda H.; Luqman M.; Yan C.W.; Fatin S. (2020)	A review: Update on vertical transmission of HIV	International Journal of Medical Toxicology and Legal Medicine	1	0.20
11	Abbasi I.A.; Ashari H.; Ariffin A.S.; Yusuf I. (2023)	Farm to Fork: Indigenous Chicken Value Chain Modelling Using System Dynamics Approach	Sustainability (Switzerland)	1	0.50
12	Chin Y.H.; Yong H.N.A. (2019)	Barriers and critical success factors towards sustainable hazardous waste management in	IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering	3	0.50
13	Mintz-Habib N. (2016)	Biofuels, food security, and developing economies	Biofuels, Food Security, and Developing Economies	4	0.44
14	Renganathan E.; Davies P. (2023)	Sustainable Development Goals and the role of and implications for primary care physicians	Malaysian Family Physician	1	0.50
15	Abdullah N.S.M.; Letchamanan H. (2022)	Meeting the Educational Needs of Every Child – A Malaysian Perspective	Studies in Global Justice	0	0.00
16	Vaziri M.; Acheampong M.; Downs J.; Rafee Majid M. (2019)	Poverty as a function of space: understanding the spatial configuration of poverty in Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goal number one	GeoJournal	13	2.17
17	Loganathan T.; Chan Z.X.; de Smalen A.W.; Pocock N.S. (2020)	Migrant women's access to sexual and reproductive health services in Malaysia: A qualitative study	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	16	3.20
18	Dauda S.; Nik Hasan N.N. (2018)	Framing the sustainable development goals in Malaysian online news	SEARCH Journal of Media and Communication Research	17	2.43
19	Álvarez E.R.; Castiblanco J.S.; Montoya M.M. (2024)	Sustainable intensification of palm oil production through cattle integration: a review	Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems	0	0.00
20	Mohd Hanafiah K.; Abd Mutalib A.H.; Miard P.; Goh C.S.; Mohd Sah S.A.; Ruppert N. (2022)	Impact of Malaysian palm oil on sustainable development goals: co-benefits and trade-offs across mitigation strategies	Sustainability Science	17	5.67

Analysing Table 1.4 concerning the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) related to poverty publications in Malaysia reveals several insights into the landscape of academic contributions in this domain. The table lists publications by various authors on topics associated with poverty and the SDGs in Malaysia. It includes data on the total

count of citations (TC) each publication has received and the citations per year (C/Y), which provides an average annual citation metric since the year of publication. The TC column indicates the recognition and influence of each type of work within the academic community. A higher citation count suggests that the research is considered valuable and relevant by its peers. For instance, a publication with over 100 citations indicates that it has had a significant impact, whereas papers with zero citations might be newer, highly specialized, or have not yet caught the attention of the academic community.

In light of the bibliometric data provided, it is useful to examine the top five authors according to their total citations (TC). This analysis can shed light on their influence within the field.

Ayompe's work, which has a TC of 109, centres on the consequences of palm oil production on sustainability. This research highlights Ayompe's considerable influence and relevance in discussions concerning environmental and social sustainability. Muhd Hanafi's research, with a TC of 17, focuses specifically on the impact of palm oil production on sustainable development in Malaysia. This demonstrates a targeted influence on the critical discourse surrounding this industry's sustainability.

The work of Shuhidan on enhancing happiness and quality of life in low-income communities through text mining has gained traction in the field of social psychology and well-being, despite having a lower citation count. Alam's research on resilience and food security, with a citation count of five, lays the groundwork for discussions on adapting to environmental changes for food sustainability. Bahron's research on the future of entrepreneurial research fronts, despite having a lower TC of two, may suggest a more recent publication or a less established area of study that is gaining interest. The TC serves as a measure of scholarly influence and the frequency of an author's work being referenced in other research, emphasising the importance of

their contributions to the field of SDG and poverty reduction in Malaysia.

The C/Y metric can be especially indicative of a publication's ongoing relevance. A high C/Y ratio suggests that publications continue to be cited frequently each year, indicating sustained interest and influence. Conversely, a lower or zero C/Y ratio could imply that the publication has not sustained interest over time or is too recent to have been cited. Notably, publications with a strong focus on sustainability and its intersection with economic and social facets, such as palm oil production's impact on community welfare and indigenous chicken value chain, tend to have higher citations, suggesting that these are pressing topics within the SDG and poverty discourse in Malaysia.

The diversity of journals and conference series, from those focusing on ethics and systems to cleaner production and sustainability, reflects the multidisciplinary nature of SDG research, encompassing environmental, social, economic, and governance perspectives. The analysis of these bibliometric indicators is integral for identifying key contributors, influential studies, and emerging trends in poverty-related SDG research in Malaysia. It would also guide future research directions, collaborative opportunities, and assessment of the research impact on policymaking and on-the-ground poverty alleviation efforts.

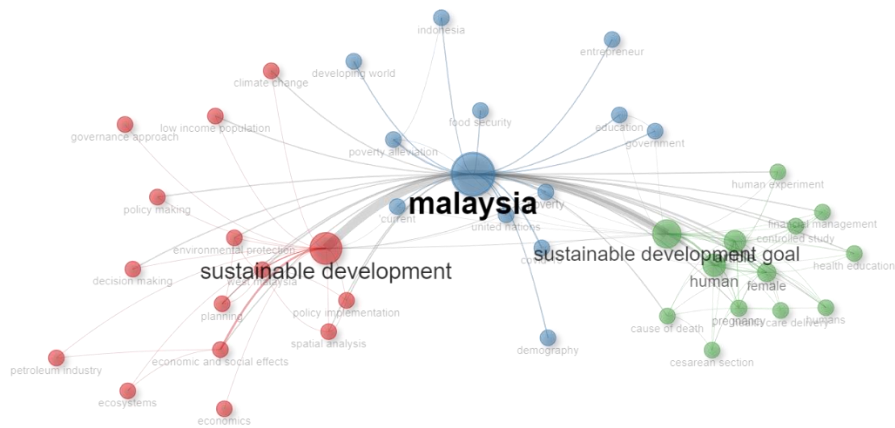


Figure 1.2. Main Clusters (RO4)

Figure 1.2 appears to categorize keywords from SDG-poverty research in Malaysia into clusters, where each cluster signifies a thematic concentration of studies. By using bibliometric indicators within these clusters, the impact and connectivity of each keyword in the research landscape can be assessed.

Cluster 1 (red) comprises fundamental themes like "sustainable development" and "climate change," indicating extensive discussions on the relationship between poverty and broader sustainability objectives. The high betweenness score for "sustainable development" suggests that this theme frequently intersects with others, shaping the SDG-poverty discourse.

Cluster 2 (blue) exhibits an educational and entrepreneurial focus with implications for poverty reduction strategies such as "food security." Here, "government" displays a notable PageRank, indicating significant influence over poverty discourse, possibly due to policy-oriented research.

Cluster 3 (green) emphasises demographic and health aspects with keywords like "female" and "pregnancy," which may pertain to gender-focused poverty research. The substantial closeness score of "human"

implies an overarching theme that connects various subtopics in the cluster.

The value of these bibliometric clusters lies in their comprehensive research approach to addressing poverty in relation to Malaysia's SDG initiatives. Collectively, the clusters and metrics inform researchers and policymakers about the most influential themes and potential areas for future investigation or intervention.

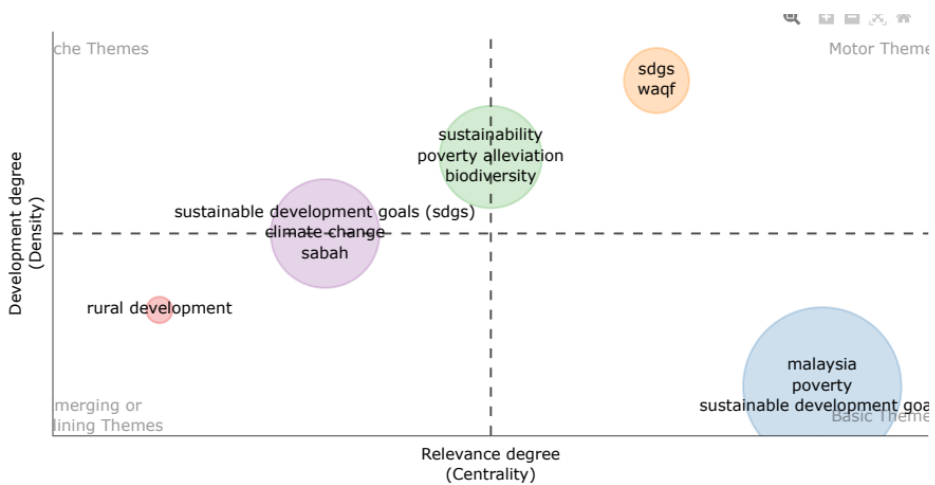


Figure 1.3. Theme Map (RO4)

Figure 1.3 presents a strategic map of themes derived from bibliometric analysis, showcasing the relationship between various research areas related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and poverty in Malaysia. This map illustrates the degree of development and relevance of each theme based on two axes: the vertical axis signifies the theme's development (density), while the horizontal axis denotes the theme's centrality (relevance degree).

In this map, Malaysia's poverty theme is depicted as a Basic Theme with high centrality and density, indicating a well-established core area of research with extensive literature, and is foundational to other research themes in the field. Additionally, Sustainable development

goals and SDGs waqf themes have been identified as Motor Themes, which demonstrate both high density and centrality, suggesting that they are well-developed and influential across the field, driving research, and connecting various sub-themes.

On the other hand, sustainability, poverty alleviation, biodiversity, and climate change themes are classified as Niche Themes, which have high density but lower centrality. They represent specialized, mature areas of research with significant depth, but are less connected to other themes in the network. Rural development and the Sabah theme are plotted as Emerging or Declining Themes, which have lower density and centrality, indicating that they are either newer areas with growing literature or are potentially diminishing in focus within the current research landscape.

This strategic map is beneficial for scholars and policymakers, as it informs them about the consolidated body of knowledge, the themes that drive the research agenda, and where emerging or specialized topics are developing within the context of SDGs and poverty in Malaysia. Moreover, it helps identify potential gaps and opportunities for future research.

DISCUSSION

The increase in bibliometric outputs related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Malaysia, particularly those pertaining to poverty reduction, can be attributed to several factors, including recent events and ongoing policy initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Malaysian economy, resulting in a rise in absolute poverty from 5.6% in 2019 to 8.4% in 2020. This reversal of the previous trend of poverty reduction has likely spurred further academic research to understand and address new challenges in poverty alleviation (Zulkifli et al., 2021).

Additionally, the increase in the national poverty line income in 2019 has expanded the scope of research required to address the issue, making more of the population statistically poor. School closures during the pandemic have disproportionately affected children from poor families, potentially widening educational and nutritional gaps, and necessitating further study of these new dimensions of poverty (Abdullah et al., 2022).

The government's response has also been instrumental in driving the increase in bibliometric outputs. The 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) aims to eradicate hardcore poverty and address the economic disparity between states, with a focus on increasing economic activities and improving infrastructure in less-developed regions. Furthermore, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has announced the setting of national SDG targets and accelerator initiatives to enhance Malaysia's commitment to achieving SDGs by 2030, which would include intensifying efforts across all levels of government and various sectors (Latip et al., 2023).

The increase in scholarly publications and subsequent citations is likely due to the policy responses and the changing socio-economic landscape, which have piqued the interest of the academic community. Researchers are seeking to contribute to the national dialogue on poverty reduction and to influence policymaking with evidence-based recommendations. The bibliometric trends indicate a convergence of factors, including heightened academic and policy interest, a response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, and the mobilization of national efforts to meet the SDGs within the targeted timeframe.

Furthermore, the bar and line chart in question display a clear correlation with recent socioeconomic progress and policy initiatives in Malaysia, particularly the peak in research publications and citations observed in the years 2020 and 2021. The COVID-19

pandemic led to a significant rise in absolute poverty rates in Malaysia, thereby reversing earlier trends of poverty reduction and capturing the attention of academia towards the emerging challenges in poverty alleviation (Vaziri et al., 2019).

In response to this crisis, the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) was implemented by the Malaysian government, which comprised various strategies to eradicate hardcore poverty and address the economic disparities among states. These strategies included enhancing economic activities and strengthening infrastructure in less-developed states, which have traditionally experienced higher rates of absolute poverty. Simultaneously, the national government has set specific SDG targets for the first time, emphasising initiatives such as improving the national governance structure for SDGs, aligning programs with SDG objectives, and raising awareness of their implementation. The concerted effort to reach these targets by 2030 has likely spurred a surge in scholarly publications, as researchers seek to contribute to evidence-based policymaking and understand the impacts of such initiatives (Ab Rahman et al., 2023).

Moreover, there has been a call for understanding poverty dynamics at the micro level, using approaches such as vulnerability analysis and the input-output-outcome-impact (IOOI) framework to create a robust foundation for policy formulation. This multidimensional analysis of poverty includes examining the effects of economic instability and climate change on agricultural yields, potentially driving transitory poverty and contributing to the increase in bibliometric outputs as the academic community investigates these complex phenomena. Therefore, the academic discourse seems to encapsulate the intricate socio-economic issues, and the policy initiatives designed to tackle them. As Malaysia endeavours to recover from the pandemic and pursues the Sustainable Development Goals, the significance of publication on SDG related poverty alleviation has become

increasingly apparent, culminating in the observed trends in bibliometric data (Ashari et al., 2022).

The data supporting Malaysia's researchers' commitment to publishing on poverty-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is reinforced by the nation's recent socioeconomic challenges and initiatives. Although Malaysia made significant progress in reducing extreme poverty and the incidence of absolute poverty prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it still faces challenges in addressing relative poverty and the urban-rural divide. According to recent reports, while the absolute poverty rate was 6.2% in 2022, poverty in Malaysia encompasses more than just income levels, and includes access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. It is crucial to analyse poverty beyond aggregate figures in order to capture the diverse experiences and challenges faced by different regions and communities.

To address these issues, the Malaysian government has been proactive in implementing policies and initiatives. For example, the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) focuses on eradicating hardcore poverty by utilising tailored, locality-based strategies, and improving infrastructure and connectivity, particularly in less developed states (Akbar, 2017). This plan aligns with the objective of SDG 1.2, which aims to reduce by at least half the proportion of people living in poverty in all its dimensions by 2030. The Malaysian government acknowledges the need for more comprehensive income and non-income poverty indicators, recognising that poverty is a multidimensional issue that impacts various aspects of an individual's life. The establishment of the Poverty Unit under the Economic Planning Unit to coordinate poverty alleviation policies and the government's commitment to eradicating hardcore poverty by 2025 demonstrate a strategic and data-driven approach to tackling these socio-economic disparities. These policy directions and economic reforms are critical steps towards transforming Malaysia into a high-

income nation by 2025, as projected by the World Bank. However, achieving this goal requires addressing the issue of low wages and improving the quality of human capital, which is essential for ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed across all segments of society (Amin et al., 2023).

In short, Malaysia's emphasis on research focused on SDG-related poverty reduction reflects the country's continuous efforts to tackle the intricate, multifaceted difficulties of poverty. This emphasis highlights the significance of implementing extensive, data-driven, and inclusive strategies that prioritise equitable development and guarantee that all citizens can take part in and profit from the nation's socio-economic progress. The rise in the number of publications can be attributed to the government's initiatives and academic discussions that emphasise poverty as a multifaceted problem that extends beyond financial limitations. This is consistent with Malaysia's national efforts to establish SDG indicator targets and finalize accelerator initiatives to achieve these goals more effectively, as articulated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. These initiatives are outlined in the Phase 2 Sustainable Development Goals Roadmap and are intended to enhance national SDG achievements and increase awareness and implementation at various levels (Shahar et al., 2019).

The increase in citations per publication suggests that research quality and impact are gaining recognition, particularly given the intricate challenges posed by poverty, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), the pandemic's economic fallout has resulted in a rise in the incidence of absolute poverty in Malaysia, reversing the downward trend observed prior to 2020. However, the government's implementation of the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) reflects a concerted effort to address these issues by aiming to eradicate hardcore poverty and promote inclusive growth, particularly in less-developed states. Furthermore, it is increasingly apparent that a fresh

analytical framework is necessary to comprehend the nuances of poverty dynamics at both individual and household levels. Such approaches encompass vulnerability analysis, which serves to identify not only the poor but also those who are vulnerable and at risk of falling into poverty. This enhanced understanding is essential for formulating effective and enduring anti-poverty policies, especially considering the ongoing urban-rural divide that contributes to the country's uneven socio-economic landscape (Abbasi et al., 2023).

Overall, Malaysia's SDG performance reflects positive progress; however, challenges persist. These assessments indicate disparities in performance across states and territories, highlighting that a high GDP does not always equate to sustainable development. To address SDG targets, it is necessary for all stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and public sector, to exercise their collective responsibility and work together in a coordinated manner. The bibliometric trends and the subsequent policy developments in Malaysia demonstrate the country's shifting research landscape, which is becoming more closely aligned with the nation's strategic development goals and the international SDG agenda.

The importance of sustainable development and poverty reduction has become more pronounced in the post-pandemic era. Cluster 1's emphasis on themes such as "sustainable development" and "climate change" reflects an academic focus on the intricate relationship between environmental stewardship and social welfare. The pandemic has highlighted the need for resilient systems that cater to both the ecological balance and human prosperity. In Cluster 2, the prominence of "government" with its PageRank suggests that policy interventions have become increasingly central in scholarly discourse. This underscores a real-world shift in which government actions are vital to navigating the complexities of pandemic recovery, addressing food security, and fostering inclusive entrepreneurship. Cluster 3's focus on demographic health variables such as "female" and

"pregnancy" signifies a growing recognition of the gendered nuances of poverty, a subject that has gained renewed attention in light of the pandemic's disproportionate impact on women. The connectivity of the "human" keyword across themes in this cluster denotes an integrated approach for understanding how various social determinants of health intersect with poverty. This bibliometric mapping is a reflection of current realities, suggesting a research and policy landscape attentive to the dynamic interconnections between sustainability, economic recovery, educational initiatives, and demographic health as societies strive for equity and resilience in a changed world (Mohd Hanafiah et al., 2022).

In the post-pandemic world, the significance of "Malaysia poverty" as a Basic Theme in academic research reflects its crucial status as a pressing issue, potentially exacerbated by the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. The prominence of "Sustainable development goals" and "SDGs waqf" as Motor Themes emphasises their relevance to recovery strategies and underscores the necessity of sustainable approaches in the post-pandemic era (Amin et al., 2023). Although Niche Themes like "sustainability" and "poverty alleviation" remain essential, their specialized and deeply rooted nature may result in limited interconnections with broader post-pandemic recovery themes. Emerging or Declining Themes, such as "rural development," could signify areas requiring renewed attention or adaptation in light of the pandemic's evolving challenges, particularly in regions like Sabah, where development disparities might have been intensified (Shah et al., 2023). The mapping of these themes highlights their relevance in guiding policy and research in Malaysia's ongoing response to and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis (Latip et al., 2023).

The critique appropriately identifies limitations that are not uncommon in specialized academic fields. The scarcity of literature in prestigious journals on SDG-related poverty research in Malaysia

indicates a gap between the generation of local knowledge and its dissemination through globally recognised platforms. This gap may result from various factors, such as the absence of access to international publication networks or difficulties in fulfilling the publishing criteria of high-impact journals, which often demand rigorous methodological frameworks and substantial contributions to existing global discourses.

To address this gap, expanding the scope of the literature review beyond databases like Scopus to encompass other scholarly repositories can be beneficial. Additionally, incorporating grey literature, including policy papers, government reports, and industry publications, could compensate for the academic lag. Such sources frequently contain timely data and are closer to on-the-ground realities, offering immediate insights into the practical implementation of the SDGs and their impact on poverty in Malaysia. Engaging with this broader spectrum of literature can enrich the understanding of local challenges and innovations in poverty reduction, providing a more nuanced and holistic perspective that is necessary for both scholarly and practical advancements in the field. Moreover, the literature on poverty reduction in Malaysia with a focus on SDGs has not adequately addressed the complex legal and political frameworks that either support or hinder progress in this area. Future research should critically examine the interplay between national laws, policies, and political will in driving or impeding the attainment of these goals. A thorough analysis of the legal instruments and political mechanisms at play, with a particular focus on their efficacy, accountability, and alignment with SDG mandates, is essential. This research agenda should prioritise empirical studies that evaluate the outcomes of existing policies, identify systemic barriers, and propose legal reforms that could serve as catalysts for accelerated SDG achievement (Halim et al., 2020). Such scholarship could shed light on ways to integrate SDG targets into the legislative agenda and political

discourse, ultimately contributing to more effective and equitable poverty-reduction strategies.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the bibliometric analysis has revealed that the development of SDG-focused poverty reduction research in Malaysia is both a product of and a response to the country's complex socioeconomic landscape, particularly in light of the post-pandemic 'new normal' world. The steadily growing scholarly output reflects the academic community's commitment to addressing poverty through multifaceted approaches, as evidenced by the promising citation metrics of this research environment. However, the relatively young age of the documents highlights the ongoing development of this field and the necessity for continuous exploration, particularly in relation to the legal and political challenges that intersect with poverty alleviation efforts. Although international collaboration is present, the predominant emphasis on domestic research underscores the importance of understanding local contexts. Given the ever-changing nature of poverty, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19 and the ongoing evolution of the SDG agenda, it is crucial to further explore the intersections between poverty, legal frameworks, political will, and policy implementation. As the researchers plan for future research, it is essential to extend their investigative scope to encompass grey literature and diversify the publication spectrum. By doing so, they can enrich academic discussions with practical, real-world insights, resulting in a stronger and more applicable knowledge base that can guide and shape effective poverty reduction strategies in the Malaysian context and contribute to the global discourse on sustainable development challenges.

Credit authorship contribution statement

Mohamad Ikhran bin Mohamad Ridzuan: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Validation, Writing. Noor Syakirah Zakaria: Review & Editing, Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Visualization, Validation. Rizal Zamani Idris: Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Project Administration. Azizan bin Morshidi: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Supervision, Writing - Original Draft, Review & Editing Original Draft.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The researchers attest that they have no financial or personal interests that could be construed as competing or influencing the findings presented in this article.

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Chapter 2

Unlocking Pathways to Inclusive Development: The Role of Social Capital in Shaping Poverty Outcomes in Malaysia

Mohd Ikhwan Aziz, Sathiswaran Uthamaputhran & Rafazila Ramli

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between social capital and poverty outcomes in Malaysia through a quantitative analysis based on data collected from 50 respondents using convenience sampling. Utilising correlation analysis, the study investigates the associations between various social capital indicators and poverty measures, shedding light on the mechanisms through which social networks influence poverty dynamics. The findings reveal significant positive correlations between social capital indicators, such as trust levels, civic engagement, and reciprocity, and poverty measures, including income levels, access to services, and family composition. Furthermore, the study highlights the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, providing valuable insights into the composition of the study population. These findings underscore the importance of social capital in shaping poverty outcomes and hold implications for future research and policy initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive development in Malaysia. Recognising social capital as a driver of inclusive growth, policymakers are encouraged to integrate social capital considerations into poverty reduction strategies and national development plans, fostering resilience and empowerment within communities.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a pervasive challenge faced by nations worldwide, including Malaysia. Despite remarkable economic growth and development strides in recent decades, poverty remains a pressing issue that demands attention. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by Malaysia and other United Nations member states, underscore the urgency of addressing poverty and promoting sustainable development (Assembly, 2015).

In the Malaysian context, poverty manifests in various forms, affecting both urban and rural communities. While the country has made significant progress in reducing absolute poverty rates over the years, there are persistent disparities in income, access to education, healthcare, and basic services. As Malaysia strives to achieve the SDGs, understanding the multi-dimensional nature of poverty is essential for designing effective policies and interventions (Anand, 1977).

This paper adopts a quantitative approach to explore poverty in Malaysia through the lens of Social Capital Theory. By employing statistical methods and data analysis, this study aims to provide empirical insights into the relationship between social capital and poverty outcomes. Through rigorous examination of socio-economic indicators, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Malaysia (Hatta & Ali, 2013; Zainal et al., 2023, p. 202).

The rationale for employing a quantitative approach lies in its ability to provide robust empirical evidence, allowing for systematic analysis of poverty dynamics and policy implications. Social Capital Theory offers a theoretical framework that emphasises the role of social networks, relationships, and community cohesion in addressing poverty. By integrating these perspectives, this paper aims to generate actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and

researchers to effectively tackle poverty and advance the SDGs agenda in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Social Capital Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of social relationships, networks, and community connections in addressing poverty. Originating from the works of scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam, Social Capital Theory emphasises the importance of social cohesion, trust, and cooperation in fostering collective action and achieving positive outcomes for individuals and communities (Asquith, 2019; Coleman, 2018; Edwards & Foley, 2001; Grossman, 2013).

In the context of poverty research in Malaysia, Social Capital Theory offers insights into how social networks and relationships can serve as valuable resources for individuals facing economic hardship. By examining the social capital embedded within communities, this theoretical perspective highlights the potential for leveraging existing social ties to alleviate poverty and promote inclusive development.

Conceptualization of Social Capital and Its Dimensions

Social Capital can be conceptualized as the networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate cooperation and mutual assistance within a community. It encompasses both bonding social capital, which refers to connections within homogenous groups, and bridging social capital, which involves connections across diverse social groups (Boutilier, 2017).

In the Malaysian context, social capital manifests through various dimensions, including

In recent years, there has been growing interest in understanding the role of social capital in influencing poverty outcomes across various socio-economic contexts. This literature review explores the relationship between different social capital indicators and poverty

measures, focusing on three key dimensions: trust levels (Jennings & Stoker, 2004), civic engagement (Jennings & Stoker, 2004; Powers & Webster, 2023), and reciprocity (El-Attar, 2013.; Feiler, 2006), and their association with income levels, access to services, and overall poverty measures, respectively.

Trust Levels and Income

Numerous studies have highlighted the positive correlation between trust levels within communities and income levels of individuals or households. Research by Putnam (1993) and Coleman (1988) suggests that communities characterised by higher levels of trust tend to exhibit greater economic prosperity (Siisiainen, 2003). Trust facilitates cooperation and collaboration among individuals, leading to increased economic opportunities and resource-sharing networks. This finding underscores the importance of trust as a foundational element of social capital and its impact on poverty alleviation efforts.

Civic Engagement and Access to Services

Civic engagement, defined as active participation in community activities and decision-making processes, has been linked to improved access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Studies by Kawachi et al. (1997) have demonstrated that communities with higher levels of civic engagement are better equipped to advocate for their needs and mobilize resources to address systemic barriers to service delivery (Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997) . This highlights the transformative potential of civic engagement in promoting inclusive development and enhancing the well-being of marginalised populations.

Reciprocity and Poverty Measures

Reciprocity, characterised by mutual assistance and support within communities, plays a crucial role in mitigating the impact of poverty and fostering resilience among vulnerable populations. Research by Feiler, (2006) suggests that reciprocal relationships enable individuals

to access social and economic resources that may not be available through formal channels. Communities with strong reciprocity networks are better able to cope with economic shocks and social disruptions, thereby reducing the likelihood of chronic poverty and social exclusion (Delaine et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the literature reviewed here highlights the complex nature of social capital and its profound influence on poverty outcomes. Trust levels, civic engagement, and reciprocity emerge as key drivers of inclusive development, shaping income levels, access to services, and overall poverty measures within communities. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing effective poverty alleviation strategies and fostering sustainable development in diverse socio-economic contexts. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms through which social capital operates and to identify best practices for leveraging social capital to promote equitable and resilient societies.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, we delve into the intricate interplay between social capital and poverty outcomes within the Malaysian context, specifically focusing on the regions of Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah. Our methodology adopts a quantitative approach, meticulously analysing 50 samples drawn through convenience sampling, ensuring representation across various demographic segments within these areas (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Quantitative research serves as our compass, guiding us through the vast sea of data to discern meaningful correlations and patterns. By harnessing numerical data, we aim to unravel the underlying dynamics shaping poverty levels and how social capital influences them (Elder, 1998).

Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah emerge as focal points in our investigation, their unique socio-economic landscapes offering invaluable insights into the nexus between social cohesion and poverty alleviation. Through meticulous analysis, we seek to shed light on the extent to which factors such as community trust, networks, and civic engagement impact poverty outcomes in these regions.

Our study transcends mere statistical analysis; it delves deep into the fabric of society, unravelling the intricate threads that bind individuals and communities. By scrutinizing a diverse array of socio-economic indicators, from educational attainment to employment opportunities, we aim to uncover the subtle yet profound ways in which social capital influences the cycle of poverty.

As we embark on this empirical journey, our methodology ensures rigor and reliability, meticulously gathering data points and subjecting them to rigorous statistical scrutiny. Through correlation studies, and other quantitative techniques, we aim to discern not only the presence of relationships but also the strength and direction of their impact (Artusi et al., 2002).

Ultimately, our research endeavours to inform policy interventions and community initiatives aimed at bolstering social capital as a means of combating poverty. By illuminating the pathways through which social cohesion can uplift marginalised communities, we aspire to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discourse on poverty alleviation in Malaysia and beyond.

In our endeavour to unravel the complex interplay between social capital and poverty outcomes within the Malaysian context, particularly in the regions of Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah, our methodology adopts a comprehensive quantitative approach. As diligent researchers, we recognise the paramount importance of

employing robust analytical techniques to elucidate the underlying dynamics shaping poverty levels and the influence of social capital.

To start, we do correlation analysis, a fundamental tool in quantitative research, to discern the strength and direction of relationships between various socio-economic indicators and poverty metrics. By meticulously examining correlation coefficients, we aim to uncover the nuanced connections between constructs such as trust, reciprocity, civic engagement, and poverty indicators like income levels and access to essential services (Bland & Altman, 1994).

Furthermore, we employ Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, to ensure the reliability of our measurement scales. This meticulous assessment allows us to ascertain the coherence and stability of our instruments measuring social capital constructs. A high Cronbach's alpha value serves as a hallmark of reliability, bolstering the credibility and validity of our findings (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

In tandem with correlation analysis and Cronbach's alpha, we conduct frequency analysis to gain deeper insights into the prevalence and distribution of key variables within our sample. By scrutinizing the frequency distributions of demographic characteristics, social capital indicators, and poverty outcomes, we acquire a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic landscape in Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah.

Through the judicious application of these analytical techniques, our study endeavours to construct a nuanced narrative that elucidates the intricate relationship between social capital and poverty outcomes. By adhering to rigorous methodological standards and embracing analytical diversity, we aim to offer insights that not only contribute to academic discourse but also inform evidence-based policy interventions and community development initiatives aimed at

fostering resilience and empowerment within marginalised communities.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The empirical findings of this study, within a sample of 50 respondents, reveal significant insights into the intricate relationship between social capital and poverty outcomes in Malaysia. Through rigorous quantitative analysis, the study meticulously examines various socio-economic indicators and their association with different dimensions of poverty.

Frequency analysis emerges as a pivotal tool, facilitating the organization and summarization of categorical data to uncover patterns and trends within the dataset. By succinctly presenting the distribution of values through frequency tables, researchers gain valuable insights into the prevalence of different categories, enabling informed decision-making and the identification of actionable insights. Across disciplines, frequency analysis serves as a cornerstone of empirical research, providing a robust framework for data exploration and hypothesis testing. In the context of this study, frequency analysis enriches our understanding of the complex interplay between social capital and poverty outcomes, contributing to the broader discourse on poverty alleviation strategies (Zadeh, 1950).

Table 2.1. Demographic analysis

CATEGORY		FREQUENCY
Gender	Male	3
	Female	47
Location	Pasir Mas	39
	Tanah Merah	11
Type of Business	Services	12
	Food and Beverage	38
Education	SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia)	31

	Certificate	14
	Diploma	3
	Bachelor's Degree	2
Income	Below RM1,000	29
	RM1,000-RM3,000	17
	RM3,001-RM5,000	4
Family Members	4 and below	13
	5 or more	37
Marital Status	Single	7
	Married	29
	Divorced/Separated	14

Gender distribution paints a vivid picture, revealing a significant preponderance of female participants, with 47 out of 50 respondents identifying as women. This imbalance suggests a distinct gender composition within our sample, potentially reflecting underlying societal norms or participation patterns. Geographical origins provide nuanced insights into respondents' residential locales. Pasir Mas emerges as the predominant hub, boasting 39 respondents, while Tanah Merah, though less populous, contributes 11 participants. This geographic dispersion hints at potential variations in community dynamics, resource availability, and socio-economic contexts between the two locales.

Occupational engagement unveils intriguing patterns, with a substantial majority of 38 respondents involved in the food and beverage sector. In contrast, the services sector accommodates a smaller cohort of 12 participants. This divergence underscores the prevailing economic activities within our sample, indicating varying employment opportunities and income sources. Educational backgrounds present a diverse tapestry, with the plurality of respondents holding SPM qualifications, followed by cohorts with certificates, diplomas, and bachelor's degrees. This educational mosaic underscores the multifaceted pathways through which

individuals navigate their socio-economic trajectories, reflecting diverse aspirations, opportunities, and academic achievements.

Financial landscapes exhibit notable disparities, with a considerable segment reporting incomes below RM1000, while fewer fall within the RM1000-RM3000 and RM3001-RM5000 brackets. This income distribution mirrors the economic heterogeneity within our sample, suggesting differential access to resources, employment prospects, and financial security. Family compositions offer intriguing glimpses into respondents' domestic arrangements, with households of five or more members emerging as the predominant archetype. In contrast, smaller families comprising four or fewer members constitute a minority within our sample. This family dynamic underscores the diversity of familial structures and support networks underpinning respondents' socio-economic contexts.

Marital statuses illuminate the relational landscapes of our respondents, with the majority being married, followed by divorced or separated individuals, and single participants being the least represented. This marital tapestry provides insights into the relational statuses, life trajectories, and support systems shaping respondents' socio-economic narratives.

In summation, this detailed analysis of the frequency table unveils a rich tapestry of demographic and socio-economic attributes defining our sampled population. From gender dynamics to residential locales, occupational pursuits, educational journeys, financial realities, familial structures, and marital statuses, each facet offers nuanced insights into the diverse lived experiences and socio-economic landscapes of our respondents, enriching our understanding of their backgrounds and circumstances.

The empirical findings of this study reveal significant insights into the relationship between social capital and poverty outcomes in Malaysia.

Through rigorous quantitative analysis, the study examines various socio-economic indicators and their association with different dimensions of poverty.

Table 2.2. Pearson Correlation and Cronbach Alpha

SOCIAL CAPITAL INDICATOR	POVERTY MEASURE	PEARSON'S R	P-VALUE	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Trust Levels	Income	0.72	< 0.001	0.85
Civic Engagement	Access to Services	0.53	< 0.01	0.82
Reciprocity	Poverty Measures	0.39	< 0.05	0.78

The Cronbach's alpha values alongside the correlation analysis indicate how consistent and dependable the measurements of social capital and poverty are. Higher alpha values, like those for Trust Levels (0.85), Civic Engagement (0.82), and Reciprocity (0.78), suggest strong internal consistency within each scale. This means the items used to measure trust, civic engagement, and reciprocity are closely related, making the measurements reliable. The correlation results, such as the positive link between Trust Levels and Income, are supported by these strong alpha values, reinforcing the reliability of the findings. Overall, the alignment of significant correlations with high Cronbach's alpha values enhances the credibility and validity of the study's conclusions, making it clearer how social capital influences poverty outcomes (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The Pearson correlation analysis, encapsulated in Table 2, unveils compelling insights into the intricate relationship between social capital indicators and poverty measures. Firstly, a robust positive correlation emerges between Trust Levels and Income ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a significant association between community trust and economic prosperity. Communities characterised by stronger bonds of trust tend to exhibit higher income levels, suggesting the

presence of cooperative networks and resource-sharing mechanisms that foster economic growth. This underscores the pivotal role of trust in promoting socio-economic development and resilience within communities, emphasising the importance of nurturing interpersonal relationships and fostering mutual trust as strategies for addressing poverty (Bland & Altman, 1994; Cohen, 1988).

Secondly, Civic Engagement demonstrates a noteworthy positive correlation with Access to Services ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the impact of community involvement on the provision and accessibility of essential amenities. Active civic participation facilitates advocacy efforts and community-driven initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure and service delivery, thereby enhancing the quality of life for residents. This underscores the transformative potential of civic engagement in addressing systemic barriers and inequalities, fostering inclusive development, and promoting social cohesion.

Lastly, Reciprocity exhibits a moderate positive correlation with Poverty Measures ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.05$), indicating the significance of reciprocal relationships in mitigating economic hardship. Communities characterised by reciprocal networks of support and mutual assistance tend to experience lower levels of poverty, underscoring the importance of social capital in buffering against socio-economic vulnerabilities. This highlights the intrinsic value of fostering strong social ties and solidarity within communities as a means of building resilience and promoting equitable access to opportunities. Overall, these findings underscore the multidimensional nature of social capital and its profound implications for poverty alleviation and community development, emphasising the need for holistic approaches that harness the collective strengths of communities to address systemic challenges and foster sustainable socio-economic progress.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The empirical findings of this study offer valuable insights that can inform policy interventions aimed at poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Malaysia. By leveraging the correlation between social capital indicators and poverty measures, policymakers can design targeted strategies to enhance social cohesion, strengthen community networks, and promote inclusive growth. Key policy implications derived from the empirical findings include:

Promoting Community-based Initiatives: The study highlights the importance of fostering community participation and engagement as a means of enhancing social capital and reducing poverty. Policymakers can support community-based initiatives that encourage collaboration, networking, and collective action, such as neighbourhood associations, cooperatives, and self-help groups.

Investing in Education and Human Capital Development: Given the significant impact of education on poverty outcomes, policymakers should prioritise investments in education infrastructure, teacher training, and educational resources. By ensuring equitable access to quality education for all, Malaysia can empower individuals to break the cycle of poverty and achieve socio-economic mobility.

Strengthening Social Safety Nets: The study underscores the role of social capital in providing informal support networks and safety nets for vulnerable populations. Policymakers can strengthen existing social welfare programs and safety nets, such as cash transfer schemes, food assistance programs, and healthcare subsidies, to ensure that no one is left behind in the fight against poverty.

Recommendations for Enhancing Social Capital at the Community Level

Facilitating Community Engagement: Policymakers can facilitate community engagement through capacity-building initiatives, training

programs, and awareness campaigns. By empowering communities to identify their needs, mobilize resources, and implement grassroots projects, Malaysia can foster a culture of collective responsibility and social solidarity.

Supporting Social Infrastructure: Investing in social infrastructure, such as community centres, public spaces, and recreational facilities, can provide platforms for social interaction and networking. By creating conducive environments for community gatherings and activities, policymakers can strengthen social ties and promote social capital formation.

Strategies for Promoting Inclusive Development and Advancing SDGs

Integrating Social Capital into Policy Frameworks: Policymakers should integrate social capital considerations into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, and SDGs implementation frameworks. By recognising the role of social capital as a driver of inclusive development, Malaysia can adopt holistic approaches that address both economic and social dimensions of poverty.

Enhancing Collaboration and Partnership: Collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders is essential for advancing SDGs and promoting inclusive development. Policymakers can facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships that leverage diverse resources, expertise, and networks to tackle complex socio-economic challenges collaboratively.

By incorporating these policy recommendations and strategies into national development agendas, Malaysia can harness the power of social capital to drive poverty reduction, promote inclusive development, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Through concerted efforts and collective action, Malaysia can build

resilient communities, empower marginalised populations, and create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study underscores the significant role of social capital in shaping poverty outcomes and fostering sustainable development in Malaysia. Through rigorous quantitative analysis, several key findings have emerged. Firstly, we observe a positive correlation between social capital indicators, such as community networks and trust levels, and poverty measures. This suggests that communities with stronger social ties tend to experience lower levels of poverty, highlighting the importance of fostering interpersonal relationships and community cohesion as strategies for poverty alleviation.

Moreover, our analysis reveals that education plays a pivotal role in determining poverty outcomes. The findings underscore the critical importance of investing in human capital development as a means of empowering individuals and communities to break the cycle of poverty. By enhancing access to education and skills training programs, policymakers can equip individuals with the tools they need to secure stable employment and improve their socio-economic well-being.

Furthermore, social capital emerges as a crucial determinant of poverty outcomes independent of other socio-economic factors. This emphasises the need to harness social networks and community relationships as drivers of inclusive growth and development. By strengthening social capital through initiatives that promote civic engagement, trust-building, and reciprocity, policymakers and community leaders can create environments that foster economic resilience and social cohesion.

In addition to these key findings, the frequency analysis conducted in this study provides valuable insights into the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the study population. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the majority of respondents are female (94%) and reside in Pasir Mas (78%). The most prevalent type of business among respondents is food and beverage (79%), while the majority have completed SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) as their highest level of education (62%). Regarding income, a significant portion of respondents report earnings below RM1000 (58%). Family sizes vary, with 76% of respondents having five or more family members. Finally, the majority of respondents are married (58%), followed by those who are divorced or separated (28%), and single (14%).

Furthermore, the correlation analysis enhances our understanding by quantifying the relationships between social capital indicators and poverty measures. As depicted in Table 1, significant positive correlations are observed between Trust Levels and Income ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$), Civic Engagement and Access to Services ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$), and Reciprocity and Poverty Measures ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.05$). These correlations reinforce the importance of social capital in influencing poverty outcomes and provide actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders alike. Together, these findings contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics between social capital, poverty, and development in Malaysia, providing actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders alike.

Implications for Future Research and Policy Initiatives

The findings of this study hold significant implications for both future research endeavours and policy initiatives aimed at addressing poverty in Malaysia. Firstly, future research efforts should delve deeper into understanding the nuanced dynamics of social capital and its effects on poverty outcomes, particularly across diverse regions and demographic groups within Malaysia. Utilising longitudinal

studies and qualitative research methods can provide invaluable insights into the intricate mechanisms through which social networks influence poverty dynamics over time.

Secondly, policymakers are encouraged to integrate considerations of social capital into poverty reduction strategies, national development plans, and the implementation frameworks of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognising social capital as a fundamental driver of inclusive development can prompt the adoption of holistic approaches that address both the economic and social dimensions of poverty more effectively.

Moreover, fostering collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders is essential for advancing SDGs and promoting inclusive development agendas. Policymakers should facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships that leverage diverse resources, expertise, and networks to address complex socio-economic challenges collaboratively.

In conclusion, this study underscores the pivotal role of social capital in shaping poverty outcomes and advancing sustainable development in Malaysia. By harnessing the power of social networks, promoting community engagement, and investing in human capital development, Malaysia can foster resilient communities, empower marginalised populations, and pave the way for a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

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Chapter 3

I'm an Exception: Stories of Overcoming Odds in Malaysia

Sinoretha Sining

I am an exception amidst poverty due to the support, opportunities, and privileges that have guided my path.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world", Mahatma Gandhi once said. Over the last five decades, significant resources have been dedicated to addressing poverty in Malaysia. Numerous funds, beneficial programs, and funding for NGOs with a mission to overcome poverty have been established to close the gap between social classes. They have established study groups that analyse issues like education, job opportunities and asset building, where they advocate for policies and lifestyles to support our marginalised communities. They have written books and columns and given passionate speeches, decrying the wealth gap that is leaving more and more people entrenched with the shorter end of the stick. Yet, despite their tireless efforts, the impact remains insufficient. The battle against poverty still continues, demanding ever-greater solutions and innovations to effect lasting change. I wish to make things different to give back to my country, my community, my people. I am an exception because of the people who refused to let me succumb to circumstances.

For example, Jude, a 13-year-old boy who was raised by his single father in a small village in Sabah. His father works daily as a lorry driver leaving him and 4 of his younger siblings at home. He was sent to a hostel which is also an orphanage run by the church near his school. The hostel is nearer to the school as compared to his house which is an hour away. But as the oldest child, Jude doesn't want to burden his father more. He stays at the hostel during the week and goes home

on weekends to work part-time, doing tasks like cleaning and picking fruits on a nearby farm. The wage barely covers his transportation back to the hostel, along with paying his telephone bills and buying small snacks for his siblings. However, an important figure is the hostel coordinator Ken, who took care of the orphans, making sure there is enough food and beds for the children, and also held weekly activities for them. During the lockdown, Jude had trouble studying but thanks to Ken, he was able to access a laptop in his room, enabling him to continue his studies. Together with the supportive group in the hostel, they helped each other a lot, whether it was academically, physically or mentally. After 4 years of staying in the orphanage house, Jude aced his SPM exam, and he got a scholarship to continue his Diploma in one of the renowned universities in Malaysia. He went from a state of hopelessness to realising his own capabilities and achieving beyond his wildest dreams with the support of others facing similar challenges. Now, Jude excels both academically and socially, thriving in his endeavours.

I am an exception because I have been privileged with the resources and support necessary to navigate life's challenges independently and strive for success against all odds.

On the other hand, there is Deborah and her husband Terence who spends most of their time volunteering. Now, they spend more than 3 days each week, driving about three hours from Kota Kinabalu to reach remote villages in Kota Marudu, Pitas and Kudat. While Jude benefited from the support of individuals like Ken and the resources provided by the hostel, Deborah and Terence dedicated their lives to volunteering and uplifting communities. In the remote areas of Sabah, they focus on building hostels near the school to provide students with easy access to education. The centres served as education hubs on weekdays and fellowship venues on weekends, drawing eager students and increasing their educational opportunities by many folds. Deborah and Terence also trained local teachers and paid them,

and their efforts in Sabah involve multiple aspects. They run programs that help with holistic development such as character building and leadership, give career talks, and extend the education to the villagers too. Most importantly, they were taught to make better financial and business decisions as Deborah stated that the communities were often cheated of their resources. Some of them have never even set foot in a bank. The actual cost of providing for each child is RM300 per month, and their operations heavily rely on public financing through their funding programme, STORM (Short Term Operation Relief Mission), a volunteer initiative introduced by Deborah and Terence to bridge the gap between urban youth and rural communities.

I am an exception because I've been blessed with opportunities that have come by sheer luck.

Although I grew up in this part of the community, witnessing how poverty impacts the single parent juggling between multiple jobs and childcare. The elderly who are denied government benefits just because they have children that can 'provide' for them, who are expected to support them, even though these children may not have had the privilege of receiving a basic education. I have seen the communities who are unleashing their ingenuity and tenacity to collectively create their own solutions. Witnessing people who are broke but not broken, people who are struggling to realise their good ideas, so that they can create a better life for themselves, their families and their communities. Observing these individuals, my people who may be financially struggling but remain strong, a drive to turn their ideas into reality and create a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities, is all the proof that I need that they merely require a gentle push to move forward. Just a little assistance can go a long way. Jude, Ken, Deborah and Terence are the rule, not the shiny exception or a rare occasion. Countless unsung heroes exist among us, numbering in the thousands if not millions.

The issue is not that the poor are staying poor because of the lack of income. The problem lies beyond that. Basic education, housing, healthcare and the overall community is integral as the poor stay poor without their presence. The world will continue to evolve and change. While the potential income of the poor can increase and help them, the environment and conditions they are in will keep them there with the generations to come.

I stand as an exception, not because I am more talented than Jude, or my parents work any harder than Deborah and Terence, or I have a guiding figure like Ken. My exceptionality lies in the opportunities I've been given and the person I've grown to become as a result. My love for my people and my country will drive my commitment to lift them out of the cycle of poverty, one individual at a time. This is my solemn promise to my people.

I was raised by both my parents and had the opportunity to go to school that was close to home. Although I had to go to school by bus, I still got to buy boxed drinks and even snacks with my allowance. However, some days, I would watch my dream barbie doll outside of the toy store. My family wasn't that well off, but we were still comfortable enough that we did not have to worry about having food on the table. I'd get home after school every day, complete my homework, and wait for my parents to come home. Now, I work as a research assistant in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia while pursuing a full-time master's degree. I also do part time jobs online where I get paid monthly for my daily 30-minute job, twice a week, I could buy nicer meals and finally get the dream barbie doll for myself. My life is better than before.

Meanwhile, marginalised communities are full of talented, smart people, who diligently hustle and persevere each day of their lives. People who demonstrate resilience to get up every day, send their kids to school and go to jobs that don't pay enough, or receive an education

that are only putting them in debt. People who are applying their savvy intelligence to stretch a minimum wage paycheck or balance multiple jobs to make ends meet. I only see people who are doing their best for themselves and for others.

I am an exception due to luck and privilege, not solely owing to my diligence and hard work.

The common idea of “hard work leads to success” is not always the case and it gives the implication that only those who work hard would be successful while the ones who don’t will not. Giving the idea that as long as they work hard enough, they will be able to bear the fruits of their labour. We tell ourselves in the back of our mind and sometimes from our mouth that “there must be something wrong with those poor people”. We have a wide range of beliefs of what that ‘something wrong’ is. Some people tell stories that poor people are some lazy freeloaders, or probably have neglectful parents that didn’t teach them enough, and if they were shown the right path, they could make it. From my experience, I have known more than 10 different stories of the same unfortunate person, who shows up every day doing their best. I’m not saying that those negative stories aren’t true but it prevents us from seeing the bigger picture of it. The quarter-truth and limited plotline have us convinced that poor people need fixing.

I am an exception because of the deep passion for my community.

With this opportunity before me, my aim is clear: to pave a new path for my people, one filled with hope, opportunity, and prosperity. I firmly believe that with the right support and access to opportunities, anyone can break free from the cycle of poverty. But too often, individuals in my community miss out on vital programs and resources. Consider, for instance, the case of free tablets or fully funded education programs offered by the government. Many deserving individuals from my community may not even hear about

these opportunities in time or may struggle to navigate the application process. Even if they do apply, they may find themselves unable to compete with applicants who have more resources, better language skills, or broader experiences. This raises an important question, instead of favouring those already equipped with skills, why not prioritise those just starting their journey, those with no experience, those who are marginalised? I want to have a hands-on programme to navigate the marginalised communities to grab opportunities that are already there and hopefully one day provide more impactful help.

Figures like Jude, Ken, Deborah, and Terence serve as beacons of hope, but not everyone in our community has such close connections. Change can be scary, particularly in small rural communities where fear of the unknown runs deep. Yet, I am determined to lead by example and inspire our youth to embrace change as a catalyst for growth and progress. Change within a community is more likely to happen when it is driven internally rather than outsourced because internal change is rooted in the understanding of local needs, values, and dynamics. And my hope for my people is that they don't wait for somebody else to get it for them. I hope they remember what we are capable of, all that they have built with sweat, blood and dreams, and the people kept afloat because of their backbreaking work. Individually, we don't have a lot of power and wealth, but collectively we are unstoppable. This starts with engaging with locals to understand their needs then providing opportunities for skill development through education. I want to encourage the development of local solutions and initiatives that address the root causes of poverty within the community. Where I see it involves supporting small businesses, cooperatives, or community-based organizations that work towards economic empowerment and social inclusion. When I become a leader in this country, advocating for policy changes and fostering collaborations with various stakeholders for strategies to address societal challenges effectively, to finally even the playing field for my people.

Jude, Ken, Deborah, and Terence are not just characters in a story. Their struggles and triumphs are not just distant tales, they are part of my reality. Their resilience and dedication have inspired me, pushing me to strive for change and equity in my community. As I reflect on their stories, I am reminded of the profound impact individuals can have when they come together to uplift one another. And as I continue my journey, I am committed to amplifying their voices, advocating for change, and working towards a more just and fairer field for all. I am the exception, the change that is needed, and in this, I humbly swear.

**Part 2:
Navigating Challenges in Poverty in
Sabah**

Chapter 4

Challenges towards SDG 4 among Rural Children in Sabah

Wong Sing Yun, Mohd Sadiq Bin Md. Shaffie, Jain Yassin & Faerozh Madli

ABSTRACT

One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the UN is to provide inclusive, egalitarian, high-quality education and to encourage opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone. However, as with any of the other goals, the efforts to achieve this goal was not easy and without hiccups. One of the greatest challenges when it comes to the efforts to achieve SDG 4 lies at the difficulty to reach out to the communities living in the remote area. Due to their remote location, scarce resources, poor infrastructure, varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, health inequalities, financial limitations, and susceptibility to climate change, remote communities face difficulties in meeting SDG 4. Efforts to bring education to the children living in the rural area remain a huge challenge with limited resources and capacity availability. In order to grasp a better understanding of the hindrances faced by rural children in getting a better-quality education, this commentary aim to review the gathered secondary literature that can provide a better idea of these challenges through a thematic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations established a comprehensive framework known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the worldwide pursuit of sustainable development, consisting of 17 interconnected goals aimed at tackling some of the world's most pressing concerns. Education aspiration which stated in SDG 4 focused on Quality Education are substantially expressed in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to guarantee integrated and equal quality education for all by 2030 (Shiohira, 2021). SDG 4

providing comprehensive and equitable education for all is not just a goal in and of itself, but it is also a critical enabler of many of the other SDGs. Individuals are empowered by education, which eliminates inequities, promotes economic progress, and creates social cohesion. Furthermore, improved education may have an impact on job growth, competitiveness, and prosperity (OECD, 2012). Quality education will also provide access to disability, teenagers who dropout at an early age (Haron *et al.*,2021).

In most countries, the government has made some steps to improve educational quality. For instance, Malaysia is highly concerned with its community's education and has launched two Education Blueprints, notably the Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013-2025, for preschool to post-secondary education in 2013 and the Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2015-2025, for higher education in 2015 (Haron *et al.*,2021). Both blueprint offers a vision of the education system and student aspirations that Malaysia should provide quality of education as Malaysia's commitment to achieving SDG 4. It emphasises the need of providing adequate education to all children, particularly vulnerable populations such as poor children, children living in rural regions, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and refugee children.

Nevertheless, education quality is a major concern, with about 60% of Malaysian 15-year-old students failing to fulfil minimum competence levels (Anderson & Barrett, 2020). According to Ministry of Education of Malaysia (2018) children in rural areas especially family with lower incomes unable to give their children the facilities and resources they require for academic success. The gap in quality education is realized between urban and rural areas of the country. In other hand, economic hardship and reduced parental care and protection mean vulnerable children may lose the opportunity to go to school. Orphans, particularly, are at greatest risk of missing out on a consistent education. According to Lingenfelter *et al.*, (2017) orphans frequently experience difficulties in acquiring an adequate education.

The motivation for this study was driven through the lack of attention given to quality of education issues for orphans and vulnerable adolescents at orphanages. The orphans and vulnerable teenagers living in the Bondulu Toboh Home were chosen for this study. The Bondulu Toboh Home, located in the rural region of Tambunan, Malaysia, provides as a heartbreaking illustration of these challenges, giving a one-of-a-kind case study that sheds light on the intricacies and barriers that impede orphaned children's educational development. An educational project undertaken by the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) which consisting of educators and education experts to provide targeted assistance to students with learning weaknesses. Nevertheless, it is important exploring the barriers encountered by the orphanage children at Bondulu Toboh Home. This research not only contributes to the academic understanding of the learning gaps experienced surrounding SDG 4 but also provides insights that can inform policy and action at both local and global levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality education encompasses all components of the school and its surrounding education community, as well as the rights of the complete child and all children to survival, protection, development, and participation at the learning centre (UNICEF, 2000). This means that the emphasis is on learning, which increases children's capacities to act gradually on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, helpful skills, and acceptable attitudes. This will assist the youngsters in creating safe, secure, and healthy environments for themselves and others. Moreover, as stated by Haron *et al.*, (2021), when children are given the tools they need to reach their full potential, they grow into productive people who are ready to contribute back to their communities and break the cycle of poverty.

In the context of orphanages, children at orphanages come from a variety of backgrounds and have had a variety of experiences. Some may have supportive caretakers and receive appropriate attention,

whereas others may experience neglect or other challenges. Factors that influence a child's self-esteem and confidence are complicated and varied, and they can be influenced by a variety of environmental, personal, and social factors. According to Sadho (2015), one of the issues in orphanages in Malaysia, Children and adolescents in Malaysian orphanages have low self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of caregivers' lack of attention. Low self-esteem and self-confidence might impair a child's academic achievement. Children who lack confidence in their skills are less likely to participate actively in school, take academic risks, and explore new opportunities (Harter, 2012).

Numerous studies have investigated the academic performance of children residing in orphanages, often comparing them to their non-orphaned peers. Research consistently suggests that children in orphanages face academic challenges. For instance, a study by Nelson et al. (2018) found that orphaned children exhibit lower test scores and academic achievement levels compared to their non-orphaned counterparts. Ahmad and Jamil (2021) and Asfani et al., (2016) stated that the quality of education and performance of the orphans also depend on student factor. Orphaned children may come from a variety of backgrounds, and their educational experiences may differ. Some may have gone to school on a regular basis prior to entering an orphanage, whilst others may have had limited or disrupted access to education. These differences can have an impact on their preparation for and participation in formal schooling. This is highlighted in research by Apedaile et al. (2022) on the educational backgrounds of orphaned children.

Learning gaps among students are discrepancies in academic knowledge and skills that exist at various levels of education. There are several factors contributing to learning gaps among students, particularly in in Malaysia. Students from low-income households sometimes face educational challenges due to a lack of educational

resources, adequate childcare, and extracurricular activities. According to research, there is a strong association between family income and academic performance, with students from low-income families being more likely to fall behind (Krishnan, 2023; Hassan& Rasiah (2011). In time of Covid-19, although most teachers had already been trained about the notion of online learning (Tahir and Noorzali, 2020. Certain difficulties, however, were raised, such as limited applications, a lack of technological infrastructure, and limited internet connection. Hence, the infrastructure readiness also plays important roles in academic performance. Particularly, in orphanages, in terms of facilities, previous research indicated that only few orphanages cater to requirements other than just providing secure housing, while mostly merely provide safe housing for orphans (Ahmad & Jamil,2021).

Theoretical speaking, Social Development Theory (1978) postulated that the orphans' cognitive development potential is determined by the proximal development zone in which they engage in social behaviours. The relationships with staff and residents also have an impact on their behavioural development. Hence, adapting to a new setting and its routines was difficult for the residents, particularly the very young children. As a result, people developed an inner conflict, which disrupted their emotions and hampered their development and potential thus, lead to learning gaps.

In conclusion, past research has identified a clear need for actions to address learning gaps among orphans in orphanages. These disparities are linked to a variety of issues, such as disruptions in education, mental well-being, and a lack of constant support. Understanding and correcting these gaps is critical for giving orphans with the educational opportunities and assistance they require in order to develop academically and build a better future. Hence, this study will focus on highlighting the critical issues and challenges faced by local rural poor communities in Sabah.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Thematic analysis is a method known as studies of emphasising, identifying, and interpreting critical views on qualitative research. It offers a wide range of views on the data collection and ambiguous interpretation of critical thinking while the study is being conducted. There are several steps in thematic analysis that need to be taken for the proper conduct of the study such as collection of data, describing issues and challenges, and solutions that can be viewed to comprehend the issues mentioned. Repeated readings of a data set are necessary for the identification of the most salient significations in the collected materials (Oscar et al., 2019).

Thematic analysis is best suited to perform as research methodology for this research as past researchers have gathered a lot of data regarding SDG 4.0 education quality for all in Sabah. Therefore, data collected can be interpreted for further enlighten of multiple views, highlighted issues, and ways to overcome them for future prospect. For instance, The Sabah local community faces a unique set of challenges when it comes to income and consumption inequality, as well as the quality of education (Muhamad Azwanet al., 2023).

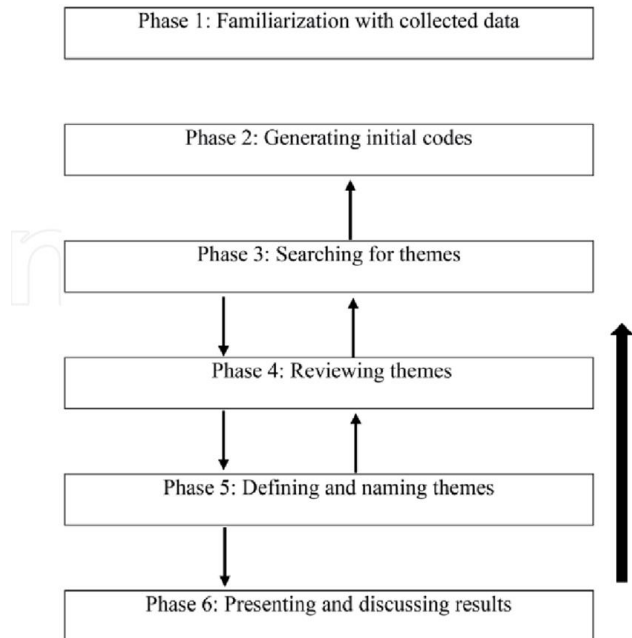


Figure 4.1. Thematic analysis: Six interactive phases (Oscar et al., 2019)

The model above showed the six important phases that must be taken to produce proper research using thematic analysis.

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

ISSUES	CHALLENGES
Physical Access	Computers, Laptops, internet availability, access location and access quality.
Infrastructure Access	The hardships of students to travel from home to school in long distance and low-quality roads.
Motivational towards education	Existence of a high gap between enrolment and dropouts in education.
Shortage of crucial resources	Crucial resources such as electricity and water are needed in schools and institutions for a conducive learning environment

The first and foremost highlighted issue is physical access which leads to unavailable instruments to obtain knowledge or information in rural areas. According to the results of the focus group discussion

(FGD), some of the informants claimed that the internet is not available in their village (Yi Xue Fang et al., 2022). The bigger issue is when there is no point in having mobile phones or laptops if the areas do not have access to internet. They will remain the same which is unable to obtain digital information using the tools given or purchased. Covid19 has led the changes of education from physical learning to virtual learning which involves the use of the Internet. However, some of rural areas in Sabah still do not possess access to the internet.

The motivation for students to travel long distances to acquire mobile data or internet depends on the importance of the information or knowledge such as if it is not worth the effort, the student will procrastinate the work. This in return will create a gap of education inequality between urban and rural areas in Sabah.

Next, infrastructure access explains the facility, for instance the road travel distance for students from home to school. In Sabah, there have been numerous viral moments that led to the hardships of students to travel from home to school in long distance as well as on muddy track. The incomplete infrastructure has led the students to travel from one point to another in hardship that involves dirty clothes, shoes and students feeling weary. Although the condition of the school had improved drastically with Solar energy and with the existence of some form of Wi-Fi as compared to its early days, however, infrastructure wise it was still not up to a 21st -century standard (Azwan Ahzran Perman, 2021).

Students will most likely feel the hardship from poor infrastructure development and more likely to be less attracted into gathering knowledge and information in depths. Cars and motorcycles tend to have troubles along the journey as bad roads can lead to tyre punctured and engine problems. On top of that, this will create a gap of education inequality between urban and rural areas in Sabah. As

such, the existing circumstances of limited access to educational facilities will certainly hinder digital literacy among students in Sabah, as evidenced by the result of this study, with 76% of students thinking that virtual learning is not conducive belonging to the same category as the students with limited educational facilities (Adi Jafar et al., 2022). Moreover, motivational towards education explains the passion that exists in students for knowledge as they are hoping to learn something valuable or new in everyday life. The issue that exists in rural areas is the mindset because of the high gap between enrolment and those who did not complete their studies. This leads to the views of young people in rural areas as the place they grew up in does not offer much educational opportunities as urban areas such as the library, internet café and printing machine shop.

There is a significant gap between enrolment rates and completion rates in Malaysia, with many students dropping out of school before completing their education (Wong Sing Yun et al., 2023). Therefore, the younger generation view this perspective as unimportance towards education levels and lost their motivation in attending schools or universities. This enlightened the gap between education inequality in rural areas.

Finally, shortage of crucial resources such as finance, electricity and water which acts as an important element in any educational facility or school. For example, electricity is a fundamental instrument as mobile phones, laptops and radios generally act as a device to obtain knowledge and information. Water is an important resource as students are unable to use the restroom and toilet at school when the time comes. Parents are unable to afford the necessity such as fan and lights to accommodate the better environment for education surrounding.

When nighttime comes, they will face another bigger problem which is the light issue because homework or studies conducted at nighttime requires lights and electricity to act as medium of education.

CONCLUSION

Education is an important factor in Sustainable Development Goals 4.0 as it prepares an individual to help to grow the national development in economy. One must obtain knowledge in preparation for career development and self-awareness in social life. There are a few recommendations to solve the issues and challenges that has been highlighted in the findings. Firstly, the government must take action to ensure that rural areas students are provided with complete physical access such laptops, mobile phones, tablets and most importantly internet access. Once the issue has been resolved, students will more likely have less trouble with obtaining knowledge as they possess the access to gather data and information with the touch of their fingertips. Next, infrastructures must be well developed to ensure that students and parents can have a secure journey from home to school and vice versa. Typically tar road is essential to avoid nuisance and maybe add public transportation such as bus school for convenience. Moreover, educators and parents must instil the importance of education to younger generations minds or objective to restore balance in the mindset of gap between enrolment and dropouts in education. Education is not a small matter that can be taken lightly as knowledge is power and can be obtained equally. Lastly, providing an alternative use natural resources such as solar energy or hydroponic to generate electricity instead of building pile of electricity pillars in rural areas which can use a lot of financial resources.

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Chapter 5

Kemiskinan dan Pengurusan Sisa Plastik di Pulau Mabul, Sabah

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ABSTRAK

Laporan kajian kes ini membincangkan faktor kemiskinan komuniti yang mempengaruhi pengurusan sisa plastik dalam kalangan komuniti Pulau Mabul. Perbincangan adalah berfokuskan kepada (1) Kemiskinan-literasi-maklumat pengurusan sisa plastik, (2) Kemiskinan-kemampuan mengurus sisa plastik dan (3) Kemiskinan-pemilikan teknologi pengurusan sisa plastik. Maklumat kajian diperolehi daripada kajian lapangan singkat yang dijalankan di Pulau Mabul, Semporna pada bulan Mac 2024. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa komuniti mempunyai usaha menguruskan sisa, termasuk sisa plastik di Pulau Mabul, namun faktor kemiskinan menjadi penyebab kepada penerusan kaedah pengurusan sisa plastik secara tradisional termasuk membakar dan membantutkan usaha pengurusan sisa yang lebih sistematik. Hasil kajian mendapati satu daripada faktor penyumbang isu pengurusan sisa, khususnya sisa plastik di Pulau Mabul adalah isu kemiskinan. Oleh yang demikian, beberapa cadangan yang melibatkan usahasama pemegangtaruh, peningkatan literasi, pendayaupayaan sumber manusia dan inovasi dilaksanakan di pulau ini.

PENGENALAN

Pengurusan sisa plastik adalah satu daripada isu pengurusan sisa di pulau Mabul, Semporna, Sabah iaitu sama seperti yang berlaku di pulau-pulau lain di Sabah, malah di seluruh dunia. Banyak inisiatif telah dilaksanakan untuk menguruskan sisa plastik di Sabah,

termasuk kempen 3R (kurangkan penggunaan plastik, kitar semula dan guna semula), programme hijau, pengutipan sisa secara berkala dengan kerjasama agensi kerajaan, persatuan dan pemain pelancongan dan badan bukan kerajaan (NGO), namun isu pengurusan sisa terus membelenggu pulau tersebut. Kajian singkat dijalankan pada bulan March 2024 untuk mendapat maklum balas komuniti terhadap pengurusan sisa plastik di Pulau Mabul. Hasil kajian mendapati satu daripada faktor penyumbang isu pengurusan sisa, khususnya sisa plastik di Pulau Mabul adalah isu kemiskinan. Oleh yang demikian, beberapa cadangan yang melibatkan usahasama pemegangtaruh, peningkatan literasi, pendayaupayaan sumber manusia dan inovasi dilaksanakan di pulau ini.

KAEDAH KAJIAN

Maklumat telah dikumpul menggunakan kaedah pemerhatian, temubual, Diskusi Kumpulan Berfokus dan rujukan pustaka. Manakala data dianalisis menggunakan kaedah deskriptif.

Pemerhatian

Pemerhatian singkat dijalankan di sekitar petempatan di Pulau Mabul untuk mengenal pasti kaedah pengurusan sisa yang wujud di kampung tersebut dan kadah pengurusan sisa, khususnya sisa plastik.

Temubual

Tujuan temubual ialah untuk mengumpul maklumat berkaitan isu pengurusan sisa di Pulau Mabul dan bagi mendapatkan maklum balas mengenai pengetahuan dan usaha komuniti menguruskan sisa plastik di pulau tersebut. Selain itu, temubual dilakukan ke atas pegawai daerah Semporna, pengerusi Persatuan Pelancongan Bumiputra Semporna, guru besar SK Pulau Mabul, pengurus sekolah alternatif dan aktivis yang terlibat secara langsung dan tidak langsung dalam pengurusan sisa di Pulau Mabul.

Perbincangan Kumpulan Sasar

Perbincangan Kumpulan Sasar (FGD- Focus Group Discussion) dilakukan dalam kalangan murid sekolah alternatif berumur sembilan hingga 12 tahun bagi mengenal pasti literasi dan penglibatan mereka dalam pengurusan sisa di Pulau Mabul serta literasi terhadap bahaya penggunaan plastik dan potensi untuk mengitar semula bahan plastik. Murid sekolah rendah dipilih untuk mengenal pasti kesediaan komuniti pulau menerapkan pengetahuan tentang pengurusan sisa, khususnya sisa plastik.

Rujukan pustaka

Rujukan pustaka, khususnya laporan berkenaan pengalaman lepas isu dan pengurusan sisa di pulau Mabul dirujuk untuk mendapatkan gambaran dan latar belakang pengurusan sisa di pulau tersebut.

HASIL KAJIAN

Pengurusan sisa plastik oleh komuniti di Pulau Mabul

Kesedaran komuniti Pulau Mantanani tentang kepentingan dan tanggungjawab kebersihan dan pengurusan sisa adalah pada tahap yang sangat baik. Ini terbukti dengan penglibatan komuniti membersihkan persekitaran kediaman mereka pada setiap hari (Rajah 1a). Mereka juga menyediakan tong sampah (Rajah 1b) dan melakukan pengumpulan sampah dalam plastik (Rajah 1c). Tindakan ini menunjukkan kepekaan komuniti terhadap kebersihan dan masalah sampah, bukanlah berpunca daripada ketidakpedulian komuniti secara total terhadap kebersihan.



Rajah 5.1a. Komuniti membersihkan persekitaran kediaman mereka pada setiap hari



Rajah 5.1b. Menyediakan tong sampah



Rajah 5.1c. Pengumpulan sampah dalam plastik

Menurut aktivis, kelebihan komuniti di Pulau Mabul dalam pengurusan sampah ialah komitmen mereka dalam programme kebersihan seperti gotong royong membersihkan pulau (air dan darat). Namun temubual dengan beberapa informan mendapati komuniti perlu dibantu dari pelbagai aspek untuk melaksanakan pengurusan sisa, khususnya dari aspek literasi dan kos pengurusan. Misalnya kebergantungan komuniti kepada biaya bot yang disediakan oleh syarikat dan persatuan pelancongan untuk mengangkut sisa domestik dari pulau ke tanah besar. Manakala kebergantungan terhadap penyediaan pusat pengumpulan sampah yang disediakan syarikat pelancongan menyebabkan komuniti kembali membakar sampah apabila syarikat pelancongan berhenti memberikan perkhidmatan tersebut.



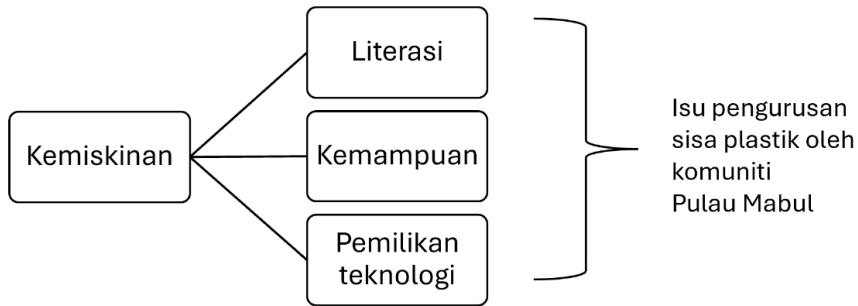
Rajah 5.2a. Bekas pusat pengumpulan sampah yang disediakan oleh Scuba Junkie Mabul Beach Resort



Rajah 5.2b. Sisa yang diuruskan secara kaedah pembakaran pada setiap hari

Faktor kemiskinan dalam isu pengurusan sisa plastik di Pulau Mabul

Satu daripada penemuan kajian yang diperolehi daripada kajian kes di Pulau Mabul ialah isu pengurusan sisa plastik yang dipengaruhi oleh faktor kemiskinan komuniti pulau tersebut seperti yang ditunjukkan dalam Rajah 5.3, iaitu berkaitan hubungan antara (1) kemiskinan, literasi dan maklumat pengurusan sisa plastik, (2) kemiskinan dan kemampuan mengurus sisa plastik dan (3) kemiskinan-pemilikan teknologi pengurusan sisa plastik.



Rajah 5.3. Kemiskinan dan pengurusan sisa plastik Komuniti Pulau Mabul

Kemiskinan-literasi-maklumat pengurusan sisa plastik

Isu kemiskinan dalam kalangan komuniti di Pulau Mabul menjadi kekangan bagi mereka untuk mendapatkan pendidikan formal dan menguasai ilmu asas iaitu membaca, menulis dan mengira. Manakala pemerhatian dan FGD yang dijalankan dalam kalangan murid sekolah alternatif juga mendapati bahawa sebilangan besar murid tidak mempunyai kadar literasi yang tinggi dari aspek membaca.

Isu ini menyebabkan komuniti mempunyai kadar literasi yang rendah terhadap maklumat-maklumat yang disampaikan secara bertulis. Literasi yang rendah menyebabkan ketidakcekapan penyampaian maklumat, misalnya maklumat dalam papan tanda dalam Rajah 3 yang mengandungi arahan berkaitan pengurusan sisa atau sampah yang betul, namun tidak dapat diaplikasikan oleh ahli komuniti kerana kadar literasi membaca dan literasi bahasa yang rendah, apatah lagi bahasa penyampaian yang digunakan adalah bahasa selain bahasa Melayu dan selain bahasa setempat. Temubual menunjukkan bahawa mereka menjalankan kaedah pengurusan sisa yang betul melalui aktiviti dan kempen yang disertai.



Rajah 5.4. Papan tanda kaedah menguruskan sisa

Kemiskinan dan kemampuan mengurus sisa plastik

Kemiskinan sangat berkaitan dengan kemampuan mengurus sisa plastik. Hasil temubual mendapati bahawa kos mengangkut sampah menggunakan bot ke tanah besar Sabah dari Pulau Mabul memerlukan perbelanjaan yang besar. Komuniti tidak mempunyai kemampuan untuk membiayai sendiri kos pengangkutan tersebut kecuali mendapat bantuan atau pembiayaan pendana, yang biasanya terdiri daripada pemain pelancongan, agensi kerajaan dan agensi bukan kerajaan yang melaksanakan program pembersihan pulau. Ini kerana majoriti daripada penduduk setempat yang menduduki pulau tersebut bekerja sebagai nelayan tradisional sara diri, peniaga kecil dan suri rumah yang mempunyai pendapatan yang hanya cukup untuk membiaya keperluan asas keluarga. Oleh itu komuniti terpaksa memilih untuk membakar sampah pada setiap hari (Rajah 5.2b).

Kemiskinan dan pemilihan teknologi pengurusan sisa plastik

Keupayaan yang rendah dalam kuasa beli dan pemilihan teknologi adalah satu rangkaian yang mengekang pemprosesan sisa plastik secara sistematik, teratur dan efektif. Sememangnya sisa plastik dapat digunakan semula, namun tidak dapat dikitar semula tanpa teknologi. Ketidamampuan memperolehi mesin kitar semula menyebabkan komuniti terpaksa mengamalkan kaedah guna semula (reuse) sebagai kaedah mengurangkan sisa plastik dan inovasi. Sisa plastik yang diguna semula dijadikan bahan landskap dan kegunaan domestik (Rajah 5.5a dan Rajah 5.5b).



Rajah 5.5a. Pasu plastik



Rajah 5.5b. Bahan Lanskap



Rajah 5.5c. Perahu buatan sendiri

CADANGAN

Kemiskinan adalah faktor yang mempengaruhi kecekapan pengurusan sisa oleh komuniti di Pulau Mabul. Namun kajian awal berpandukan keupayaan komuniti dan faktor sokongan luar, pengurusan sisa di pulau Mabul dapat ditambahbaik melalui (1) usahasama pemegangtaruh, (2) peningkatan literasi, (3) pendayaupayaan sumber manusia dan (4) literasi inovasi.

Usahasama pemegangtaruh

Usahasama pemegangtaruh dengan komuniti dalam pengurusan sisa perlu diteruskan dan diperkukuhkan dengan mengambil kira kesediaan komuniti untuk memberikan tujuh komitmen kepada programme hijau dan kebersihan. Ini juga berpandukan kepada kejayaan usahasama komuniti dengan beberapa pihak seperti Scuba Junki Mabul Beach Resort dan PUSPABUMI sebelum ini. Usaha ini juga perlu disokong oleh pihak berkuasa tempatan dengan mencadangkan dasar pengurusan 'menang-menang' dengan mewajibkan pemain industri pelancongan dan pelancong melaksanakan programme pembersihan pulau sebagai satu daripada pakej wajib pelancongan.

Peningkatan literasi

Selain daripada pengukuhan sokongan luaran kepada komuniti dalam pengurusan sisa, pemantapan keupayaan dalaman juga penting. Ini bagi memastikan agar komuniti dapat berdikari dalam menguruskan sisa pada masa akan datang tanpa bergantung kepada pihak luar. Ini boleh dilakukan dengan memberikan latihan pengetahuan dan kemahiran yang bersesuaian kepada ahli komuniti yang berpotensi. Selain daripada literasi asas itu juga, pengetahuan mengenai bahaya sisa plastik dan kaedah memproses sisa plastik secara sistematik juga perlu diterapkan kepada komuniti.

Pendayaupayaan sumber manusia

Pendayaupayaan sumber manusia tidak tertakluk kepada literasi ilmu asas dan kemahiran sahaja, ia memerlukan pemerksaan menyeluruh

termasuk peningkatan jati diri khususnya kepemimpinan untuk menguruskan komuniti. Ini memerlukan kesediaan komuniti dan sokongan pihak berkepentingan khususnya institusi pendidikan dari peringkat sekolah rendah sehingga peringkat pendidikan tinggi. Dalam hal ini sekolah, pusat kemahiran dan universiti boleh memainkan peranan dalam menyediakan programme yang sesuai dalam membantu meningkatkan keupayaan komuniti setempat.

Literasi inovasi

Kekuatan komuniti menghasilkan rekacipta inovasi seperti bot berasaskan sisa dan bahan lanskap menunjukkan potensi komuniti menghasilkan karya inovatif. Potensi ini boleh digunakan untuk mencipta karya inovatif yang menguntungkan dan selamat, seperti mengitar semula sisa plastik sebagai produk kraf tangan dan mungkin sekali minyak. Universiti Malaysia Sabah merupakan institusi pendidikan yang mempunyai pakar dalam bidang ini di Sabah. Pihak berkuasa perlu mengambil peluang ini untuk membawa teknologi daripada pakar untuk diajarkan kepada komuniti pulau yang mempunyai sumber sisa plastik yang boleh dijadikan produk berharga dengan menggunakan teknologi. Mungkin sekali kaedah ini dapat menjadikan Pulau Mabul sebagai pulau inovasi sisa plastik di mana komunitinya adalah sumber manusia berkepakaran pada masa akan datang.

PENUTUP

Usaha menangani sisa, khususnya sisa plastik di pulau Mabul tidak boleh dibiarkan terus dibelenggu oleh kemiskinan. Sebagai sebuah pulau yang menjadi tarikan pelancong, usaha untuk menguruskan sisa memerlukan komitmen dan integrasi bersepadu antara komuniti dan semua pihak berkepentingan.

PENGHARGAAN

Terima kasih kepada Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) sebagai penaja geran penyelidikan kajian Plastic Upcycling Project for Mabul Island

Plastic to Fuel SDK0321-2021) dan rakan strategik Scuba Junkie Mabul Beach Resort, Kolej Komuniti Semporna, Persatuan Pengusaha Pelancongan Bumiputera Semporna (PUSPABUMI), kepada Pejabat Daerah Semporna, Ketua Kampung Pulau Mabul, SK Pulau Mabul dan Sekolah Al-Amin Pulau Mabul.

Part 3:
Navigating Challenges in Poverty in
Peninsula Malaysia

Chapter 6

A Simulation Study of Poverty Malaysia by 2050

Yap Yin

ABSTRACT

Since the formation of Malaysia in 1963, the Government have implemented various economic policies including affirmative action plans, such as the New Economic Policy 1970-1990 (NEP), Third Outline Prospective Plan (2001-2010), the Economic Transformation Programme 2010 (ETP) to spur Malaysia to become a high-income nation and recently launched the “Transformasi Nasional 2050” or TN 50, an initiative to plan for the future of Malaysia in the period 2020 to 2050. Analysis of the 1991, 2000 and 2010 census reports of Malaysia shows that there are economic development gaps between regions (Peninsula Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak), between localities (urban and rural) and also variations between and within the different ethnic groups, in terms of the major economic indicators such as educational attainments, occupational stratifications and household incomes. These gaps or inequalities must be addressed otherwise they will jeopardize the foundation of national development. Since all the indicators are dynamic in nature and they are all causally related to one another, it is necessary to develop a dynamic simulation model to monitor the dynamics of these gaps and to generate future scenarios based on different policy options and assumptions. The future scenarios generated by the model developed for this study, show that the population of Malaysia is converging with a positive reinforcing loop, into two contrasting groups, namely the market dominant minority group and the impoverished majority indigenous group by 2050. Such scenario if unaddressed, will become a fertile ground for a backlash of the impoverished indigenous group against the market-dominant minorities.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for using the system dynamics simulation model

Most of the variables used in the existing economic developmental programs of Malaysia are dynamic and they are changing all the time. The variables also interact with each other. As a result, it is difficult to use such programs to monitor the sustainability of socio-economic development of Malaysia. A very large data bank is required to store and update the results of these programs. Nation building is a complex system which is usually dominated by multiple loops and non-linear feedback processes. In the process of evaluating the impacts of policies and laws against the set of values and goals, the Government may not be able to consider all the causal mechanism, some of which are difficult to quantify, for example, social capital. As policies and legislative issues become more complex, it becomes very difficult for the top policy makers to judge the effects of the policies, in the light of sensitivities and inconsistencies. As the problem of national building is both complex and non-linear, there is no analytical solution. The only reasonable approach is to construct a simulation model which incorporates the endogenous as well as the exogenous variables of the problem in a functional and dynamic way. The model can then compress the space and time of the problem to enable policy makers to generate scenarios based on different policy options and also to see how development policies hold up in the future.

The initial step in the model construction is to develop the system framework which is shown in the following system diagram.

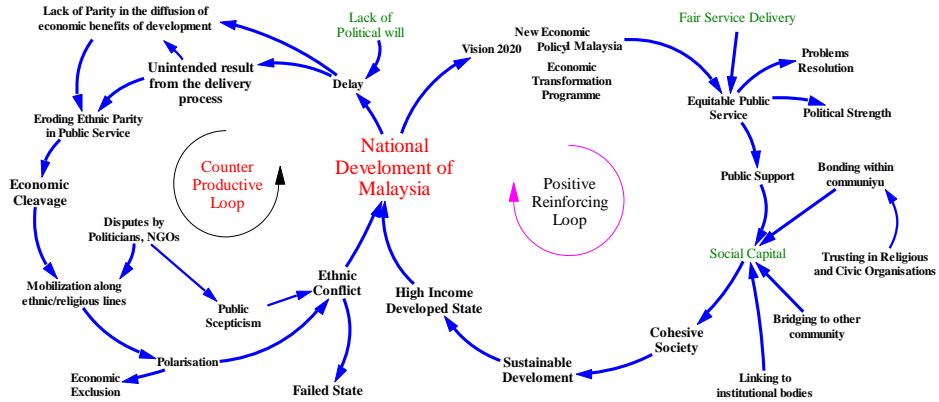


Figure 6.1. System Framework for National Development of Malaysia

The above diagram outlines the framework of model construction. The socio-economic development of Malaysia depends on the balance between the two loops, the Positive Reinforcing Loop and the Counter Productive Loop (the Negative Reinforcing Loop). The Positive Reinforcing Loop on the right-hand side indicates the positive impacts of the development policies as proposed the Malaysian plans, New Economic Policy, New Development Policy, Vision 2020, SCORE and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) of Malaysia. The growth rate of each of the variables becomes exponential as they reinforce one another and hence the term positive reinforcing loop. When all the above developmental policies are implemented equitably and justly, through the government servicing machineries, the social capital of the people in terms of trust will be enhanced. This will result in public support and subsequent overall socio-economic progress. The level of trust as embedded in the social capital of the people towards the country or state will grow or decline depending on the level of governance of the state and the level of bridging relationship between the people and the state. When the level of trust the people shown towards their own community, other communities and institutional bodies grow and the level of governance is high, the society will prosper and will become more cohesive.

The left side of the diagram indicates some of the events or plans which contribute to the negative reinforcing loop. Both the positive and negative reinforcing loops show how small changes can grow with more and may often take more and still more of the same resembling compound interest. Hence this reinforcing feedback need to be monitored and addressed before they become uncontrollable.

The sequence of the main events or action plans in the Negative Reinforcing Loop are as follows:

- Delay in the delivery process. To improve system performance, the highest leverage point is the minimization of system delay. Almost all feedback systems have delay which may lead to instability if delays are either unrecognized or not well understood.
- The delivery process of many well-intended “solutions” actually makes the matters worse over the long term. For example, the delivery process may shift the burden to other solutions that address the symptoms and not the root of the problem. Over time people rely more and more on symptomatic solution which is becoming increasingly the only solution. Any problems resulting from the delay in the delivery process and the unintended results will constitute a negative reinforcing loop which if not addressed will cause economic cleavages and economic exclusion among other smaller ethnic groups. For sustainable development to take place, the movement of the positive reinforcing loop should exceed the Counter Productive loop, otherwise, the nation or state will descend into a failed state instead of a cohesive and high income developed state. When the counter-productive loop contributes more than the positive reinforcing loop, there will be economic cleavages in the fabric of national unity. Economic cleavage in a multi-ethnic society if not addressed or managed will lead to the mobilizations along ethnic and religious lines. Such scenarios are the fertile ground leading to polarization and ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, the problem of nation building is a

complex and non-linear problem. The adding up intentions and actions of the development plans is not enough to explain the entire system. Even though all the development plans are delivered on time without being side-tracked by officers with certain personal agenda, the process of national unity and integration may not be sustained.

The framework of the system in Figure 6.1 provides the basis for the construction of the stock flow diagram which is shown in Figure 6.2.

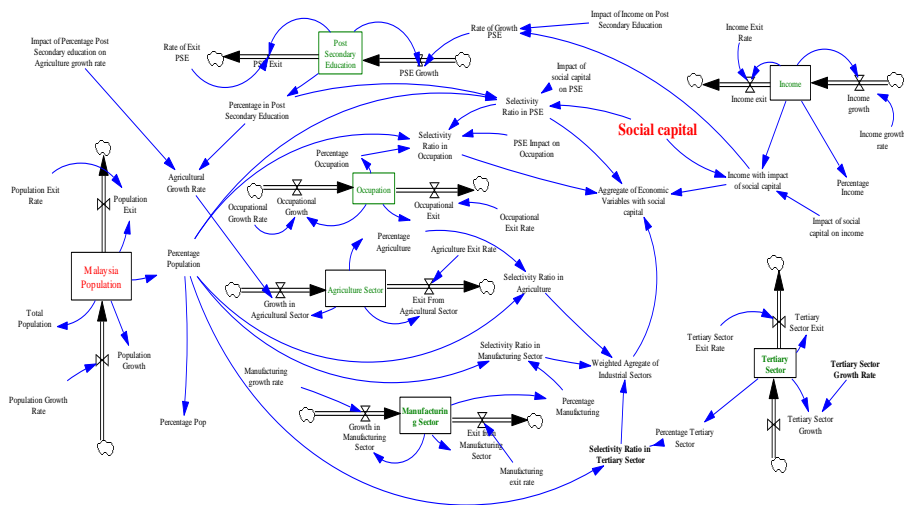


Figure 6.2. Stock Flow Diagram

The above stock flow diagram consists of seven stocks namely:

- Malaysia Population by Ethnicity
- Labour Force in Agriculture Sector by Ethnicity
- Labour Force in Manufacturing Sector by Ethnicity
- Labour Force in Tertiary Sector by Ethnicity
- Occupational Distribution of high-level labour force (Managers, Professionals, Associate Professionals)
- Labour Force with Post Secondary Education
- Salary and income of the employed labour Force of Malaysia

Each stock consists of Malay, Chinese, Indian, Other Bumiputera and Others. The economic variables of the ethnic groups are analysed horizontally. The reasons for considering the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak as a separate ethnic group are that they have a different social capital from the indigenous majority from Peninsula Malaysia and that at the formation of Malaysia, their human capital of most of the labour force lack functional literacy. In terms of population size, by around 2040 onward, they will be the second largest ethnic group after the Bumiputera from Peninsula Malaysia. To monitor the sustainability of the economic development of Malaysia, it is necessary to consider the gaps between the ethnic groups in term of economic variables. Since the ethnic groups are of different size, the most appropriate method is to use Proportional Equality Index or Selectivity Ratio (SR). It is obtained by dividing the percentage of the ethnic group of the given economic variable by its population percentage share. For example, in 2010, according to the Census Report, the occupational classification of the top three categories occupations; namely Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals account for 3,250,475 workers. The Malay, Chinese, Indians and Other Bumiputera account for 54.44 %, 30.57 %, 8.18 % and 6.81 % respectively. Dividing each ethnic group by its percentage population, the resulting Selectivity Ratios (SR) for the Malay, Chinese, Indians and Other Bumiputera are 0.998, 1.244, 1.032 and 0.532 respectively. This shows that in terms of high-level human capital the Other Bumiputera are under-represented by 46.8 % while the Chinese and Indians are over-represented by 24.4 % and 3.2 % respectively.

This model can show the SRs of the ethnic groups for any economic variable at any point in time. This feature enables decision maker to see the forest as well as the tree and thus enable any positive or negative reinforcing loops to be identified.

The domains and indicators of the Social Capital are indicated in Figure 6.3.

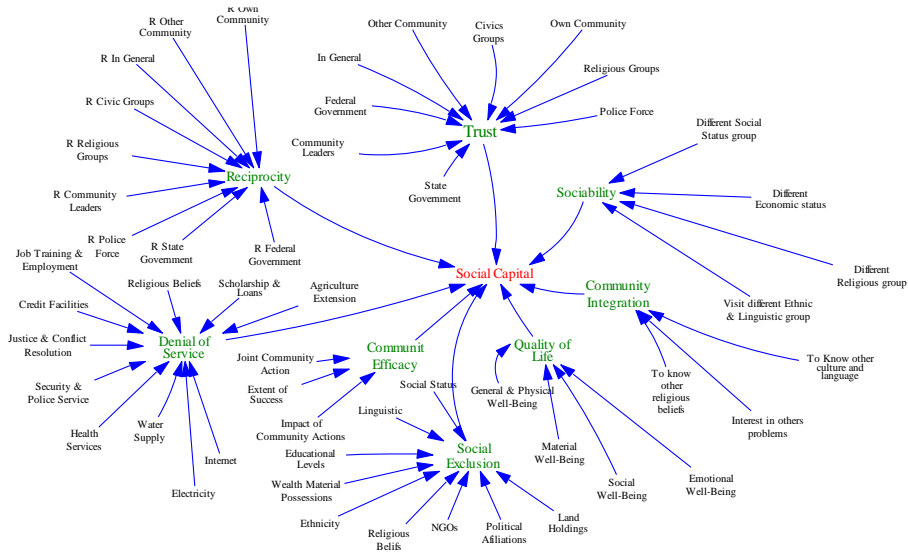


Figure 6.3.

Social Capital can be defined as networks together with share norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups. Recently it has increasingly been recognised that natural capital, physical capital and human capital determine only partially the process of economic growth. Deepa Narayan (1999) in his paper “Bonds and Bridges” cited that the level of social capital and the level of governance of a state influences social economic wellbeing or latent conflict.

Many simulations run of the model are conducted to identify the main system archetypes where certain patterns of structure which recur again and again. Some of the main system archetypes are: Limits to grow, balancing processes, reinforcing processes and Shifting the burden processes. Consider a few crucial scenarios.

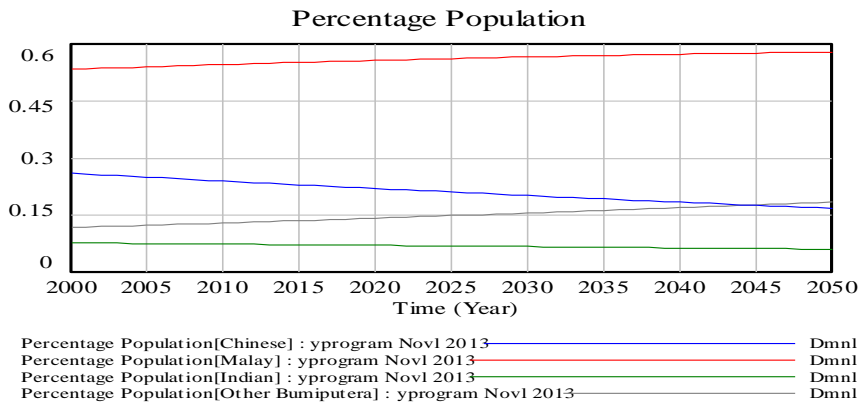


Figure 6.4. Simulated Percentage Population by Ethnicity

The simulated scenario shows that the population of Malaysia (Malaysian citizens) increases from 24.64 million in 2010 to 40.88 million in 2050. All the four ethnic communities show contrasting demographic dynamics. The Chinese population decline with a positive reinforcing loop from 23.96 per cent in 2010 to 16.74 per cent in 2050 while the Indian population decline very gradually from 7.36 per cent in 2010 to 6.02 per cent in 2050. The drastic decline already begins as early as 1970 when the Chinese account for 35 per cent of the population. The Chinese and Indian are the ageing communities of Malaysia.

The two ethnic communities which register positive increase in population are the Malay and Other Bumiputera of Sabah and Sarawak. The Malay population increases from 55 per cent in 2010 to 58 per cent in 2050 while the population of the Other Bumiputera increases with a positive reinforcing loop to over 18 per cent in 2050. They are experiencing limits to growth because the rate of production of human capital is negated by the rate of population increase. This variable is a declining reinforcing loop which may not be noticeable at the beginning. The Non-Malaysian -Citizens were not considered in the initial construction of the Model. There were 1.4 million NMC in 2000. The 2010 Census Report shows that they account for 8.1 % of the total

population, of which 56.6 % are in Peninsula Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak account for 38.35 % and 5.05 % respectively.

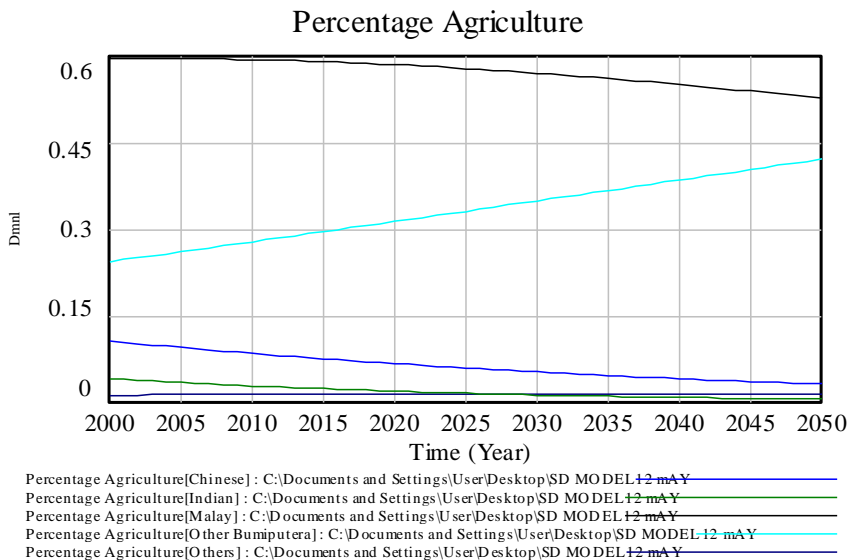


Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5 is one of the most important scenarios to monitor in terms of the sustainability of the development of the country. The figure shows that the percentage shares of the ethnic groups in the agricultural sector are declining over time, except the percentage share of the Other Bumiputera which is increasing exponentially with a positive reinforcing loop. According to 2020 Census Report, there were 916,300 workers employed as Skilled Agriculture Workers, of which the total Bumiputera account for 75.11 % while the Chinese and Indians account for 12.79 % and 2.22 % respectively.

Table 6.1 is the summary of several simulated scenarios of the SR scores of all the ethnic groups in Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tertiary sectors, Post Secondary Education and their Aggregated Economic and Social Capital (AEVS) variables scores from 2010 to 2050.

Table 6.1. Key Economic Selectivity Ratios Generated by Simulation

ETHNIC GROUP	ECONOMIC SECTORS	2010	2030	2050
Malay	Agriculture	1.113	1.086	1.047
	Manufacturing	0.9793	0.9683	0.9622
	Tertiary Sector	0.9922	1.095	1.210
	Post Secondary Education	1.137	1.090	0.9963
	AEVS	1.090	1.236	1.538
Other Bumiputera	Agriculture	2.113	2.093	1.986
	Manufacturing	0.3352	0.3625	0.3941
	Tertiary Sector	0.6263	0.5442	0.4736
	Post Secondary Education	0.4134	0.4283	0.4517
	AEVS	0.4833	0.5382	0.6182
Chinese	Agriculture	0.3528	0.2567	0.1825
	Manufacturing	1.354	1.549	1.781
	Tertiary Sector	1.228	1.186	1.147
	Post Secondary Education	1.182	1.330	1.686
	AEVS	1.286	1.682	2.303
Indian	Agriculture	0.3760	0.1721	0.0764
	Manufacturing	1.216	1.349	1.413
	Tertiary Sector	1.119	1.227	1.351
	Post Secondary Education	0.8771	0.9932	1.260.
	AEVS	1.317	1.394	1.804

AEVS: Aggregate of Economic Variables with Social Capital

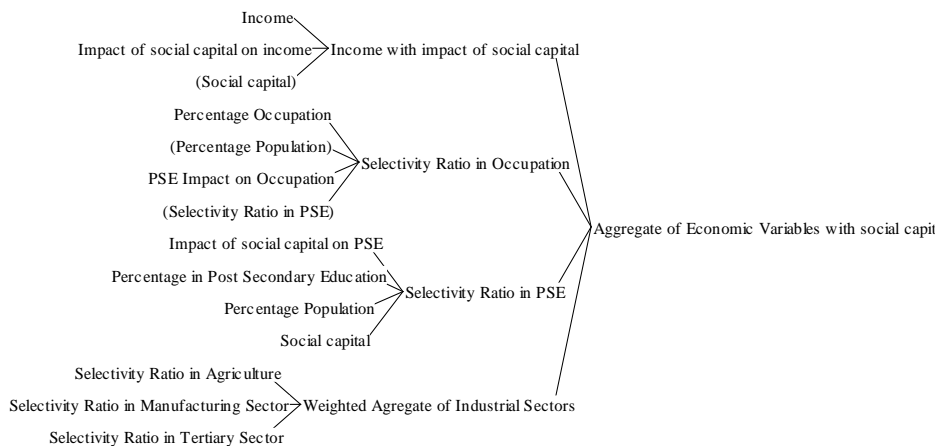


Figure 6.6. Tree Diagram for the Aggregate of Economic Variables with Social Capital (AEVS)

The AEVS has 4 domains and 14 indicators.

Table 6.1 shows that by 2050, the weighted aggregate growth paths of the Chinese are ahead of all the other communities. This is due to the fact that the Chinese already have a dominant control in the business sector during the British colonial period. According to Heng,¹ (1996),

“They have made progress by successfully deploying “NEP by-pass strategies, in the field of education and businesses.”

They have superior access to capital and credit via Chinese Associations, guilds and chambers of commerce. Through their extensive networking with the overseas Chinese from China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, they become the beneficiary of globalization.

¹ Heng Pek Koon, “Chinese Response to Malay Hegemony in Peninsula Malaysia 1957-1996”, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, December 1996

The growth path of the Indian is gradually increasing from 1.1317 in 2010 to 1.804 in 2050. One of the reasons for such a scenario is that, during the early 60s when the world rubber price crashed, the majority of the Indians left the rubber estates and migrated to the urban localities.

They have integrated into the manufacturing sector as production workers and supervisors in the late 60s and early 70s. Since then, they experienced steady upward mobility into the tertiary sector. According to the 2010 Census Report, over 40 per cent of the Indian labour force are in the manufacturing sector. In 2010, they have the highest SRs of 1.963 and 1.743 in the manufacturing sector and the Information and Communication sub-sectors respectively. In short, the Indian are well represented in all the economic activities albeit at a lower level than the Chinese. They also become the beneficiary of globalization through networking with India.

Although the New Economic Policy (NEP) has provided a tremendous impetus for the accumulation of human capital among the Malay, however, the majority of the Malay in the rural areas are still working in the agricultural sector. The 2020 Population Census shows that the Bumiputera (Indigenous people) account for more than 70 % of the workers in the agriculture sector.

The Other Bumiputera growth path is very sluggish. They are lagging behind in their SR values in all the economic sector except the agriculture sector in which their SRs drops gradually from 2.113 in 2010 to 1.986 in 2050. It implies that by 2050 they will be over-represented in the agriculture sector by over 98.6 %. They are moving very gradually into the manufacturing and tertiary sectors as elementary and service workers. Their AVES grows very gradually from 0.4833 in 2010 to 0.6182 in 2050.

To provide analytical support to the simulated scenarios, an analysis of the SRs of the ethnic groups in the seven key sub-sectors of the tertiary sectors from the 2000, 2100 and 2020 Census Reports of the Department of Statistics Malaysia. The seven key sub-sectors are chosen because they account for more than 60 % of the GDP of Malaysia. The analysis is shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2. Business sub-sectors by Ethnicity 2000-2010

CODE	INDICATORS	MALAY		OTHER BUMIPUTERA		CHINESE		INDIAN		NON-MALAYSIAN CITIZENS	
		2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
G	No	304,622	696,765	64,784	160,657	480,698	626,714	65,559	123,344	49,000	159,729
	%	31.58	39.46	6.72	9.10	49.82	35.50	6.80	6.99	5.08	8.95
	SR	0.630	0.788	0.616	0.774	2.031	1.574	0.950	1.039	0.845	1.086
H	No	197,891	237,000	28,623	45,098	171,892	128,323	31,698	60,054	34,089	35,291
	%	42.63	46.86	6.17	8.92	37.03	25.37	6.83	11.87	7.34	6.98
	SR	0.850	0.936	0.566	0.759	1.510	1.125	0.954	1.764	1.221	0.847
I	No	230,011	374,309	30,254	58,629	126,282	212,748	62,571	46,647	16,874	76,520
	%	49.36	48.68	6.49	7.63	27.10	27.67	13.43	6.07	3.62	9.95
	SR	0.984	0.972	0.595	0.649	1.105	1.227	1.876	0.902	0.602	1.280
J	No	117,545	66,174	7341	3387	110,234	50,699	22,024	17,627	3812	12,326
	%	46.82	44.05	2.93	2.25	39.94	33.75	8.78	11.73	1.52	8.22
	SR	0.933	0.879	0.269	0.191	1.628	1.496	1.226	1.743	0.253	8.22
K	No	117,545	137,213	7341	12,834	100,243	94,823	22,024	26,945	3812	3516
	%	46.82	49.84	2.93	4.66	39.94	34.44	8.78	9.79	1.52	1.79
	SR	0.933	0.995	0.269	0.396	1.628	1.527	1.226	1.455	0.253	0.154
L	No	103,260	16,974	11,135	996	111,814	16,634	29,551	4186	11,851	802
	%	38.59	42.87	4.16	2.52	41.78	42.01	11.04	10.57	4.43	2.03
	SR	0.769	0.860	0.381	0.215	1.703	1.872	1.542	1.579	0.737	0.248
M*	No	-	109,432	-	9916	-	88,897	-	22,453	-	11,580
	%	-	45.17	-	4.09	-	36.69	-	9.27	-	4.78
	SR	-	0.902	-	0.348	-	1.626	-	1.377	-	0.584
O**	No	556,270	549,998	83,686	86,692	73,357	53,735	42,657	31,234	14,592	9426
	%	72.19	75.23	10.86	11.86	9.52	7.35	5.54	4.27	1.89	1.29
	SR	1.439	1.502	0.970	1.008	0.388	0.326	0.774	0.634	0.314	0.156

Source: Compiled from *Economic Characteristics of the Population, 2000 & 2010*

G- Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles,

H - Transportation & Storage

I - Accommodation and Food and Beverages Service Activities

J - Information and Communication

K - Financial & Insurance / Takaful Activities L - Real Estate Activity (in 2000, Real Estate+ Renting + Business Act)

M* - Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (not included in the 2000 Census Report)

O** - Public Service & Defence (this was designated as L in 2000)

The above table shows that as of 2010, more than 40 years after the implementation of the New Economic Policy, NEP, (1970-1990), on a national basis, the Malay and Other Bumiputera of Sabah and Sarawak are not able to attain parity in any of the seven key sub-sectors of the tertiary sector, which are expected to contribute to more than 60 % to the GDP of Malaysia by 2020. Similar analysis for the Census Report 2000, show the same conclusion except that the Indian and Non-Malaysian Citizens are making significant progress during the 2000 – 2010 period. The Indian have exceeded their parity share in six out of the seven sub-sectors while the Non-Malaysian Citizens have exceeded their parity share in two of the sub-sectors. It is ironical that the Other Bumiputera of Malaysia are lagging behind the Non-Malaysian Citizens in the key business sectors. Hence these findings support the 2050 scenario in which the Malay and Other Bumiputera are trailing behind the Chinese and Indian. This scenario clearly shows that one of the key objectives of Vision 2020 is not met. The key objective is that through the implementation of the New Economic Policy (1970-1990), an economic sector is not to be dominated by one ethnic group. One of the implications of the simulated scenario for 2050 is that the Chinese and Indian will become the market dominant minority while the indigenous majority is skewed to the lower stratum of economic attainments. The recent DOSM statistics show that the median income of the labour force of Malaysia is RM 5810 while the median salary of the male workers in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery sector is RM 1749 which is nearly 30 % lower than the median income of the labour force of Malaysia. According to the 2020 Census Report, there were 976,500 labour force in the agriculture sector. The total Bumiputera, Chinese, Indians, Others, and Non-Malaysian Citizens account for, 70.49%, 12.00 %, 2.08 %, 6.86 % and 8.57 % respectively. This is the economic sector with the highest gap in poverty.

According to Amy Chua²:

“In countries with a market-dominant minority and a poor “indigenous” majority, the forces of democratization and marketization directly collide.... This backlash typically takes one of the three forms...The most ferocious kind of backlash is ethnic cleansing and other forms of majority-supported ethnic violence.”

To avoid the bleak scenario highlighted by Amy Chua, it is necessary to monitor the sustainability of the socio-economic development of Malaysia. A reasonable approach is to construct a simulation model to incorporate the endogenous and exogenous variables in a functional way to enable policy makers to generate scenarios based on different policy options and to see how development policies hold up in the future.

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² Amy Chua, “World on Fire”, Anchor Books, New York, 2003

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Chapter 7

Bridging the Gap: Exploring the Nexus of Migrant Workers and Poverty in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the complex relationship between migrant workers and poverty in Malaysia, emphasising the multifaceted dynamics that influence the experiences of migrant communities. Malaysia's rapid economic growth and industrialization have led to a substantial reliance on migrant labour, driving its development while also laying bare the vulnerabilities faced by these communities. Addressing these challenges aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 1: No Poverty: Ensuring that migrant workers are not trapped in poverty requires fair wages, decent working conditions, and access to essential services. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promoting decent work for all, including migrant workers, and fostering inclusive economic growth are vital for reducing vulnerabilities and improving livelihoods. SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities: Tackling the inequalities faced by migrant communities is crucial for achieving more equitable societies. SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Strengthening institutions to protect the rights of migrant workers and ensuring access to justice for victims of exploitation are integral to this goal. By integrating the SDGs into policy frameworks and business practices, Malaysia can foster a more inclusive and sustainable development path that upholds the rights and dignity of all its residents, including migrant workers.

Drawing upon case studies, this paper examines the moral and legal frameworks on equal work opportunity that has implications on the migrant community viz-a-viz the local workers. It will further interrogate the laws and policies that perpetuate poverty among migrant workers including exploitative labour practices and limited

access or gap in the areas of social protection. Through a nuanced analysis of these issues, this paper aims to inform policy discourse and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty and promoting the rights and well-being of migrant workers and impoverished communities in Malaysia. By fostering dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders, it seeks to advance inclusive and sustainable development agendas that prioritise social justice, human rights, and dignity for all. We also hope that by rigorously testing the possible measurements used to gauge migrant workers' contribution to the nation, we can help policy makers and industry plan the economy decently, mutually benefiting local and migrant workers.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's rapid economic growth and industrialization over the past few decades have led to dependence on migrant labour¹²³ While this reliance has contributed to Malaysia's development, it has also exposed vulnerabilities and poverty within the migrant communities.⁴⁵ The migrant workers in Malaysia are predominantly from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), migrant workers make up 2.2 million out of the total 14.1 million employees in the labour force as of the second quarter of 2022.⁶ Most of the migrant workers are concentrated in low-skilled occupations, filling labour demands in formal sectors such as the plantation (15%), manufacturing (25.6%), construction (19%), agriculture (22%) and services industries (39.4%).⁷

¹ Devadason, E. S., & Meng, C. W. (2014). Policies and laws regulating migrant workers in Malaysia: A critical appraisal. *Journal of contemporary Asia*, 44(1), 19-35.

² Amarjit, K. 2010. "Labour Migration in Southeast Asia: Migration Policies, Labour Exploitation and Regulation." *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 15 (1): 6-19

³ Choo, C. L. 2020. De-commercialization of the Labour Migration Industry in Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Studies*. Vo. 9(1); pp. 27-65.

⁴ IOM. 2023. <https://www.iom.int/resources/assessment-causes-and-contributing-factors-migrant-workers-becoming-undocumented-malaysia>

⁵ SUARAM. 2024.

https://www.suaram.net/_files/ugd/359d16_ab54282901d049e1bd30ce834f143354.pdf

⁶ Department of Statistics (DOSM). 2022, Second Quarter. *Labour Market Review*

⁷ Ibid

This paper takes a stance that employers have a moral and legal obligation to practice equal work opportunity among all employees regardless of citizenship and are bound by the employment laws and regulations in Malaysia. By establishing fair practices, workers can perform their jobs safely and with dignity. Cases such as the Goodyear & Rubber Co and F&N serve as strong example for all employers to model fair and equal treatment of employees. Data for this paper is through a combination of methods: document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions conducted by the North South Initiative (NSI) from 2021.

CASE STUDIES OF NON-COMPLIANCE OF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA

In 2019, several lawsuits were filed in the industrial court against Goodyear & Rubber Co by a total of 184 workers from Nepal, India and Myanmar. There were allegations of forced labour indicators, such an unpaid wage, unauthorized salary deductions, forced excessive work hours and passport retention by the employer, among workers which was reported by Liberty Shared. About 150 worker payslips were submitted to the court as evidence of unpaid wages, showing some migrants working as many as 229 hours a month in overtime, exceeding the Malaysian limit of 104 hours.⁸ The case was pursued by NSI and the legal team over non-compliance with a collective labour agreement. In 2022, the court judgement awarded between RM50,000 (USD11,061.95) to RM200,000 (USD41,819.13) it per worker depending on the length of their employment, confirming that migrant workers were “entitled to the same rights, they should not be discriminated, and they are entitled to receive the benefits that are contained in the CA” (Pereira, 2024).⁹

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/exclusive-goodyear-settles-labour-abuse-claims-with-workers-malaysian-factory-2022-09-14/>

⁹ <https://www.suaram.net/human-rights-reports?pgid=kvex92wb-a7571c7d-e313-432e-9bb1-85580564bdfd>

Similarly in 2022, F&N Beverages Manufacturing were sued by 47 workers mainly from Myanmar for non-compliance of collective agreement. While workers worked in a unionized environment, migrant workers were not invited or encouraged to join the trade union at F&N company in Malaysia. The industrial court consent judgement awarded the workers RM1,171,793.90 and the case was resolved in 2023. This averaged to about each worker being compensated about RM24,931 per worker. If RM1500 is used as the minimum monthly wage, the loss of wage is equivalent to 16 months' salary (Pereira, 2024),¹⁰ which impacts the livelihood of the migrant worker.

LEGISLATIVE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Malaysia has laws and policies which regulate the recruitment and employment of migrant workers in Malaysia. The commitment to protect migrant workers aligns with Malaysia ratifying 18 ILO Conventions, of which 14 are in force¹¹ (ILO, 2022). The subject of conventions includes right to organise, collective bargaining (C098); forced labour (C029); equal remuneration (C100); minimum age (C138); worst forms of child labour (C182); promotional framework for occupational safety and health convention (C187); labour inspection (C081); tripartite consultation (C144); employment service (C088); protection of wages (C095); guarding of machinery (C119); minimum age (underground work) (C123); minimum wage fixing (C131); and maritime labour (MLC 2006). The latest ratification by Malaysia was in 2022 with the Protocol of 2014 of the Forced Labour Convention. Besides these conventions, the global framework for migrant worker's management includes the international convention of the protection of rights of all migrant workers and members of their family. And the Global compact for safe orderly and regular migration. At the ASEAN

¹⁰ <https://www.suaram.net/human-rights-reports?pgid=kvex92wb-a7571c7d-e313-432e-9bb1-85580564bdfd>

¹¹ ILO. Ratification of Malaysia

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::p11200_country_id:102960

level, labour migration is governed by the Asian consensus on the protection and promotion, ASEAN declaration on strengthening and ASEAN convention on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Labour laws and policies in Malaysia aim to safeguard the rights and interests of both Malaysian workers and migrant workers. In practice however, differences exist, and considerations apply specifically to migrant workers due to their circumstances as shown below.

Malaysian Workers vs Migrants vs Refugee Table of Discrimination

RIGHTS BY LAW/REGULATION	MALAYSIAN WORKERS (CONTRACT FOR SERVICE)	MIGRANT WORKERS (TEMPORARY PASS WORK HOLDERS)	REFUGEES (UNCHR CARD HOLDERS)
Social Protections via SOCSO/PERKESO	Full protections, during and after work related accidents	Only work-related accidents	Not permitted
EPF Contribution	Compulsory	Not Compulsory	Not permitted
HRDF/TVET Trainings and Upgrading Schemes	Enjoys trainings	Not Entitled	Not permitted
Minimum Wage	Entitled	Entitled	Not permitted

Employment Insurance Scheme (EIS)	Entitled	Not Entitled	Not permitted
Years of Work	Until retirement age	10 (+3 Extension)	No formal work allowed
Periodical Medical Screening (FOMEMA)	Not subjected	Compulsory with possibility of facing termination and deportation if unfit	Not permitted
Pregnancy	Maternity and paternity leave given	Women pregnant migrant workers will be terminated and deported	Not permitted
Collective Agreement Benefits Entitlement	Has access if union or non-union member	Has access if union member. Must contest in IR Court if non-union member	Not permitted
Union Membership	Has access	No restriction	Not permitted
Union Leadership/Exco	Allowed	Possible but with permission granted by MOHR	Not permitted

Public Health Care Access	Access to RM1 public Health Clinics	Have access but at unsubsidized rates Subject to arrest and detention if undocumented	50% "discount" on unsubsidized rates if UNHCR Card Holder
YBGK/Public Legal Aid Fund	Has Access	No Access	No Access
Remand period	Max 14 days	Max 28 Days	Max 28 days
Peaceful Assembly Act	Yes	Excluded and denied	Excluded and denied

Source: Pereira, 2004¹²

The Employment Act 1955 is the primary legislation governing employment in Malaysia. It covers various aspects such as working hours, rest days, overtime pay, and termination benefits. Malaysians are entitled to a minimum wage, currently RM1500, as determined by the government, which is reviewed periodically to ensure it keeps up with the cost of living. The Industrial Relations Act 1967 provides mechanisms for resolving disputes between employers and Malaysian employees, including collective bargaining and the right to strike. The IR aims to promote and maintain industrial harmony and regulations between employers, employees and trade unions. The Trade Union Act 1959 governs the management of trade unions such as MTUC members who are registered under the trade unions Act. According to the Act, there is no barrier in joining a union for migrant workers as long as they match the job scope and are directly hired by the company. PERKESO/SOCSO provides social security protections such as employment injury insurance and hospitalization benefits to all workers but excludes migrant workers from the invalidity pension

¹² <https://www.suaram.net/human-rights-reports?pgid=kvex92wb-a7571c7d-e313-432e-9bb1-85580564bdfd>

scheme and coverage of accidents outside the workplace and migrant workers' accommodation. The Minimum Wage Order 2022, under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resources, orders employers to pay their workers a minimum salary of RM1500 per month. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA Act 154)1994 governs safety and health issues at the workplace in Malaysia.

The recruitment of migrant workers is processed and governed by the Ministry of Human Resources, Embassies and Ministry of Home Affairs, Migrant workers must have valid work permits which are tied to the specific employer and sector except for workers in the construction industry and selected service sectors. Migrant workers are entitled to a minimum wage, and Foreign Workers Compensation Scheme (FWCS) which provides medical coverage for employment-related injuries. The Anti-trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (Act 670) protects migrant workers from human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. This act also protects migrants from 'exploitation' referring to sexual exploitation, forced work of services, slavery or other activities that contravenes the law or human organ transplants (Section 2 of Act 2007). The Contracts Act 1950 legally binds all parties involved in the labour recruitment especially workers who have contract for service. Domestic workers are excluded from certain labour rights such as minimum wage, fixed working hours and day off. However, for a migrant worker to pursue a labour dispute in the Malaysian judicial system, a worker would have to obtain a special pass and remain in the country throughout the duration of the case (ILO, 2018).¹³

While the Constitution of Malaysia claims that we are all equal in the eyes of the law, as per Article 8 and Article 6 stating that no one shall be held in slavery, we still find most migrant workers at risk of being trapped in slavery and treated discriminatorily. This is due to weak

¹³ ILO. 2018. Situation and gap analysis on Malaysian legislation, policies and programmes, and the ILO Forced Labour Convention and Protocol. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/genericdocument/wcms_650658.pdf

laws which in practice is not proactive in nature and poor enforcement of rules and regulations of those laws, where much of the SOPs are not made public. Also, the extra-territorial nature of labour migration, has deterred enforcement from prosecuting human traffickers, labour agents and masterminds of organised crimes on the other side of our borders.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The case studies revealed exploitation and discrimination of migrant workers in Malaysia. The quotes below highlight the existing disparities and challenges faced by migrant workers in Malaysia, despite the presence of labour laws aimed at protecting their rights. The issues range from unequal working conditions and opportunities to limited access to legal recourse and social protection. Addressing these disparities requires concerted efforts from the government, employers, trade unions, civil society, and international organizations to ensure that all workers, regardless of their nationality or immigration status, gender, are treated fairly and equitably.

"Malaysian authorities are treating migrants as criminals, arbitrarily holding them for prolonged periods in immigration centres with almost no access to the outside world" (Human Rights Watch Report, 2024)

"There were ongoing allegations of human rights violations in immigration detention centres where refugees and migrants were indefinitely detained. In February, human rights groups called for investigations into conditions after the government revealed that 150 foreigners, including seven children and 25 women, had died in the centres in 2022...In April, the government announced that it was investigating the arrival of hundreds of migrant workers who, despite paying exorbitant fees to intermediaries, did not have jobs and were therefore

vulnerable to forced labour... " (Amnesty International Report, 2024)¹⁴

"...migrant workers can join unions. But the government is aware that some employers are forcing workers not to join..." (MTUC, 2019) ¹⁵

"While Malaysian labour laws apply to both Malaysian and foreign workers, enforcement remains a challenge, particularly for foreign workers who may not be aware of their rights or fear retaliation for reporting violations. This has led to a situation where foreign workers are often denied equal protection under the law." - Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Report, 2022

GAPS IN WORKERS' RIGHTS – UNIONISATION

Migrant workers in Malaysia are vulnerable to a spectrum of labour rights issues, in some cases leading to trafficking and forced labour situations. Despite anti-trafficking and anti-forced labour policies in place that focus on prevention and protection strategies,^{16 17} migrant workers continue to be exposed to exploitation that impacts their agency (Marks & Olsen, 2015). The labour rights framework is enshrined in the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (Forced Labour Protocol) to address forced labour issues including trade unions.

The trade union movement have generally focused on solidarity with worker's rights and holds freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining of all employees in Malaysia (Shamir, 2012). Migrant workers have the right to join trade unions under the Trade

¹⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/malaysia/report-malaysia/>

¹⁵ <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2019/11/27/bosses-stopping-migrant-workers-joining-unions-says-mtuc/>

¹⁶ <http://dosh.mohr.gov.my/en/images/NAPFL%202021-2025/mobile/index.html>

¹⁷ <http://mapo.bernama.com/pdf/annualcountryreport.pdf>

Union Act 1959 but often this right is violated through explicit prohibition in worker's employment contracts (Mark & Olsen, 2015). According to Pereira (2004),¹⁸ migrant workers reported that some trade unions and human resources personnel of a few companies have prevented migrant workers from joining unions. As a result, migrant worker's needs are not addressed holistically. This leaves a vacuum of care and equity deficit on the part of both the trade unions and employers to grant equal rights and benefits to all employees at the workplace.

The migrant workers in Malaysia mostly work in the five major economic sectors that demands at least 8 to 12 hours working hours per day (IOM 2023). The long and irregular work hours make it impossible for migrant workers to seek help and join union activities, in addition to lack of understanding on the benefits provided and social protection offered by collective agreements (CAs).¹⁹ Additionally, migrant workers could face cultural and communication barriers, including language which puts them at risk of exploitation²⁰ Grievances mechanism and collective bargaining become superficial and counter-productive when migrants workers are denied access to these rights. Finally, the 'temporary' status of migrant workers poses a challenge to the trade union's mission of 'protecting' all workers. This rhetoric, however, is impacted by the perspectives that migrant workers are problematic, and a threat to the availability of jobs and bargaining power of local workers.²¹ The reality, however, is there are workers who work more than 10 years in one workplace. A migrant worker who returns home after the expiration of the 10-year limit

¹⁸https://www.suaram.net/_files/ugd/359d16_ab54282901d049e1bd30ce834f143354.pdf

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Pocock NS, Chan Z, Loganathan T, Suphanchaimat R, Kosiyaporn H, Allotey P, Chan WK, Tan D. Moving towards culturally competent health systems for migrants? Applying systems thinking in a qualitative study in Malaysia and Thailand. *PLoS One*. 2020 Apr 6;15(4): e0231154. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0231154. PMID: 32251431; PMCID: PMC7135217.

²¹ Kanapathy. V. 2008. Controlling Irregular Migration: The Malaysian Experience. ILO Asian Regional Programme on Governance of Labour Migration Working Paper No.14

translates into an economic loss as employers have to rehire and retrain new workers which is proven to be a costly exercise.

WAGE THEFT

The case studies have revealed that the exploited migrant workers were underpaid or denied rightful wages and benefits as stipulated in the collective agreement. Wage theft suggesting forced labour indicator among migrant workers in Malaysia is a significant and pervasive issue that has garnered global attention. According to U.N. labour agency, profit generated from forced labour stands at USD236 billion per year.²² Wage theft refers to “the total or partial non-payment of a worker’s remuneration, earned through the provision of labour services, as stipulated in a written or non-written employment contract. It also includes the payment of salaries below the minimum wage, non-payment of overtime, non-payment of contractually owed benefits, the non-negotiated reduction of salaries as well as the retention of dues upon one’s contract termination.”²³

Malaysian labour laws and regulations may not provide adequate protection for migrant workers, making it easier for employers to engage in wage theft without facing significant consequences. Many migrant workers incur significant debts to recruitment agencies or employers for securing employment in Malaysia. For example, a study conducted by NSI in collaboration with IOM in 2023²⁴ among 40 migrant workers revealed the following migration cost by nationality.

²² <https://apnews.com/article/sexual-exploitation-slavery-forced-labour-united-nations-report-e6a4910e246aa738810e937aac68d8aa>

²³ <https://mfasia.org/policy-brief-no-1-justice-for-migrant-workers-creating-an-effective-solution-to-address-wage-theft/>

²⁴ IOM. 2023. <https://www.iom.int/resources/assessment-causes-and-contributing-factors-migrant-workers-becoming-undocumented-malaysia>

Migration Cost by Nationality

NATIONALITY (N=40)	MIGRATION COST (US)
Bangladesh (130)	\$4000 - 5000
Nepal (19)	\$1100 - 1650
Indonesia (8)	\$134 - 500

Source: IOM, 2023

Debt bondage can lead to wage deductions, making it difficult for workers to receive their full wages. As a result, wage theft deprives migrant workers of their rightful earnings, leading to financial difficulties, inability to repay debts, and poverty. Inadequate wages and overwork can result in physical and mental health issues due to stress, exhaustion, and lack of access to healthcare. Migrant workers who experience wage theft may be less likely to report workplace abuses or join unions due to fear of retaliation from employers. Economic hardship and workplace exploitation can lead to social isolation among migrant workers, limiting their ability to integrate into communities and access support networks. Malaysia is yet to harmonize local laws related to migrant workers recruitment with ILO's "General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs."²⁵

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND REMEDY

The case studies outcome shows the importance of addressing migrant worker grievances within the labour rights framework. Migrant workers often did not have the power and agency to access justice and remedy either within the company or external organizations (IOM, 2023). 36 out of the 40 workers in the study confirmed that they had no avenues to report or seek help, and they feared that reporting would cause them to lose their job or be

²⁵https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/publication/wcms_703485.pdf

detained by authorities. Participants referred to lack of language skills and their documented status as deterring workers from remediating with employers and seeking external help. Lack of knowledge on their rights also prove to be a significant factor of vulnerability according to the IOM (2023) study²⁶. Bangladesh and Nepali migrant workers understood the role of the embassy to only issue new passports. Respondents indicated that they have minimal confidence and knowledge of the grievance mechanisms at the workplace and did not perceive it as an effective route to remedy. The migrants interviewed felt that companies took advantage of undocumented worker vulnerabilities and do not provide sufficient information relating to the redress mechanism. Migrants felt that reporting to regulatory bodies (labour department, police, industrial relations) put them in danger of arrest or detention.

PASSPORT RETENTION

With poor working conditions and often unpaid wages, employers sometimes use a variety of tactics to prevent workers from leaving their workplace. Employers holding the passports of workers is one such strategy that is commonly reported by the migrant workers. Withholding passports increases the likelihood of arrest and detention if the migrant is caught by enforcement authorities. While there are some concessions made to have employers hold workers passports with consent, this is highly discouraged by civil society actors as this process has been abused amidst the imbalance of power relations. Common excuses given by employers is that worker's will abscond if they had their passport in their possession. This has been heavily debated in various forums in Malaysia and remains a controversial issue.

²⁶ IOM. 2023. <https://www.iom.int/resources/assessment-causes-and-contributing-factors-migrant-workers-becoming-undocumented-malaysia>

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the structural barriers and systemic inequalities that perpetuate poverty among migrant workers and impoverished communities is crucial for fostering inclusive and sustainable development in Malaysia. This paper has explored the intricate relationship between migrant workers, poverty, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting the multifaceted challenges and vulnerabilities that shape their experiences and the broader implications for sustainable development.

The alignment of these challenges with SDGs underscores the urgency and relevance of addressing the rights and well-being of migrant workers and impoverished communities. Specifically, SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) are particularly relevant in this context.

Exploitative labour practices, such as wage theft, underpayment, and unsafe working conditions, disproportionately affect migrant workers and contribute to their economic vulnerability. These practices often go unchecked due to weak enforcement mechanisms and inadequate legal protections, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and social marginalization.

Furthermore, gaps in social protection systems deny migrant workers and impoverished communities' access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social welfare benefits. Without adequate support systems in place, they are more vulnerable to financial instability, health crises, and other hardships, exacerbating their poverty and marginalization. Systemic inequalities, discrimination, and limited opportunities for upward mobility further reinforce this cycle of poverty, hindering the ability of migrant workers and impoverished communities to improve their livelihoods and access better opportunities.

Addressing the root causes of poverty among migrant workers and impoverished communities requires comprehensive policy reforms, stronger legal protections, and targeted interventions that promote fair labour practices, enhance social protections, and create inclusive opportunities. Collaborative efforts, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous evaluation of migrant workers' contributions to the nation's economy are essential for informing policy discourse and advocacy efforts aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting sustainable development.

In conclusion, integrating the principles and targets of SDGs into policy frameworks and business practices can foster a more inclusive and sustainable development path that upholds the rights and dignity of all residents, including migrant workers and impoverished communities. By tackling exploitative labour practices, strengthening social protection systems, and promoting inclusive development strategies, Malaysia can empower migrant workers and impoverished communities to build better futures for themselves and contribute to the nation's progress towards achieving the SDGs. By planning the economy decently and ensuring mutual benefits for both local and migrant workers, Malaysia can advance towards a more equitable and prosperous future. This is becoming inherently important because of the latest discourse stemming from the UN guiding principles on business and human rights (UNGPs), leading to enforceable sanctions like the Withhold Release Order (WRO) of the US customs and border protection, and the upcoming EU corporate sustainability due diligence directive (CSDDD).

Part 4:
Leveraging Agriculture to
Overcome Poverty

Chapter 8

Budi Daya Bersama: Merangkul Kesejahteraan Komuniti melalui Projek Kebun Komuniti “Social Lab” untuk Mencapai Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan

Nathaniel Maikol, Shafinah Kamarudin, Oswald V Iking, Erny Nicholas, Mohamad Zaki Mohamad Saad, Nur Hafizatun Ramlan

ABSTRAK

Sabah mencatatkan kadar kemiskinan tegar enam kali ganda daripada kadar nasional dan terus meningkat akibat daripada ketidaksetaraan dan pembangunan yang tidak seimbang daripada pelbagai sudut termasuk pendapatan, pendidikan dan infrastruktur. Hal ini menyebabkan Malaysia agak sukar mencapai Agenda Pembangunan Mampan 2030 untuk Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan 1 (SDG 1), yang memberi penekanan untuk menamatkan kemiskinan dan kekurangan lain. Oleh itu, Syarikat Tumparak Sdn. Bhd. berhasrat membantu komuniti petani di Kampung Kuyungon, Tambunan, Sabah untuk meningkatkan hasil tanaman menerusi projek Kebun Komuniti-Social Lab. Projek ini dimulai dengan tinjauan awal, beberapa siri perkongsian ilmu bersama peserta projek, penyediaan tapak, pembangunan rumah hijau, semaian biji benih, pemindahan anak benih ke batas, penjagaan dan penyelenggaraan tanaman, penyelenggaraan lepas tuai, dan pembungkusan dan penjualan. Ilmu yang dipindah kepada peserta termasuklah pengeluaran makanan mampan dan pengurusan lepas tuai, pengurusan air dan pengurusan pengairan, pemasaran dan penjualan hasil pertanian. Sayuran seperti timun taiwan, peria katak, tomato ceri, sawi kerinting, sawi bunga, terung putih, sawi taiwan, lada benggala, kacang panjang, dan lobak merah ditanam secara berperingkat mulai 5 Disember 2023. Hasil tanaman ini telah mula dijual di pasaran tempatan pada 10 Januari 2024. Projek ini menunjukkan impak positif iaitu petani mampu

memperoleh hasil jualan sekurang-kurangnya RM1000.00 – RM1800.00 sebulan daripada satu rumah hijau bergantung pada jenis tanaman. Selain itu, penggunaan baja organik sepenuhnya kepada tanaman di dalam membolehkan petani berpeluang untuk memohon pensijilan myGAP kelak. Kejayaan projek ini adalah hasil komitmen penuh daripada peserta, pemantauan berkala yang dilaksana oleh pihak syarikat Tumparak Sdn. Bhd., sokongan dana daripada Asas Pelaksanaan Pelan Gerakan Malaysia - Pelan Pembangunan Mampan berasaskan SDG (APPGM), serta khidmat nasihat daripada Jabatan Pertanian Sabah dan Universiti Putra Malaysia. Keseluruhannya, gabungan komitmen komuniti petani, syarikat swasta dan agensi kerajaan membuktikan SDG1; tiada kemiskinan, SDG2; kelaparan sifar, dan SDG10; mengurangi ketidaksetaraan boleh dicapai.

PENGENALAN

Isu kemiskinan tegar dan usaha meningkatkan pendapatan untuk memperbaiki socio-ekonomi masyarakat masih menjadi tumpuan utama di Malaysia termasuk masyarakat di Sabah. Usaha ini adalah selari dengan Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan 2030. Sehubungan dengan ini, pemilik Syarikat Tumparak Sdn. Bhd. berhasrat mengetengahkan konsep Social Lab untuk menjadi gerbang yang menghubungkan petani dan teknologi terkini, membimbing petani ke arah pertanian lestari, dan menerapkan amalan pertanian mampan.

Sehubungan dengan itu, sokongan dana daripada pihak Asas Pelaksanaan Pelan Gerakan Malaysia - Pelan Pembangunan Mampan berasaskan SDG (APPGM) telah merealisasikan hasrat untuk mengetengahkan konsep Social Lab bersama komuniti petani Kampung Kuyungon, Tambunan, Sabah. Seterusnya, Kampung Kuyungon yang terletak di Banjaran Crocker meletak kepentingan kampung ini untuk memelihara sumber air utama untuk 42000 penduduk di Tambunan. Oleh itu, komuniti petani di Kampung Kuyungon masih mengekalkan kaedah pertanian konvensional dan hanya mengguna kawasan tanah pertanian sedia ada supaya aktiviti

pertanian tidak menjejaskan kualiti air sungai. Aktiviti pertanian di kawasan ini adalah berbentuk kepada sara diri dan tertumpu kepada tanaman padi dan sayuran. Selain itu, kekurangan infrastruktur khususnya jalan raya turut menjadi cabaran kepada komuniti petani setempat untuk memasarkan hasil pertanian mereka.

Konsep Social Lab merupakan satu konsep pertanian yang mengguna pendekatan pembangunan rumah hijau serta menekankan konsep pertanian organik. Nilai budi daya bersama ditekankan di dalam projek ini, iaitu merujuk kepada amalan budi daya yang dilaksana secara kolektif oleh komuniti. Setiap peserta perlu bekerjasama di dalam merancang, menanam dan menguruskan rumah hijau sebagai satu komuniti. Oleh itu, setiap peserta bertanggungjawab membantu peserta lain untuk bersama-sama mencapai keseluruhan keberhasilan projek di dalam mencapai matlamat SDG1; tiada kemiskinan, SDG2; kelaparan sifar, dan SDG10; mengurangi ketidaksetaraan.

Pelaksanaan projek Social Lab ini turut mendapat sokongan dan khidmat nasihat daripada Jabatan Pertanian Sabah dan Universiti Putra Malaysia. Penglibatan bersama pihak agensi kerajaan membolehkan komuniti petani memperolehi maklumat terkini dan khidmat nasihat secara langsung untuk mengembangkan Social Lab. Projek ini berjaya membuka peluang kepada komuniti petani Kampung Kuyungon untuk memasarkan hasil tanaman di kawasan Tambunan dan menjadi pusat pembelajaran tanaman organik. Secara keseluruhannya, projek ini berjaya meningkatkan sumber pendapatan peserta.

OBJEKTIF

Objektif utama artikel ini dibentangkan adalah untuk berkongsi tentang perjalanan pelaksanaan Projek Kebun Komuniti "Social Lab" di Kampung Kuyungon, Tambunan, Sabah ke arah mencapai Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan. Seterusnya, artikel ini akan

mengetengahkan cabaran yang dihadapi dan pengalaman peserta di dalam mengikuti projek ini dan mengendalikan pengurusan tanaman di Social Lab masing-masing. Kajian ini mengenal pasti manfaat yang boleh diperolehi melalui pelaksanaan projek Social Lab ke arah meningkatkan sumber pendapatan komuniti petani di Kampung Kuyungon.

AKTIVITI PROJEK

Secara umumnya, seramai 10 petani yang berpendapatan rendah dipilih untuk menyertai projek ini. Projek ini dimulai dengan aktiviti tinjauan awal. Pada awalnya, sesi taklimat berkaitan projek dan tinjauan awal ke lokasi yang ingin dibangunkan Social Lab dijalankan. Sesi taklimat ini penting untuk memberi maklumat awal seperti objektif projek Social Lab, kaedah pelaksanaan projek dan keperluan nilai daya budi daripada peserta yang dipilih. Seterusnya, tinjauan awal dilaksanakan untuk mengenal pasti kekangan atau cabaran untuk membangunkan Social Lab tersebut. Tinjauan awal ini turut melibatkan pensyarah daripada Universiti Putra Malaysia untuk memberi khidmat nasihat berkaitan pelaksanaan projek ini. Aktiviti ini dijalankan pada September 2023 (Rajah 8.1).



Rajah 8.1. Taklimat dan tinjauan awal tapak projek

Seterusnya, aktiviti penyediaan tapak projek dilaksanakan. Kawasan yang dipilih untuk dibangunkan Social Lab dibersihkan. Pembangunan Social Lab turut mengguna buluh, iaitu tumbuhan sedia ada di kawasan Kampung Kuyungon sebagai kerangka rumah hijau. Penggunaan buluh ini lebih bersifat semula jadi, boleh menjimatkan kos pembangunan Social Lab dan peserta mudah untuk menyelenggara Social Lab ini kelak. Rajah 8.2 menunjukkan aktiviti semasa pembangunan Social Lab. Rajah 8.3 menunjukkan penyediaan batas di dalam Social Lab.



Rajah 8.2. Proses pembangunan Social Lab



Rajah 8.3. Penyediaan batas

Selepas Social Lab dibangunkan dan batas disediakan, semua peserta mula menyemai biji benih berdasarkan sayuran yang hendak ditanam. Biji benih yang diberikan kepada peserta adalah timun taiwan, peria katak, tomato ceri, sawi kerinting, sawi bunga, terung putih, sawi taiwan, lada benggala, kacang panjang, dan lobak merah. Rajah 8.4 menunjukkan contoh aktiviti semaian dan pertumbuhan daun sebenar lada benggala selepas 22 hari disemai. Selepas daun sebenar muncul, aktiviti memindah anak pokok ke batas dilaksanakan (Rajah 8.5).



Rajah 8.4. Semaian biji benih dan contoh pertumbuhan daun sebenar untuk lada benggala



Rajah 8.5. Pindahan anak semaian ke batas

Setiap Social Lab ditanam dengan sejenis tanaman sahaja agar peserta lebih mudah untuk menjaga dan menyelenggara tanaman. Jadual 8.1 menunjukkan maklumat berkaitan tempoh untuk diperlukan oleh setiap tanaman sehingga tempoh tuaian.

Jadual 8.1. Tempoh tuaian bagi setiap tanaman

BIL	TANAMAN	TEMPOH (HARI)
1	Timun Taiwan	40-60
2	Peria Katak	50-70
3	Tomato Ceri	50-85
4	Sawi Keriting	30-50
5	Sawi Bunga	50-75
6	Terung Putih	70-90
7	Sawi Taiwan	40-60
8	Capsicum	60-90
9	Kacang Panjang	60-80
10	Lobak Merah	30-50

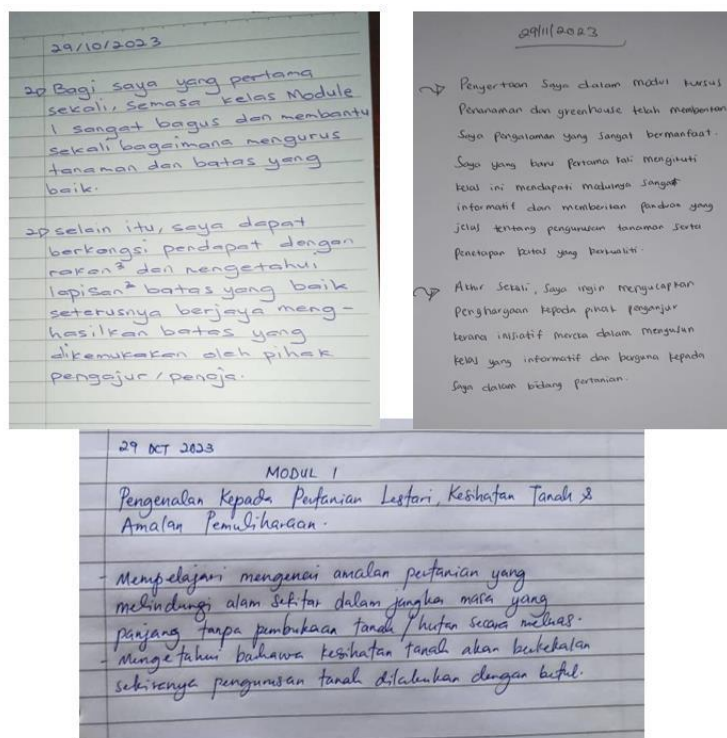
Aktiviti penjagaan dan penyelenggaraan tanaman perlu dilakukan secara berterusan. Hal ini adalah untuk memastikan tanaman dapat mengeluarkan hasil sayuran seperti yang dijangka. Meskipun begitu, peserta turut berhadapan dengan isu serangan serangga perosak tanaman (Rajah 8.6). Peserta berjaya mengendalikan isu ini dengan bimbingan yang dilaksana secara berterusan. Rajah 8.7 menunjukkan sesi perkongsian ilmu yang dijalankan secara berkala sepanjang projek ini. Rajah 8.8 menunjukkan contoh respons peserta terhadap sesi perkongsian ilmu yang dijalankan.



Rajah 8.6. Serangga perosak



Rajah 8.7. Peserta mengikuti sesi perkongsian ilmu secara berkala



Rajah 8.8. Contoh respons peserta selepas mengikuti sesi perkongsian ilmu

Seterusnya, sayuran dituai mengikut tempoh matang untuk penuaian (Rajah 8.9). Setelah sayuran ditimbang dan dibungkus, sayuran telah sedia untuk dijual. Rajah 8.10 menunjukkan aktiviti promosi dan penjualan sayuran di Sidang Kemuncak *Sustainable Development Goals* Malaysia Wilayah Sabah 2024, yang diadakan di Kota Kinabalu pada 25 Januari 2024.



Rajah 8.9. Penuaian hasil tanaman



Rajah 8.10. Aktiviti Promosi dan Penjualan Sayuran Social Lab Sidang Kemuncak *Sustainable Development Goals* Malaysia Wilayah Sabah 2024

Projek Social Lab ini menerima lawatan daripada Jabatan Pertanian Sabah, Pejabat Daerah Tambunan, Kolej Komuniti Tambunan, Kolej Geomatika penduduk sekitar Tambunan serta pelawat dari luar negara. Pada kesempatan ini, peserta menjual hasil tanaman secara terus dari Social Lab ke pelawat. Aktiviti penjualan secara terus dilihat menyokong SDG1 dan SDG2. Sehingga Mac 2024, pembangunan Social Lab telah memperoleh pendapatan kasar sekurang-kurangnya RM1000 untuk sayuran hijau. Manakala, sayuran berbuah seperti lada benggala dan lobak merah masih menunggu tempoh untuk dituai.



Rajah 8.11. Lawatan daripada pihak Jabatan Pertanian Tambunan pada 12 Januari 2024

PELAWAT DAN JUALAN TERUS DARI KEBUN KOMUNITI SOCIAL LAB



Rajah 8.12. Jualan Terus dari Social Lab

CADANGAN DAN PERBINCANGAN

Pada peringkat awal, cabaran utama projek ini adalah lokasi projek ini terletak di kawasan luar bandar. Selain itu, kawasan ini mempunyai kekangan daripada infrastruktur yang masih boleh ditambah baik pada masa yang akan datang. Kemudahan sedia ada iaitu Dapur Komuniti membolehkan semua peserta berkumpul untuk setiap sesi perkongsian ilmu. Meskipun begitu, keperluan lain seperti sistem siaran raya boleh membantu melancarkan sesi perkongsian ilmu ini. Input pertanian yang berkualiti seperti biji benih dan baja yang bersesuaian juga amat diperlukan untuk projek ini. Seterusnya, tanaman yang ditanam turut menghadapi serangan serangga dan penyakit. Walaubagaimanapun, bimbingan berterusan daripada Syarikat Tumparak Sdn. Bhd. dan Jabatan Pertanian Sabah membantu peserta untuk mengendalikan isu tersebut dengan baik.

Secara keseluruhannya, model Social Lab yang diketengahkan oleh Syarikat Tumparak Sdn. Bhd. dengan sokongan agensi kerajaan dan pendanaan APPGM amat membantu komuniti petani luar bandar khususnya di Sabah untuk meningkatkan pendapatan sara diri. Komitmen, usaha dan semangat daripada komuniti petani Kampung

Kuyungon dengan nilai budi daya bersama patut dicontohi di dalam memastikan sesebuah projek komuniti berteraskan pertanian boleh dilaksanakan dengan jayanya. Sesi perkongsian ilmu dan bimbingan yang berterusan membolehkan semua peserta mempunyai hak upaya untuk mengurus dan menyelenggara tanaman dengan baik. Sesi perkongsian yang berterusan bersama petani membolehkan petani memperoleh maklumat terkini khususnya di dalam pengurusan dan penyelenggaraan tanaman dan ini adalah selari dengan SDG10, iaitu untuk mengurangi ketidaksetaraan antara penduduk di bandar dan luar bandar.

Selain itu, penanaman sayuran yang berasingan untuk setiap Social Lab, memudahkan petani untuk mengurus tanaman serta mengelakkan persaingan di dalam pengeluaran hasil tanaman. Projek ini membantu peserta meningkatkan sumber pendapatan mereka dan hal ini adalah selari dengan SDG1 dan SDG2. Projek Social Lab juga telah berjaya menarik pelawat dari dalam dan luar negara untuk mempelajari berkaitan pertanian organik. Oleh itu, projek Social Lab di Kampung Kuyungon mesti diteruskan dan penambahan rumah hijau dilihat boleh menjadi tarikan agropelancongan utama bagi kawasan Tambunan dan Sabah secara amnya. Pada masa yang akan datang, halatuju projek Social Lab di Kampung Kuyungon ke arah pensijilan myGAP akan meningkatkan kualiti sayuran dan kepercayaan pengguna terhadap hasil produk tanaman organik daripada Kampung Kuyungon.

Chapter 9

Seeds of Change: Nurturing Hope in Kg. Bambangan Lama Ulu Tuaran, Sabah, Malaysia through Academic and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) Intervention

Jacqueline Joseph & Cornelius Peter

ABSTRACT

The community in Kg. Bambangan Lama Ulu Tuaran, Sabah, is deeply rooted in tradition and faces challenges, yet has created a strong and enduring bond among the beautiful surroundings with the breathtaking view of Mount Kinabalu. The area is a rural settlement situated on the western slopes of the Crocker Range, characterised by steep topography and low-quality soil. The location is situated at an elevation of approximately 1,130 feet above sea level. The local community practices traditional hillside farming, emphasising self-sufficiency farming and focusing on the cultivation of food and cash crops. The families diligently engaged in traditional farming, rearing of stingless bees, yet only receiving insufficient produce that barely supported their existence. The farming community continued to remain in a cycle of poverty, hindering their ability to overcome economic inequalities. Implementing measures like modern farming, crop diversification, and water management is expected to greatly improve the livelihoods of agricultural families in Kg. Bambangan Lama. Nevertheless, academic institutions and NGOs are anticipated to collaborate in implementing agricultural reforms in the village that align with Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 6. The potential collaboration of academia, NGOs, and the resilient community of Kg. Bambangan Lama showcases optimism and development by effectively aligning their combined endeavours with the SDGs. In conclusion, the integration of academic research and NGO initiatives led to a comprehensive strategy that tackled current issues and

steered the village towards a future with reduced poverty and a more resilient society.

INTRODUCTION

The narrative was set in Kg Bambangan Lama Ulu Tuaran, Sabah, a remote village located within the buffer zone of Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve (CRBR) with precipitous terrain and infertile soils. It is positioned at an elevation of approximately 1,130 above sea level. Despite its modest size, the village carries a rich legacy that weaves through the lives of its 150 registered folks. While a significant number of the local population may have relocated to the city of Kota Kinabalu in pursuit of employment opportunities with private and public organizations, Kg Bambangan continues to thrive, serving as a testament to the resilient nature of the people who live there. Situated in an area predominantly inhabited by individuals of the Dusun ethnicity who belong to the Christian faith, the sustainable economic structure is made from their skills in cultivating stingless bees and honeybees (see Figure 9.1a). This multifaceted effort not only generates revenue for the local community but also facilitates a subtle interaction with the surrounding environment, thereby supporting the restoration of ecological balance. Recognising the land's dual role as a provider and nurturer, the people of Kg Bambangan actively participate in agricultural pursuits especially the hilly paddy cultivation.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY FARMING INITIATIVES IN KG. BAMBANGAN AND THEIR ALIGNMENT WITH SDG NO. 2 - ZERO HUNGER

Self-sufficiency farming is being practiced by the local populations in Kg. Bambangan Lama Ulu Tuaran (see Figure 9.1). The local communities produce most or all the food on their piece of land with little to no external input from other people or organizations. These communities are planting food crops such as ginger torches, leafy vegetables, and native fruits. They are also practicing hill paddy cultivation, method of cultivating rice on hillsides using traditional or

indigenous agricultural practices (see Figure 9.1e). The local communities also have a source of income from rubber tapping, which is one of the cash crops (see Figure 9.1d). Self-sufficiency farming significantly contributes to SDG No. 2, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. However, because of the poor road condition and the low market prices, the local communities are unable to proceed with the processing of latex sap. With good road accessibility, this would allow the latex sap to be processed at the nearby factory and then sold to the middleman. The roadway that links Kg Bambang to the external surroundings presents a further hurdle (see Figure 9.2). The road condition demands four-wheel drive for travel, becomes risky when the monsoon season arrives with downpour. On occasion, the hazardous road conditions result in catastrophic landslides that completely encircle the village (see Figure 9.2e).



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

Figure 9.1. (a) Stingless bees farming, (b) Taro cultivation, (c) Dragon fruits, (d) Rubbers, (e) harvesting hilly paddy, (f) shifting agriculture



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)

Figure 9.2. Poor road conditions heading to Kg. Bambangan Lama Ulu Tuaran

ADDRESSING PRESSING CONCERNS: KEY ISSUES IMPACTING COMMUNITIES IN KG. BAMBANGAN LAMA

Although the community's aesthetic appeal is indisputable and being surrounded by remote forest, it is vital to acknowledge the courageous challenges that it confronts daily. Education that is not easily accessible is among the most pressing issues. While knowledge is widely regarded as a symbol of development, Kg Bambang is confronted with the harsh truth that it solely possesses a primary school. This primary school is situated in Kg. Tudan, which can be reached in an arduous four-hour trek or an hour-long drive. Imagine the situation where parents and children venture on arduous journeys with the sole intention of attaining an education that ought to be easily accessible. Secondary education necessitates that students commute 50 kilometres to a remote school in Kiulu, thereby forcing them to reside in hostels that are physically separated from their families. Supply of electricity, which is frequently overlooked, represents an additional formidable impediment. Kg Bambang subsists on generators and solar energy, which are utilised to illuminate their houses and supply power to critical appliances. While most of us turn on our lights effortlessly, those living in Kg. Bambang Lama struggles to ensure accessibility to electricity, which is taken for granted by the majority. The people who live in Kg Bambang are confronted with an array of challenges that surpass their basic inadequacies of electricity and education. The lack of fundamental amenities, such as healthcare facilities and clinics, exacerbates their challenges. Given that the closest medical facilities are in Tambunan and Penampang, which are each two hours by vehicle away, obtaining necessary healthcare becomes a challenging task. The road condition demands four-wheel drive for travel, becomes risky when the monsoon season arrives with downpour. On occasion, the hazardous road conditions result in catastrophic landslides that completely encircle the village (see Figure 9.2).

Most local communities possess houses that are in a state of disrepair and lack proper maintenance (see Figure 9.3). The local community gathers sustainably sourced wood and bamboo from the nearby forest to construct their houses. They carefully select sturdy timber and flexible bamboo to create sturdy frames and walls. Philip Peter, a member of the local community, has sought assistance by requesting support for the PROGRAMME PERUMAHAN RAKYAT TERMISKIN (PPRT) through the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and still waiting for the responses regarding to his application.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figure 9.3. Dismal living conditions of one of the local communities

Seven Sabah districts proposed to be gazetted as protected areas

BY JEGATHISAN SIVANESAN ON MARCH 22, 2024, FRIDAY AT 8:07 PM
SABAH

(a)



Jeffrey (centre) speaking to reporters after chairing the State Water Resources Council

meeting

(b)

Deputy Chief Minister I Datuk Seri Dr Jeffrey Kitingan said the first proposal involves gazetting all water resources areas throughout the state for two purposes, namely protection or conservation.

He said gazetting for protection, specifically in seven districts with water plants that are affected by the current dry and hot weather, would mean the areas cannot be disturbed even though they might be state land or outside of forest reserves.

The seven districts are Tuaran, Papar, Tawau, Sandakan, Semporna, Kudat and Penampang.

(c)

Figure 9.4. (a) Borneo Post Online “Seven Sabah Districts Proposed to be gazetted as protected areas”, (b) Datuk Seri Jeffrey Kitingan made an announcement during the press conference, (c) Tuaran, one of the districts to be gazetted for its water resources conservation

FLOWING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: GRAVITY WATER SYSTEMS IN KG. BAMBANGAN AND THEIR ALIGNMENT WITH SDG NO. 6

The nearby communities possess abundant water resources derived from gravity water, which plays a crucial role in ensuring a sufficient water supply. Notwithstanding the occurrence of severe drought and the El-Nino season, the provision of water to the local community remained uninterrupted and persisted. The development of

aquaponic and hydroponic systems has been identified as the high potential to significantly benefit the local population by facilitating modern farming practices. SDG No. 6, or Sustainable Development Goal 6, aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Water catchment systems and gravity-fed water systems in Kg. Bambang Lama, Ulu Tuaran can significantly contribute to achieving this goal in several ways including access to clean water and affordable drinking water. Apart from that, it also contributes to community empowerment and resilience. This can be observed by implementing water catchment and gravity-fed water systems often involves community participation in planning, construction, and maintenance. This empowers communities to manage their water resources sustainably, fostering resilience to water scarcity and climate change impacts. In addition, access to reliable water sources is crucial for agricultural productivity and livelihoods in the community. Water catchment and gravity-fed systems can support irrigation for farming activities, leading to improved food security and economic development in Kg. Bambang Lama, Ulu Tuaran. Subsequently, The Deputy Chief Minister I (State Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Industry Minister), Datuk Seri Jeffrey Kitingan has announced that Tuaran district has been chosen as one of the districts to be gazetted for its water resources conservation (see Figure 9.4a, 9.4b and 9.4c).

CONCLUSION

This story-telling sheds light on the dire state of housing within the community, where substandard infrastructure, and inadequate amenities are prevalent. Additionally, the narrative explores the socioeconomic factors contributing to these poor housing conditions, such as poverty, unemployment, insufficient government support and underscores the urgency of addressing this issue. ILHAM Lestari, under the leadership of Tuan Mickey Salleh, once has reached out to the Village Development and Security Committees (JKKK) to explore collaborative efforts in cultivating Guarana but no updates till then.

Thus, Kg. Bambang Lama advocates for concerted efforts from local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and academicians. Academicians such as from Faculty of Plantation & Agrotechnology UiTM Sabah Branch, Kota Kinabalu Campus and NGOs can develop educational programs tailored to the needs of poor communities, focusing on practical skills such as agriculture, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. By providing access to quality education and skill development opportunities, academicians can empower individuals to lift themselves out of poverty and pursue sustainable livelihoods. Academicians can engage with local communities in participatory research projects, involving community members in problem identification, solution development, and decision-making processes through Service-Learning Malaysia – University for Society (SULAM). By fostering community participation and ownership, academicians can empower marginalised groups to take control of their own development and advocate for their needs. Meanwhile, NGOs can invest in infrastructure development projects such as water and sanitation facilities, renewable energy systems, and road construction in poor communities. By improving access to basic infrastructure, NGOs enhance the quality of life and economic opportunities for community members in Kg. Bambang Lama Ulu Tuaran. NGOs can collaborate with government agencies, local authorities, private sector organizations, and other stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for poverty alleviation efforts. By fostering partnerships, NGOs can maximize their impact and reach more individuals and communities in need.

Part 5:
Economic Empowerment to
Overcome Poverty

Chapter 10

Challenges and opportunities: Harnessing the potential of marketing knowledge for advancing rural community businesses

Faerozh Madli, Shaierah Gulabdin, Jakaria Dasan, Yuzainy Janin, Mat Salleh @ Salleh Wahab & Bibianah Thomas

ABSTRACT

A community located in a rural area possesses its own unique characteristics. These uniquenesses include having different languages, different types of food and diverse cultures. However, behind this diversity and uniqueness, there is a relatively common issue among rural communities which is low socio-economic levels. In other words, rural residents tend to have relatively low-income generating levels. This issue is also observable in several rural communities in Sabah. To address this economic gap, the Malaysia and Sabah governments have undertaken various initiatives to focus on this issue. Through the implementation of these initiatives, it is evident that many communities have successfully established their own businesses. Fundamentally, their businesses are influenced to some extent by the uniqueness of their respective communities. However, one thing universally acknowledged is that success is often accompanied by forthcoming challenges that need to be addressed. One challenge consistently faced by rural community businesses is related to marketing. Hence, this case study focuses on the marketing challenges encountered by rural community businesses in Sabah. This case study will also discuss the potential solutions that communities can implement based on the challenges they face while running their businesses. The findings of this case study can be utilised by various stakeholders, especially businesses that operating in rural areas and also by policymakers focusing on rural development. Also, these

findings in line with Sustainable Development Goal 1 which is no poverty.

INTRODUCTION

Business is one of the most crucial activities for any country (Kahveci, 2023). Its significance can be seen through its positive impact on a nation as well as on a specific region. This is because as commonly business activities have the ability to generate income for a country (López-Muñoz et al., 2023). This also applies to a particular region, where these business activities generate income for communities in that area. Generating income is crucial not only because it can create prosperous communities but more importantly is it can reduce the level of poverty (Kamgnia, & Ahouré, 2023). Reducing and ultimately eradicating poverty is crucial as it aligns with governmental recommendations (Samat et al., 2023). This recommendation to reduce and eliminate poverty is important because it directly contributes to economic and political stability (Asadullah et al., 2023). Additionally, this matter will also directly contribute to several SDG goals, both directly and indirectly. One of these is related to SDG Goal 1 which is no poverty.

Behind the importance of any business undoubtedly can't escape from various forthcoming challenges. These challenges are related to the process of running a business. Surely, there are various aspects or scope of challenges faced by any business. However, this study focuses on marketing and this aspect is one of the crucial parts of any business regardless of its size whether big or small business (Abdullaevich & Abdulazizovich, 2023). The importance of marketing lies in marketing products or services to promote towards existing customers and potential customer groups. Effective marketing is demanded by every business to ensure that customers have the latest information about the products we offer and subsequently will purchase the products (Kamarulzaman et al., 2023). Additionally, the importance of marketing is not limited to disseminating information

about products but also directly contributes to shaping a positive branding and image among customers and society (Zainuddin et al., 2023). However, like the implementation of other matters, challenges in the future cannot be avoided. Therefore, this study aims to explain the challenges faced by SME businesses in the rural division of Sabah. Focusing on the rural divisions of Sabah makes this objective more relevant as it will dive deeper into the challenges faced in those rural areas. Furthermore, this objective will also provide an updated explanation if previous challenges mentioned are still occurring today or if there are new challenges emerging.

METHODOLOGY

Referring to the focus and phenomenon situation discussed in this study, the researcher employs the "single case study" method. This method refers to analysing a unique situation to gain a deeper understanding. Generally, case studies become a strategic choice when researchers examine issues that are not fully controlled, and the situation is intriguing due to its relevance and contemporary issues in real life (Yin, 2003). Based on this argument, the use of the single case study method is highly appropriate because the issues raised are related to real-life realities and constitute a unique phenomenon that requires serious attention.

During the data collection session, the researcher conducted several procedures before the data collection session was fully executed. These procedures involved clearly explaining the business landscape prevailing in the rural areas of Sabah's Interior Division. This briefing session was crucial as it exposed respondents to the latest developments in their area, the respondents were owners of SME businesses in the rural areas of Sabah's Interior Division. It is making the disclosure of development matters in their area was highly relevant to them. Additionally, this session was important to ensure they felt comfortable and at ease during the question and answer session. The next session was the Q&A session and all data or

feedback from this session was recorded. This session typically lasted for 30 to 45 minutes.

CASE STUDY: MARKETING LANDSCAPE OF BUSINESSES IN THE INTERIOR DIVISION OF SABAH/BAHAGIAN PENDALAMAN SABAH

Sabah is one of the regions in Malaysia blessed with vast land area. In fact, Sabah is the second largest in Malaysia after Sarawak. Sabah is divided into 5 divisions: Kuda Division, West Coast Division, Interior Division, Sandakan Division and Tawau Division. Each of these divisions has its own uniqueness and potential. Furthermore, each division is comprised of different districts. For example, the West Coast Division consists of districts such as Ranau, Papar, Penampang, Kota Kinabalu, Tuaran, Kota Belud, and Putatan. However, despite their uniqueness and potential of each division, this case study focuses on only one division which is the Interior Division. This division consists of districts such as Kuala Penyu, Beaufort, and Membakut.

The selection of this division is based on several reasons or factors. These factors include the fact that the interior division of Sabah is seen to have great potential for business development. This is because the interior division is unique with its diverse agricultural produce and beautiful locations that serve as tourist attractions (Daineh, 2019). Additionally, various large-scale projects are set to be implemented in the interior division of Sabah and one of them is a world-famous resort that will be opened in this area (Ekonomi Masyarakat, 2024). These projects are expected to further boost the business potential in this area. However, behind the potential and progress, there are undoubtedly challenges faced by businesses in the interior areas of Sabah. The focus of this study is on small and medium businesses. Focusing on this group of businesses is important to ensure that no one is left behind by the rapid modernization and progress in their division. Moreover, this focus also significantly reduces the number of businesses who may be forced to close their businesses if these issues are not addressed properly because of rapid development occurs

around them. Therefore, the objective of this study is relevant as it focuses on the challenges faced by businesses in the interior areas or division of Sabah.

CHALLENGES

From the data collection session, several challenges were highlighted and emphasised by the respondents. These challenges span various aspects and scopes where touching on issues related to infrastructure and knowledge. Firstly, the challenge emphasised by the respondents relates to technology exposure. This challenge pertains to rural businesses having limited exposure to the latest technology used in marketing contexts. This lack of exposure causes them to lag behind in utilising current technology for marketing their products or services. The issue of insufficient exposure directly affects their businesses negatively as it can impact their customer base of accessibility towards information or products. This is because loyal customers or potential consumers are more easily attracted and reached through the use of modern technology. This situation occurs because, as relatively customers are always exposed to the latest technology. Based on this situation, if rural entrepreneurs lag behind in using modern technology for marketing, it will affect their reach to customers.

Based on the first challenge, which is related to technology exposure, the second challenge is closely intertwined with the first. The second challenge pertains to the infrastructure available in the rural areas of Sabah. This connection or relationship can be explained by the fact that the lack of exposure to technology is caused by the insufficient or weak state of infrastructure in the rural areas of Sabah. It cannot be denied that the infrastructure conditions are quite good at present but issues persist regarding weak and unstable internet access still occurred. This situation creates a gap or disparity between the desire to use modern technology and the supporting system. In other words, businesses have the desire to utilise modern technology but there are obstacles such as issues with unstable and weak internet access.

Indirectly, this situation puts businesses in a challenging position to use modern technology that requires strong internet access. Consequently, businesses find it difficult to market their products using modern technology.

Furthermore, another challenge faced by businesses is related to technology literacy. For this challenge, it concerns the level of knowledge among businesses in using current technology for marketing purposes. This challenge can be directly linked to the first and second challenges. However, for this challenge, it is more related to the internal factors of individual entrepreneurs. In some cases, this issue is also related to the level of education among entrepreneurs in these rural areas. The situation of low literacy in current technology directly hinders them from using specific technologies for marketing purposes. In other words, a lack of knowledge about technology prevents them from utilising modern technology for marketing their business products or services. Overall, all these challenges are interconnected and solutions need to be implemented to address these issues before they worsen.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Based on the challenges discussed in the previous section, this study proposes several potential solutions that can be implemented. The proposed potential solutions are based on considering various factors and elements related to the current situation of the businesses in interior division of Sabah. These suggestions are also based on strategies from programs implemented elsewhere and the possibility that they can be implemented in their area.

The first solution pertains to establishing a body or group aimed at gathering all information regarding existing programs related to technology and marketing. Essentially, this group would act as an intermediary body for disseminating information to businesses from organizations that provide training programs. This suggestion is seen

as relevant because currently, there is a situation where many entrepreneurs in rural areas of Sabah or in other areas are unaware of the existence of these programs. In Malaysia, including Sabah, there are many programs organised by the government and private sectors that provide exposure to technology and marketing. Additionally, there are also NGOs that focus on these matters. Therefore, this suggestion would be able to address issues related to technology exposure and literacy. In other words, this potential solution would also act as a connecting bridge for businesses and useful training programs. This propose solution is also in line with the discussions conducted by Bemelmans-Videc et al. (2017).

Additionally, a proposed solution is to provide training based on clarification tailored to the level of education, level of technology exposure and existing infrastructure in a particular area. This pertains to establishing a training programme designed and planned by thoroughly examining the current situation of the businesses and the infrastructure environment around. This programme is aim specifically tailored for businesses in a particular area. Implementing this programme will make it easier for entrepreneurs to understand marketing-related matters as it is designed taking into account the education level and knowledge of the businesses. Furthermore, this approach is seen as feasible because marketing knowledge exposure also considers the infrastructure conditions in their area. Comprehensive alignment through this propose solution is seen as able to solve problems related to technology literacy and infrastructure. However, this solution needs to be viewed in the long term because the alignment of this programme also needs to be periodically adjusted based on the development of their marketing knowledge and infrastructure progress in the area. This propose solution is also in line with the discussions conducted by Kezar et al. (2023).

Besides that, as for proposed solution, it could be also looked into the implementation in the long term with the improvement of marketing knowledge, technology and infrastructure. This propose solution relates to what is called as the blockchain marketing programme. This method has been implemented in several countries including our neighbouring country Malaysia, such as Vietnam (Chu & Tam, 2024). Malaysia has also implemented this programme, but it has not been widely adopted in Sabah. Therefore, this matter is proposed to be potentially implemented in rural areas of Sabah. Blockchain marketing will involve tracking the journey of their products all the way to the consumers. Additionally, blockchain marketing will also utilise various modern technologies to track the journey of their products. The integration of these elements will directly enhance the sales capabilities of their products in the future. However, the implementation of blockchain marketing is only suitable if there is an improvement in marketing technology knowledge and infrastructure (Peres et al., 2023). Overall, the suggested solutions consider various relevant factors and putting them into action will have significant potential to solve the challenges and directly achieve the desired success. What's more important is these propose solutions aim to enhance the performance of businesses and consequently reduce the current poverty rate. This is because the chain reaction of successful businesses will have a positive impact on their surrounding population by creating new job opportunities.

CONCLUSION

This case study was conducted with the aim of exploring deeper into the challenges faced by businesses in the context of marketing. The results of the data collection process indicate that there are several challenges faced by businesses in rural areas of the interior Sabah division at present, namely related to technology exposure, technology literacy, and infrastructure readiness. The study does not stop at this point but takes a step forward by proposing several potential solutions to address these challenges faced by the

businesses. These potential solutions are crucial as preventive measures that can be implemented to resolve these challenges. The proposed solutions also take a holistic and long-term approach. The findings from this study can be beneficial to various parties including the businesses themselves and relevant organizations or stakeholders. However, future research is recommended to be conducted by examining broader aspects, such as cultural aspects and norms that have existed for a long time and their impact on the daily activities of businesses today.

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Chapter 11

Empowering Locals for Tomorrow: Essential Training for Sustainable Rural Communities Towards Economic Self-Reliance

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ABSTRACT

Rural areas are often associated with economic challenges, educational disparities, and digital illiteracy which hinder the overall development of these communities. The situation is particularly dire in the state of Sabah, which has been identified as one of the poorest states in Malaysia. Therefore, various stakeholders have implemented interventions to promote sustainability in rural communities, including providing training to selected rural communities to equip them with essential knowledge and skills for sustainability and income generation. However, these interventions are often implemented only for a specific period, leaving rural communities to fend for themselves in the long run. To address this issue, this study seeks to explore the future training needs of rural communities in empowering them to attain economic independence and self-reliance. This study identified three skills required by the participants: business-related skills, digitalization skills, and cybersecurity skills. By focusing on the region of Sabah, tailored strategies may be developed to meet the specific needs of these communities. This is imperative to ensure these rural communities have the necessary knowledge and resources to transition from being the beneficiaries to becoming self-sustaining entities. Finally, this study could also offer valuable insights to pertinent stakeholders, including the government and its affiliated organizations, NGOs, as well as civil society, to foster their economic resilience, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas are often associated with sustainability challenges, including poverty, malnutrition, limited access to education, and economic hardships. These challenges act as barriers to development in rural regions, thereby obstructing the realization of sustainable development goals. Consequently, interventions are imperative to bolster rural development, with skills development emerging as a vital component. The enhancement of skills within rural communities is crucial for fostering lifelong learning, which in turn can contribute to poverty alleviation, enhance quality of life, and potentially catalyse broader community development (Sharaunga, 2019; Cavanagh et al., 2013).

Skills development is a critical factor in enhancing individuals' capacity to perform tasks and empowering them to attain self-reliance across various domains. It enables individuals not only to efficiently fulfill assigned responsibilities within organizations but also augments their leadership capabilities and empowers them to initiate job opportunities, thereby fostering economic development.

However, rural communities frequently face a dearth of adequate skills development opportunities, as evidenced by the prevalence of low-skilled or unskilled jobs, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and small-scale retail (Rotz et al., 2019). Consequently, rural areas tend to lag behind in educational attainment, financial literacy, and technological proficiency, leading to higher poverty rates. In response to this pressing issue, the Ministry of Rural Development has instituted the "Dasar Pembangunan Luar Bandar" (Rural Development Policy) with the overarching goal of achieving inclusive, sustainable, and comprehensive rural development by 2030 (Dasar Pembangunan Luar Bandar, 2020). One of the central pillars of this policy is "Teras 2," which prioritises the empowerment of rural communities through entrepreneurial skills development to attain economic independence and self-sufficiency.

However, there exists a limited body of research on the specific skills development necessary for rural communities to attain economic self-reliance. Addressing this gap is crucial, particularly considering that interventions are typically executed within short time frames. Therefore, it is essential for rural communities to be equipped for self-reliance to ensure sustained impacts even after project completion (Forkuor & Andrews Korah, 2022). In response to this imperative, this study aims to investigate the skills development required by rural communities to achieve economic self-reliance. This effort will contribute to the long-term self-sufficiency of rural areas, reducing dependence on external stakeholders' assistance. It is imperative for government and relevant stakeholders to tailor training programs to meet the specific needs of rural communities and achieve enduring impacts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural areas are often perceived as regions still closely intertwined with nature and natural resources. However, they are frequently regarded as lagging behind urban counterparts across various dimensions. This discrepancy arises from the manner in which rural areas engage with environmental challenges and leverage their potential, which ultimately shapes the sustainability of their economies—whether they thrive, decline, or falter (Li et al., 2019). Rural areas are commonly beset by sustainability challenges, necessitating attention to issues such as poverty, educational deficits, environmental concerns, and the prevalence of low-skilled employment, which often translates into low wages.

Failure to address these issues could jeopardize the prospects of rural youth, potentially fuelling a continued exodus of young people to urban areas. This demographic shift could leave rural areas populated predominantly by older individuals, leading to sluggish economic growth and eventual depopulation, which is deemed unsustainable for rural communities. Despite these challenges, rural areas possess

abundant resources that can be harnessed to sustain economic development. Diversifying economic activities beyond agriculture and forestry, such as tourism and production of finished goods can bolster economic resilience (Li, 2023).

In response to the potential for rural development, various stakeholders have initiated interventions, including startup funds, income-generation projects, and community-based tourism initiatives. While these intervention programs have marginally improved social living standards and alleviated rural issues, they often operate on a short-term basis. Consequently, some projects prove to be unsustainable once their implementation completed due to the lack of a systematic approach to maintaining their impact (Forkuor & Andrews Korah, 2022). Thus, it is crucial to equip rural communities with the necessary skills to effectively utilise their potential and achieve long-term economic self-reliance.

Providing rural residents with business-related skills and financial management expertise (Shah et al., 2020; Sulaiman et al., 2022) can enhance their entrepreneurial mindset and serve as a catalyst for establishing and managing their own startups. By empowering rural individuals with these skills, they can become more adept at identifying opportunities, managing resources, and navigating the complexities of the business world. Moreover, fostering entrepreneurship within rural communities can contribute to job creation, economic diversification, and overall community resilience.

Government agencies, related organizations, and NGOs have implemented various rural development programs aimed at enhancing economic opportunities and improving livelihoods. However, it's equally important to ensure that rural communities possess soft skills, especially among entrepreneurs (Ubfal et al., 2022). These skills encompass communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, which are essential for success in today's dynamic

and interconnected world. By prioritising the development of both technical and soft skills, rural residents can not only thrive in their endeavours but also contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of their communities.

In addition, in this digitalization era, it is essential to possess digital skills to fully exploit opportunities and eliminate rural barriers. Leng (2022) supports this notion, finding that digital adoption can transform the economy of rural communities, including less-educated groups. Embracing digitalization encourages local economic growth by fostering rural entrepreneurship and creating diverse employment opportunities. Moreover, digitalization enhances job performance, thus benefiting business operations and contributing to overall success (Sariwulan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, rural communities must be digitally literate to access a wider range of information online compared to traditional methods of information seeking (Sagarik et al., 2018; Orrensalo et al., 2024). Equipping rural residents with digital financial services literacy is also crucial. Some rural communities have trust issues regarding online financial transactions, hence the importance of raising awareness and providing appropriate knowledge to enable confident and cautious use of such services (Agwu, 2021). Without utilising online financial services, especially for transactions like buying and selling, rural communities may face limitations in facilitating economic activities. Therefore, empowering rural residents with digital skills and financial literacy is imperative for unlocking their full potential in the digital age and ensuring inclusive economic development.

Despite the importance of skills development for rural communities, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies investigating the specific skills needed from the perspective of rural residents to drive long-term economic empowerment, particularly after external intervention programs conclude. It is crucial to explore this aspect to

design capacity-building initiatives strategically, ensuring that rural communities can achieve transformational effects through knowledge sharing, creation, and translation (Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020). By doing so, rural residents can become self-reliant in fostering regional growth and sustaining economic development beyond the duration of external interventions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study adopts a qualitative approach, utilising semi-structured interviews to investigate the skill development needs of the rural community. Sabah was selected as the targeted site due to its status as one of the states with the highest poverty issues. Four participants from rural areas volunteered to partake in the study. These participants have attended the rural development programme administered by the Ministry of Rural Development in Sabah, providing valuable insights into the skills required for empowerment. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on their firsthand experience with rural development programs. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes within the responses. This methodological approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the skill development needs of rural communities, informed by the perspectives of individuals actively engaged in relevant programs and initiatives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To align with the research objective of this study, interviews were conducted with four participants who had participated in the development programme conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development. The findings underscored the necessity for rural residents to acquire essential skills for achieving economic self-reliance. These crucial skills include business-related skills, digitalization skills, and cybersecurity training.

The participants overwhelmingly emphasised the critical need for skills related to business, particularly marketing. This finding resonates with previous studies by Shah et al. (2020) and Sulaiman et al. (2022), which highlighted the significant influence of business-related skills on the success of enterprises. All participants in our study are entrepreneurs, and they emphasised that knowledge in marketing is essential for closing sales. While customers may initially show interest in their products, the ability to effectively market and promote these products is crucial for converting interest into actual purchases. Therefore, acquiring marketing skills is perceived as vital for enhancing long-term business performance.

Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of acquiring knowledge in using digital platforms. Despite acknowledging its significance, some participants, particularly older individuals, expressed challenges in mastering technology. They emphasised the awareness of online platforms' importance in facilitating buying and selling transactions. The result aligns with the findings of Leng (2022) and Sariwulan (2020), who argued that leveraging digital platforms enhances business performance.

However, several participants admitted their inability to effectively utilise these platforms due to a lack of proficiency compared to traditional methods. Therefore, acquiring digital skills would significantly benefit their long-term business strategies, considering the widespread and increasing reliance on technology in current and future business landscapes.

Participants also stressed the importance of acquiring knowledge about digital safety, particularly regarding digital financial services. Despite acknowledging the significance of technology, some expressed their concern about potential scams, particularly in online payment transactions. This fear hindered their willingness to fully utilise online features. This is similar to the findings of Agwu (2021),

who emphasised the importance of digital literacy in instilling confidence among users of digital financial services. Therefore, if participants can be educated on ways to safely navigate digital financial services, including precautions against scams, it would significantly enhance their trust and confidence.

Consequently, addressing these safety concerns could foster a win-win situation for both buyers and sellers, facilitating smoother transactions. In essence, empowering participants with knowledge about digital safety, digital platforms, and business-related skills would not only enable them to embrace digital platforms more confidently but also contribute to the overall growth and resilience of rural businesses in the digital age. Therefore, it is evident that these three skills are essential for participants to achieve economic self-reliance. Moreover, these skills are highly relevant to ensuring business growth and success. Thus, it is imperative for relevant stakeholders to incorporate these elements into future programs aimed at assisting rural communities in becoming sustainable.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the critical skills development needed by rural communities to achieve economic self-reliance. It has been identified that rural residents require training in business-related skills, particularly in marketing, digitalization skills, and cybersecurity training. These findings highlighted the importance of these elements for empowering rural communities and equipping them with the knowledge to sustainably grow their businesses in the long term. Therefore, it is crucial to design training content that considers these factors to ensure effective knowledge transfer and sustainability. While this study provides valuable insights into skills development for rural community sustainability, it is limited by its focus on a small number of participants in Sabah. Future studies could broaden the scope to include a more diverse range of participants and assess the effectiveness of implemented training programs. Evaluating the

efficacy of the training content delivered to participants is essential for measuring its impact and refining future training initiatives.

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**Part 6:
Empowering through
Entrepreneurship & Financial
Inclusion to Overcome Poverty**

Chapter 12

Rumah Makan Mkitchen: A Beacon of Hope

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented threat of covid-19 has led to global turmoil of 2020, an extraordinary venture named Rumah Makan Mkitchen emerged as a beacon of hope and solidarity. Founded in a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when businesses shuttered, and countless individuals faced unemployment and hunger while Rumah Makan Mkitchen embarked on a noble mission. As businesses closed and the economy staggered, the pioneers of Mkitchen saw an urgent need to act. The recognition that among the university community, many students and staff members were silently battling hunger and financial despair, their woes amplified by the pandemic. The efforts were extended to the nearby underprivileged communities. The strategy was not just any ordinary eatery, it was a charity kitchen with a vision to combat food insecurity among the university's students and staff, particularly targeting the low-income, poor, and needy within the community. The inception of Rumah Makan Mkitchen was driven by a dual purpose: to provide free meals to those hit hardest by the pandemic and to create 3E's which are employment, empowerment, and entrepreneurial opportunities with a new digital business in the food industry for the marginalised. Both main purposes emerged in transforming the low-income, poor, and needy into financial independence and breaking the cycle of poverty. The challenge on the implementation was monumental. The effects of Rumah Makan Mkitchen beyond just feeding people, when it encourages resilience and a sense of community, motivating others to support a more important cause. With an eye towards the future, Rumah Makan Mkitchen is committed to being a lighthouse of

opportunity and hope, shedding light on a road that others might take to cultivate empathy and harmony. Overall, Rumah Makan Mkitchen serves as a shining example of how local initiatives can contribute to achieving broader global goals, such as the SDGs. Through its holistic approach to addressing poverty and its commitment to empowering marginalised communities, Rumah Makan Mkitchen demonstrates the transformative power of community-driven action in creating a more equitable and sustainable future.

THE GENESIS OF COMPASSION

It was in the middle of the merciless environment that the COVID-19 pandemic presented that the beginnings of compassion developed. As the founders and pioneers of Rumah Makan Mkitchen witnessed the catastrophic economic impact and the secret fights with hunger and financial misery that were taking place within the community of the university, they recognised the opportunity to take action. As a result, Rumah Makan Mkitchen came into being, not simply as a reaction, but also as a ray of hope, negotiating the intricacies of post-pandemic poverty with resiliency and creativity. In this context, Rumah Makan Mkitchen emerged as a response to the urgent need for support, drawing inspiration from the resilience of communities facing adversity. This case study examines how Rumah Makan Kitchen navigated the complexities of post-pandemic poverty and hunger, harnessing the power of community solidarity and innovation to create sustainable solutions through empowerment, entrepreneurship, and employment. The inception of Rumah Makan Mkitchen started by providing a nutritious meal to those in need. However, recognising that short-term relief efforts were not sustainable in addressing poverty, Rumah Makan Mkitchen pivoted towards a model centred on empowerment, entrepreneurship, and employment. This study examines how Rumah Makan Mkitchen leveraged the crisis as an opportunity to foster lasting change and resilience within the community.

APPROACH

Free Food: In a bid to address food insecurity among underprivileged students, Rumah Makan Mkitchen distributed 100 packs of nutritious free meals every week. Each pack contained a balanced and wholesome meal, carefully prepared to meet dietary needs and promote overall health. Alongside this vital support, Rumah Makan Mkitchen also offered an entrepreneurship programme to these students. Through this initiative, students were equipped with essential skills and knowledge to be successful on entrepreneurial endeavours, fostering self-reliance and empowerment within the community. By combining immediate assistance with long-term opportunities, Rumah Makan Mkitchen strives to not only alleviate hunger but also empower individuals to build brighter futures for themselves.



Figure 12.1. Free Food Distribution

Empowerment: At the heart of Rumah Makan Kitchen's approach lies the belief in the inherent dignity and potential of every individual. Through tailored empowerment programs, participants are provided with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to take control of their destinies. Workshops on financial literacy, personal development, and goal setting empower individuals to chart their own path toward a brighter future. Furthermore, digital marketing skills

plays a vital role in helping businesses succeed and grow by expanding their reach, targeting the right audience, optimizing costs, measuring results, personalizing experiences, staying flexible, and building a strong brand presence. Embracing digital marketing strategies is essential for businesses looking to thrive in today's digital-first world.

Entrepreneurship: Recognising the transformative power of entrepreneurship, Rumah Makan Mkitchen encourages aspiring business owners to turn their passions into profitable ventures. By offering training in business planning, marketing, and customer service, the organization equips individuals with the tools needed to launch and sustain successful enterprises.



Figure 12.2. Entrepreneurship Hands on Training for B40 Students at Rumah Makan Mkitchen

Employment: Rumah Makan Mkitchen not only nurtures entrepreneurship but also partners with the university to generate employment opportunities for programme participants. The university generously sponsors the venue for all Mkitchen's activities, including the lunch programme, aimed at aiding three groups: the low-income community prepares nutritious meals, underprivileged

students manage selling activities with stipends, and the food is offered at affordable prices to students and low-income staff.



Figure 12.3. Lunch Programme at Rumah Makan Mkitchen

OBSTACLE

The path was fraught with obstacles, ranging from the difficulty of raising funds to the issue of finding employment for those who were economically disadvantaged. On the other hand, Rumah Makan Mkitchen was able to acquire the finances essential to continue its programmes by making persistent efforts, such as launching crowdfunding campaigns and forming partnerships with non-governmental organisations and businesses. It turned out that recruiting volunteers was essential, and Rumah Makan Mkitchen utilised a variety of ways to gather people who were compassionate in order to guarantee that its objective would be carried out without a hitch. Therefore, to maintain the provision of free meals, innovation was required, which resulted in the training of food entrepreneurs among those who were in need, thereby generating a model that could support itself.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

The journey was riddled with obstacles, the primary challenge being securing funds to sustain the initiative. Mkitchen's founders diligently pursued potential donors, organised crowdfunding campaigns, and hosted fundraising events, yielding over RM40,000, showcasing the community's belief in their cause. Additionally, regular funding is sourced from Mkitchen's members, who passionately contribute RM100 monthly each, totalling 28 members. This collective effort supports free meals, theoretical, and hands-on training. Mkitchen further engaged numerous NGOs and companies, resulting in FGV Holdings' contribution of essential goods worth RM20,000, including rice, cooking oil, and sauces. Furthermore, IIUM Zakat provides RM2000 monthly, aiding in providing free meals to underprivileged students, a collaborative effort in sustaining the initiative.

Employing the *asnaf*, the poor and needy, as the kitchen crew presented another hurdle. Mkitchen not only wanted to provide jobs but also to empower these individuals with skills and self-confidence. Through careful selection and training programs, they built a dedicated team of 100 employees, transforming lives by offering not just employment but a sense of purpose and community.

Volunteer engagement was crucial to Mkitchen's operations. Recruiting volunteers to help with meal preparation and distribution, especially during peak times, required continuous outreach and coordination. Through social media, university partnerships, and word of mouth, Mkitchen rallied a troop of compassionate volunteers, each contributing to the cause in their unique way.

Sustaining the provision of free meals was an ongoing challenge. However, Mkitchen's innovative approach, which included the training of 50 food entrepreneurs among the *asnaf*, helped in creating a self-sustaining model. These entrepreneurs, in turn, contributed a portion

of their earnings back to Mkitchen, helping to fund meal provisions and creating a virtuous cycle of giving and empowerment.

IMPACT AND LEGACY

The impact of Rumah Makan Mkitchen extends far beyond the provision of nutrition; it has been instrumental in cultivating a sense of community and resiliency among the staff and students at their respective universities. Over time, it has developed into a movement that motivates others to make contributions to a more significant cause and serves as a demonstration of solidarity and compassion.

As Mkitchen continues to navigate the complexities of fulfilling its mission, it remains a shining example of what can be achieved when compassion, determination, and community support come together. In a world that often seems divided, Rumah Makan Mkitchen stands as a testament to the power of unity and the enduring impact of kindness.

LOOKING FORWARD

The future holds promise and challenges for Rumah Makan Mkitchen. With plans to expand their reach, enhance their training programs, and explore sustainable funding models, the journey is far from over. Yet, one thing remains certain: Mkitchen will continue to serve as a source of hope, sustenance, and opportunity for the needy, lighting the way for others to follow.



Figure 12.4. Rumah Makan Mkitchen Team

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Chapter 13

Enhancing Resilience through Entrepreneurial Training Interventions: A Study of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

Sathiswaran Uthamaputhran, Mohd Ikhwan Aziz & Kiran Kumar

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training intervention in promoting resilience among women entrepreneurs in rural areas from East Coast Malaysia. Rural women in Malaysia encounter a range of complex obstacles when engaging in entrepreneurial endeavours, such as restricted availability of resources, societal and cultural impediments, and environmental hazards. The study conducts a thorough analysis to identify crucial aspects that contribute to the development of resilience. These factors include having access to knowledge, innovation, networking opportunities, mentoring, and psychological empowerment. The study's findings provide useful insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and community stakeholders that want to boost rural women's entrepreneurship and strengthen their ability to withstand various hurdles. This research enhances the design and implementation of more focused and effective initiatives that promote sustainable economic development and gender equality in rural communities by comprehending the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial training interventions empower rural women. Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Rural, Micro Entrepreneurships, Training & Development

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian economy is predominantly driven by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with rural businesses or countryside businesses being a significant sector contributing to its

economic landscape. Specifically, SMEs in some countryside contribute to 6.7 percent of Malaysia's GDP and employ 17 percent of the national workforce, both figures surpassing the averages seen across the European Union (Valencia-Arias et al., 2022; Uthamaputhran et al., 2024). Despite its importance, rural businesses in Malaysia faces challenges akin to those experienced across Europe. The devaluation of rural areas professions, coupled with low incomes for industries in rural areas, exacerbates the issue of urban unemployment and contributes to a decline in indigenous rural populations, mirroring trends observed globally (Ferreira, 2020). However, amidst these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need for economic diversification and development in rural areas (Zaato et al., 2023). This recognition has spurred local entrepreneurship initiatives, particularly in response to increased demand for recreational amenities and high-quality local products. These initiatives represent opportunities for SMEs to thrive and contribute to the sustainable development of Malaysia's rural economy. Similarly, the unemployment rate in rural areas, especially among women, is notably high, particularly among young women and those over 50 years old. This phenomenon can largely be attributed to the limited access to education and insufficient vocational skills among indigenous women engaged in economic activities. Institutional barriers and prevailing social structures exacerbate their marginalised status, both economically and socially, despite their potential to contribute significantly to the local communities' endogenous development. There is also a need to have a study that support empowering women to generate their own income and stresses the importance of aligning research efforts with practical applications in the field. Recognising the importance of empowering women in rural development, policymakers have shown interest in addressing these challenges. The promotion of collective entrepreneurial endeavours, such as the establishment of female cooperatives, funding for women's ventures and entrepreneurial skills training is much needed. Recently, in alignment with both Sustainable

Development Goal (SDG) and national MADANI agendas aimed at fostering vibrant rural economies, there has been a growing recognition that the sustainability of rural communities hinges upon rural business restructuring and reform. With the new policies emerged targeted to specifically on rural women development and the promotion of entrepreneurial career for them, the government has shown interest in developing training interventions which support them to change their life. Entrepreneurial success in general seems to be determined with the motivation, skills and attitudes as an entrepreneur. Thus, it is important to adopt the entrepreneurial training intervention to support the rural women entrepreneurs to be more resilience. Evaluating the efficacy and impact of current training initiatives on sustainability and entrepreneurial activity is a significant challenge. Assessing the results of these training initiatives raises important issues that require consideration. One the main concern with the training interventions on entrepreneurial activities is the sustainability and effectiveness of those programs which still limited when related to creating resilience mindset. To address this gap, this paper aims to investigate the impact of one entrepreneurial intervention training programme, as a part of a project funded by All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (AAPGM_SDG). The main motives are to understand the effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship programme on how women's decisions to undertake entrepreneurial activities that build their resilience and support community development. The paper is comprised on five sessions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is rural entrepreneurship?

Tabares et al (2022), Rural entrepreneurship, within the context of defining rural economies, arises from the structural inadequacies associated with factors such as aging demographics, low human capital, limited investments, and declining population. The discourse surrounding rural community development predominantly stems from the imperative to address these deficiencies, particularly in

bridging the economic gap between non-metropolitan (rural) and metropolitan (urban) areas. In the pursuit of mitigating these challenges, rural communities often express a belief that economic growth can be stimulated by attracting external capital. Consequently, they actively seek exogenous development opportunities, driven by the perceived economic disparities between urban and rural locations. Notably, entrepreneurship, particularly in the form of microenterprises, emerges as a prominent strategy adopted by rural communities to combat poverty, Ubfal et al (2022). Examining rural entrepreneurship within this framework reveals its recognition as a mechanism for resource integration, capacity building, job creation, enhanced living standards, and social development in rural areas. However, despite its significance, there exists a lack of clear and unified definitions for rural entrepreneurship. The term is applied to businesses strategically capitalizing on their physical location to generate profit. The predominant rationale for selecting a rural setting is the perceived advantages for the business or entrepreneur, with the venture's objectives often detached from the overall development and well-being of the rural area. Consequently, there is a noticeable dearth of meaningful engagement between rural entrepreneurship and the community as a significant geographical entity, indicative of a weak embedding in place (Wear & Gielnik, 2020).

Challenges among Malaysian rural women entrepreneurs

A comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by Malaysian rural women entrepreneurs is vital for devising effective policies and interventions to support their endeavours. Existing literature highlights several key challenges that hinder the entrepreneurial success of this demographic group, Bezanilla et al (2020). Foremost among these challenges is the limited access to financial resources, specific skills and capital. Research consistently underscores the difficulty rural women face in securing loans and investment capital, primarily due to factors such as lack of collateral, financial illiteracy, and gender-based discrimination in lending

practices. This financial constraint not only impedes the initiation of entrepreneurial ventures but also restricts their capacity for growth and expansion, thereby perpetuating economic disparities in rural areas, (Kurmanov et al., 2020). Moreover, societal norms and gender roles exert significant influence on the entrepreneurial experiences of rural women in Malaysia. Traditional expectations of women as caregivers and homemakers often clash with aspirations for business ownership, creating a complex dynamic wherein rural women must navigate between familial responsibilities and entrepreneurial pursuits. Cultural barriers, such as limited mobility and restricted access to markets and networks, further exacerbate the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs, constraining their ability to access resources and opportunities essential for business success, Bradley et al (2021). Furthermore, infrastructure deficiencies and inadequate support systems pose formidable obstacles to the entrepreneurial aspirations of Malaysian rural women. Research indicates that poor transportation networks, limited access to technology and information, and a dearth of business development services severely hamper entrepreneurship in rural areas. The absence of accessible training programs, mentorship opportunities, and networking platforms further exacerbates these challenges, hindering rural women entrepreneurs' ability to acquire essential skills, expand their knowledge base, and establish strategic partnerships crucial for business growth (Bazward et al., 2023). Addressing these multifaceted challenges necessitates targeted policy interventions and comprehensive initiatives aimed at enhancing access to financial resources, challenging traditional gender norms, and strengthening support infrastructure for rural women entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

Resilience among women rural entrepreneurs

Resilience, defined as the ability to withstand and recover from adversity, has garnered increasing attention in entrepreneurship research. Scholars have highlighted the importance of resilience in

entrepreneurial success, emphasising its role in mitigating the negative impact of setbacks and failures, fostering adaptive coping strategies, and sustaining motivation and persistence in the face of challenges, Soomro et al (2022). Entrepreneurial training interventions, including workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and online courses, have emerged as a promising avenue for enhancing resilience among small business owners. These interventions often focus on developing a range of entrepreneurial competencies, such as opportunity recognition, strategic planning, risk management, and networking skills, which are essential for building resilience in the entrepreneurial context. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions in bolstering resilience remains limited, necessitating further research to explore this relationship, Wegner et al (2020). Traditionally, resilience has been conceptualized as a personal trait, reflecting an individual's ability to bounce back from adversity with qualities such as perseverance, resourcefulness, and optimism. Scholars have explored the role of resilience as a stable personality characteristic, shaping an entrepreneur's response to challenges and setbacks. However, a paradigm shift has occurred, viewing resilience not merely as an innate attribute but as a dynamic process influenced by environmental factors and learned behaviours, Anderson et al (2022). Resilience embodies the capacity to effectively respond, adapt, and rebound from adversity. Initially perceived as an inherent personal trait, resilience was commonly associated with attributes such as flexibility and emotional adaptability. Individuals demonstrating resilience were often characterised as robust, resourceful, and possessing high levels of motivation and optimism. However, recent perspectives have broadened the understanding of resilience beyond a fixed trait, conceptualizing it as a dynamic process of navigating uncertainty. Resilience is viewed as a behavioural system wherein individuals interpret and respond to challenges based on past experiences, attitudes, and expectations. This dynamic view suggests that resilience can be cultivated and developed over time through

learning and adaptation, Hassan et al (2020). In exploring the mechanisms underlying resilience, researchers have identified two psychological components: emotional resilience and cognitive resilience. Emotional resilience involves the regulation of emotions in response to stressful situations. Individuals with emotional resilience demonstrate flexibility in managing their emotions, effectively adjusting their emotional responses to adverse events. This adaptability allows them to overcome challenges without succumbing to negative emotional states such as depression. Cognitive resilience, on the other hand, is rooted in the ability to broaden cognitive processes and explore alternative perspectives. Positive emotions facilitate cognitive flexibility, enabling individuals to access information, analyse situations, and generate innovative solutions. Cognitive resilience enhances decision-making by expanding the consideration set for choices and enabling effective problem-solving strategies. Entrepreneurs, particularly those operating in uncertain environments, must cultivate both emotional and cognitive resilience to navigate challenges effectively. For instance, entrepreneurs seeking to acquire a company in a volatile market face significant adversity and frustration due to uncertainty. To persevere in such endeavours, entrepreneurs must develop resilient attitudes characterised by emotional adaptability and cognitive flexibility. However, they must also navigate between effectual and causal logics, employing adaptive decision-making strategies to address uncertainty effectively. Effectual logics emphasise leveraging existing resources and networks, while causal logics prioritise predictive planning and goal setting. Balancing these logics enables entrepreneurs to adapt to evolving circumstances and seize opportunities in dynamic environments. In this regard, resilience is now recognised as a behavioural system, wherein individuals interpret and respond to challenges based on their past experiences and coping mechanisms (Bazward et al., 2023).

The examined entrepreneurship Training Intervention

The Entrepreneurship Training Programme, Entrepreneur Rural, is supported by funding from AAPGM-SDG, with a specific focus on nurturing entrepreneurial endeavours among women residing in rural areas in East Coast of Malaysia Kelantan. This initiative aims to provide equitable opportunities for rural women to enhance their understanding and proficiency in initiating and managing entrepreneurial ventures. Its primary objective is to amplify the visibility of women entrepreneurs while concurrently igniting their enthusiasm for self-earning pursuits. In addition to offering entrepreneurship training, the programme is structured to establish an intervention framework aimed at enhancing the resilience of rural women entrepreneurs. The core aim is to empower participants to refine their business concepts, identify new opportunities, and validate their ideas through the acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Within this framework, a major emphasis is placed on cultivating resilience through experiential learning and skill development. Central to the Entrepreneur Rural training regimen is the cultivation of resilience through experiential learning, knowledge acquisition, and skill development. The programme underscores the importance of building resilience among rural women entrepreneurs by equipping them with the necessary tools and resources to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities in their entrepreneurial journey. Through a comprehensive approach that integrates training, mentorship, and networking opportunities, Entrepreneur Rural seeks to empower women to overcome obstacles, adapt to changing circumstances, and thrive in their entrepreneurial endeavours. The main objective of this intervention training programme is needed to solve the problems facing by the rural women entrepreneurs especially in giving them sufficient entrepreneurship knowledge and skills to support their business venture. We believed that participants were still lack of necessary entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in validating business idea, using resources, level of confident, visibility and poor decision -making skills to run the business. The intervention

training programme has been customised for specific targeted participants after a survey and training-based need analysis conducted before the training, Navya et al (2021). This pre-stage process has been conducted to make sure the training gaps been captured for targeted group. The training programme was accomplished in November to January 2024 over a period of 6 weeks and conducted both in-class training and business visit. The training course include topics such as introduction to entrepreneurship, social media presence, micro strategies, personal branding, financial management, opportunity discovery, etc. A total of 30 women entrepreneurs have joined the programme.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the qualitative approach has been used to analyse the entrepreneurship influence among rural women entrepreneurs. Focus group interviews are the most appropriate method in exploratory research. We have designed a semi-structured focus group interviews which allows the trainees from the programme to provide a broader range of detailed information about entrepreneurship and resilience. According to Creswell, 2003, this method seems appropriate in which participants' discussions become more dynamic and provide personal and group feelings, opinions, and perceptions.

Sample and data collection

The interview participants were purposively recruited from the entrepreneurship training to understand the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship training programme and their resilience towards business. Eight women entrepreneurs, aged between 30-50 showed a great interest in the interview and running their businesses. Each interview lasted for 60 to 90 minutes asking 11 open-ended questions both in Bahasa Malaysia and English. Some of the interview questions on a comprehensive contextual understanding of the programme, shedding light on its inception, evolution, and all subsequent changes

that lead to resilience. We supplemented this with training observations, questionnaires, programme content, and archival material to construct a detailed portrayal of this specific programme, as described by Meyer et al (2020), aiming for a holistic view. The interview was audio recorded with the participant's consent. The participants' demographic information including age, gender, and education level also were collected.

Data analysis procedures: - We have recorded the interview data and transcribed by the professional transcription service provider. We have hired an assistant to transcribe the data and interpret the data using Aboobaker (2020) qualitative data analysis techniques. Each transcription underwent individual review to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives. The data was meticulously organised and coded line-by-line according to the interview questions. The coding process involved grouping similar answers and calculating frequencies of commonalities. Patterns across the data were identified, and major themes were uncovered based on these commonalities. Additionally, a part-to-whole interpretation technique (Mohseni et al, 2023) was employed to cluster interview quotes within each theme. The researchers determined the appropriateness of content coded under the themes, and any discrepancies in coding were addressed through discussion within the study.

RESULT

Theme 1: Adaptability

Participants demonstrated increased adaptability in responding to unforeseen challenges and changing market conditions which support the development of resilience mindset. Before they attended this entrepreneurship programme, the participants had various views on business. For example, participants A and H shared the belief that business is inherently complex and requires careful planning before venturing into it. *"I always think that it is hard to run the business as a*

woman and needed special skills to do it” Participant H said that *“one cannot embark on a venture without a thorough plan in place for its initiation and management. Surprisingly, this realization dawned on me through our collective experiences.”* This entrepreneurship programme has completely changed their way of thinking about business. In our analysis, four women participants indicated that they found this entrepreneurship programme has created a capacity to navigate a new opportunity and style in discovering the opportunities. Our Entrepreneurial training interventions equipped participants with ability to develop strategies for adapting their business models to evolving circumstances and according to current condition. Flexibility emerged as a key factor in overcoming setbacks and seizing new opportunities, contributing to overall resilience among rural women entrepreneurs.

Participant A:

“I like to do business and I feel that there is a lot of opportunities in my village. However, I feel scared to take the challenges...I feel weak maybe because I am a woman, stereotype and engage with closed-minded people or community. This programme made me think more alternatives and alter the plan from your experience with stakeholders.”

Participant D also indicated her interest in exploring an online business.

“My mom started a cookies business. She doesn’t know how to run the show. I have a little bit knowledge in that and decided to go with online selling, but I don’t know where to start e.g. which platform to use, how to use the features, etc... Thanks to this programme, I’ve been able to explore additional opportunities online and expand my customer base significantly.”

One of the participants reported the unexpected situation and how this programme minimal the crisis.

“There was a juncture where my primary supplier faced unexpected disruptions, compelling me to swiftly pivot and source alternative suppliers... I adeptly maneuvered through this crisis, ensuring minimal disruption to my business operations...which I learned from this programme.”

Theme 2: Implement Frugal Innovation

Participants demonstrated improved resourcefulness by leveraging available resources and maximizing local assets to fuel business expansion, while also implementing frugal innovation techniques. Five participants highlighted the issue of lack of innovation compared to their competitors. They stated: *“I witnessed firsthand the negative impact of a lack of innovation on the company's performance and success.”* The other person said *we “find it hard to bring new ideas as we have limited resources...”* They previously used Facebook ads and TikTok platform in their marketing activities but they didn't fully utilise it. One of the participants said: *I'm familiar with the fundamental aspects of social media, but my main challenges lie in maintaining consistency, fostering engagement, creating compelling content, and ensuring regular posting frequency.*

The participants have gained several benefits from this entrepreneurship training. For instance, participants say how they worked on their business ideas to make it more cost-effective and scalable. Entrepreneurial training interventions fostered a culture of innovation, encouraging participants to explore creative solutions to business challenges. The ability to innovate and diversify product offerings emerged as a crucial resilience factor, enabling rural women entrepreneurs to stay competitive in dynamic market environments and support to build resilience and never give-up attitude.

Participant A said:

“My ambition is to establish my own business. While I've managed to save some funds, I'm uncertain about where to begin. I'm

passionate about creating new products, yet I lack direction on how to effectively market and sell them especially in social media platform. After I attended this programme, I was able to craft my own story in unique way on how to get started with business."

Participant B reinforced Participant A opinion by saying:

"Like she said, I like to work on new stuff. I have saved some money to work on this product but don't know who to meet and how to approach them to make it work. When I came to this programme, I came across one of our mentors who has a similar business to mine...and we expressed our interest. I started to build the prototype for my unique product..."

Another participant expressed that she is actively involved in social media platforms, and it offers her a great advantage in promoting her brand and personal identity.

According to Participant D;

"I have a bakery shop... Attending this programme has been a game-changer for my bakery shop. I've acquired valuable insights in utilising platforms like TikTok and Shopee to enhance my business operations. Witnessing others harnessing these platforms successfully fuelled my desire to leverage them as well. Now, with newfound proficiency, I'm thrilled to see my dream of expanding my business through these platforms become a reality."

Participant E stated that:

"Before attending this programme, I hadn't considered utilising social media platforms to promote my plumbing service business. However, upon participating, I realized the untapped potential these platforms held for reaching a broader audience. Now, with a newfound understanding of social media marketing strategies, I've been able to engage with customers through live sessions, leading to increased inquiries and interest in my services."

Theme 3: Build Strong Determination

Participants demonstrated heightened determination in pursuing their entrepreneurial goals despite obstacles and setbacks to build strong resilience mindset. Entrepreneurial training interventions instilled a sense of resilience mindset, empowering participants to persist in the face of adversity. Many participants have emphasised the significance of determination following their training sessions. The cultivation of grit and resilience emerged as a foundational element in sustaining long-term business success and personal growth among rural women entrepreneurs.

“There was a year when we experienced a severe drought that devastated our crops. It was a devastating blow to our business, but instead of giving up, we explored alternative irrigation methods and drought-resistant crop varieties. Last time we were given up a bit. He added after the programme, “I realized that now I think I can we were able to mitigate the impact of the drought and keep our business afloat”.

Participant B and C said:

“Fluctuations in prices of ingredients like grains, dairy, and produce can significantly impact our bottom line. We are running a café in a rural area, and it is quite hard to survive there as there is very little demand for our products. Through this programme, we've implemented strategies such as diversifying our supplier base, negotiating long-term contracts, and exploring alternative sourcing options especially love how you help us to build our mindset...”

Participant F said:

“In our selling hand-made craft business adapt quickly to changing circumstances, innovate in response to challenges, especially to cope up and maintain a positive outlook in the face of adversity, and what we want to learn from this programme is how to keep sustained.”

Theme 4: Personal ties with mentors and communities

Participants emphasised the importance of personal ties and social support in bolstering resilience. It has been discussed in various perspectives. Four participants said that they have discovered new opportunities and improved business ideas with mentored and peer support. They stated: *"We don't know much about how to grow the business, and this programme gives them the guidance on how to exactly start the business and run it."* One of the participants said *"I'm very much passionate about doing this export business...no contact and who to approach..."* Participant B said *"I always have the fear of gender discrimination. Many people in my community have the prevailing sentiment that business isn't suitable for girls or women. I feel people are becoming close-minded."* She's encountered this narrow-minded attitude firsthand, but it only fuels her determination. Another participant also added that; *Owning my own business is the ideal avenue for me to challenge these misconceptions. It's my opportunity to demonstrate that gender stereotypes have no place in determining one's capabilities."* Entrepreneurial training interventions facilitated the formation of peer support groups and mentorship networks, providing participants with valuable guidance and encouragement. Four participants said collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders and community organizations emerged as a critical resource in overcoming barriers and accessing additional support services. She said that *"social support and community networks have been essential for my entrepreneurial endeavours. Whether it's receiving advice and mentorship from fellow entrepreneurs or accessing resources and opportunities through community partnership."*

Following the programme, participants provided feedback, with many emphasising the programme's networking benefits.

Participant A and F:

"This programme has facilitated connections with government agencies crucial to our business, such as Mardi. Mardi offers non-

financial support to rural entrepreneurs, particularly marginalised groups like women, empowering them to thrive in entrepreneurial ventures."

Participant H:

"Well-organised programme and main agenda that essential for us networking event where we have visited some women owned shops and companies that doing similar kind of products like us..."
Another participant said that "it inspired us to be successful like them."

Theme 5: Developing problem-solving skill

Participation in entrepreneurial training interventions resulted in a profound sense of personal empowerment and self-efficacy among participants by developing problem-solving skill. All participants have highlighted the importance of developing problem-solving skill in this entrepreneurship programme to create sustainable businesses which not only benefiting themselves but also contribute to the economic and social development of their communities. For example, participant B stated, *"I want to know how to do traditional handcraft as it is very famous in my place"*. Similarly, Participant F said she want to learn organic farming practices. *"My main motive to join this programme is to cultivating fruits and vegetables without use of harmful chemicals. I know it is a problem and I need to find a solution"*. The other participant also said, *"I want establish a small-scale food processing unit, producing jams and pickles from our farm...able to produce healthy pickles for our community"* The acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and confidence emerged as transformative outcomes of the training programs, contributing to personal and professional growth. Entrepreneurial endeavours were viewed not only as economic pursuits but also as vehicles for personal fulfilment, empowerment, and social change among rural women entrepreneurs.

According to Participant C:

"I started my Agri-tourism and hospitality management, but it didn't grow well. After joined this programme I have transformed the business to make it more customer-friendly such as offering farm stays, guided tours, and organic dining experience...I'm so happy today as I also transformed the village and improve the living standard there and solved the problem..."

Participant E said:

"I have attended so many programs but nothing like this. I have developed the skills required especially on digital marketing because I have my own boutique specialising in village clothing..."

DISCUSSION

The present research offers significant perspectives on the obstacles encountered by rural women entrepreneurs and the function of entrepreneurship initiatives in fostering a resilient mindset within them. Running a business in rural areas presents many challenges for women entrepreneurs, including scarce resources and shifting market conditions. The results emphasise how crucial entrepreneurship programs are to tackling these issues and giving women the tools they need to flourish in changing circumstances. The research highlights several important themes that arose from the interview data, such as adaptability, implement frugal innovation, strong determination, ties with mentors and community, and the ability to solve problems. These themes highlight the complexity of resilience and the range of tactics used by rural women business owners to get beyond challenges and build successful companies. One essential skill that entrepreneurship programme helps participants develop is adaptability, which allows them to negotiate uncertain settings and modify their business models in response to shifting market conditions. Resilience requires this flexibility since it enables business owners to take advantage of fresh opportunities and efficiently handle uncertainty. Consistent with our findings, existing literature on women entrepreneurs suggests

that those who demonstrate high levels of adaptability are not only better equipped to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship but also more adept at identifying and seizing new opportunities for their ventures (García-González et al., 2021). In line with Shaddiq et al (2021) research on the role of innovation in sustaining the operations of international companies in the post-COVID era, this research also emphasises how frugal innovation propels economic expansion and gives rural communities more influence. Rural women-focused entrepreneurship programs emphasise business model innovation and give participants the tools they need to spot market openings, craft distinctive value propositions, and build long-lasting business models in a more cost-effective way. This focus on innovation creates new opportunities for rural entrepreneurs as well as facilitating the growth of new businesses. Rural women entrepreneurs can maximize resource use and propel business growth even in resource-constrained situations by putting frugal innovation ideas into practices, Rudhumbu et al (2020).

CONCLUSION

In summary, the study's findings advance our knowledge of how rural women entrepreneurs cultivate a resilience attitude and the function of entrepreneurship programs in assisting them in their commercial ventures. The study emphasises how crucial it is for rural women to be flexible, inventive, and frugal in order to overcome obstacles and seize possibilities. Entrepreneurship programs help rural women entrepreneurs succeed in dynamic and uncertain contexts by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need. These initiatives not only help new businesses expand, but they also promote community development, economic progress, and women's empowerment by enabling them to overcome the particular difficulties that come with living in rural areas. It will be crucial to keep funding entrepreneurial initiatives that are specifically designed to meet the needs of rural women in the future, with an emphasis on encouraging flexibility, creativity, and resilience. By doing this, we can

provide rural women entrepreneurs the tools they need to lead sustainable development initiatives and bring about constructive community change.

LIMITATION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though this study offers insightful information about how rural women entrepreneurs create resilience, there are a few issues that should be addressed in next research projects. First off, the generalizability of results may be limited if only one case study is used. To improve the validity and dependability of the findings, future research should investigate resilience-building techniques in a variety of scenarios. Secondly, the study's focus on a single emerging economy may limit the breadth of its insights. Future research should consider including cases from diverse countries with similar socioeconomic conditions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of resilience-building processes among rural women entrepreneurs. Future studies evaluating the effects of resilience-building interventions on entrepreneurial success should make use of larger sample sizes and quantitative analysis techniques to overcome these limitations. Furthermore, carrying out comparative assessments and cross-cultural comparisons across various organization kinds would improve our comprehension of resilience-building tactics in various circumstances. In general, resolving these issues and looking into fresh research directions would advance our knowledge of how rural women entrepreneurs gain resilience and guide the creation of efficient programs that assist them in their business ventures.

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Chapter 14

Integrated Innovative Model in Enhancing the Sustainability of Entrepreneurship Initiatives Amongst Rural Communities in Sabah

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ABSTRACT

One strategy that is effective in raising the community's socio-economic is through entrepreneurship, including those who reside in rural areas. To make this a reality, the government is launching and carrying out various entrepreneurship initiatives as supported by the MADANI Community. These entrepreneurial efforts are made up of a variety of programmes that emphasise using entrepreneurship to improve the community which is to be aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The APPGM-SDG programme which becomes the focus of attention in this study is heavily emphasised on the implementation of selected 17 SDGs itself. For the record, in most of the entrepreneurial projects related to SDGs, the community awareness of relevant SDGs is very low. Leading to the imbalance success of the project targeting the SDGs agenda. Previous experiences indicate that the adoption of appropriate models is a prerequisite for the success of entrepreneurial endeavours, especially in knowledge transfer projects. On this note, the research focuses on rural areas in Sabah and includes multiple related models. Site visits to the communities engaging with the knowledge transfer programme, project reports, and literature reviews led to the findings of the study. Drawing from the efficacious experience of the SHARE Model and informed by the pivotal components used in the Kirkpatrick Model, Phillips ROI Model, and ROV, as well as the MADANI's empowerment, a sound integrated model is proposed to ensure the sustainability of entrepreneurship initiatives. Not only do the

entrepreneurship initiatives elevate the standard of living amongst rural communities but also strengthen their understanding of the elements of SDGs attached to the projects. It is also imperative to take into account the essence of the successful entrepreneurship initiatives that predominantly rely on the entrepreneurship education of TVET.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVES AND TVET

The government's efforts to boost people's standard of living through entrepreneurship are aligned with various entrepreneurship initiatives that the Ministry and related agencies have launched. This is consistent with the rapidly advancing technological and digital advancements that make it easier for anybody to enter the field of entrepreneurship. Not forgetting the importance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) elements to be embedded in the projects. The business programme that was presented and put into action may hopefully help those who are still under the poverty level, particularly those who live in rural areas. Through the MADANI approach, the government's seriousness is made evident.

The Ministry and its agencies have undertaken a number of entrepreneurship programmes that are in line with the government's goals to increase people's standard of living through entrepreneurship. This is in line with the quickly developing digital and technology innovations that are making it simpler for everyone to pursue entrepreneurship. Do not overlook the significance of incorporating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) components into the initiatives. The business programme that was proposed and implemented could potentially assist individuals who are still living in poverty, especially those who reside in rural areas. The MADANI method demonstrates the government's sincerity. For example, the MADANI Community serves as a glaring example of how seriously the government takes the involvement of communities in each constituency.

The MADANI Community for instance, becomes one of the clear manifestations of the government's seriousness in involving communities in each constituency to be involved in various entrepreneurship initiatives. Nevertheless, to what extent those entrepreneurship initiatives will succeed in improving the life of the community involved is not certain. However, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) may provide the answer. It is through TVET that beneficiaries are provided with the relevant skills, knowledge, and right attitude or competencies needed (Salleh et al., 2016). With TVET, participants automatically shift.

For example, the MADANI Community serves as a glaring example of how seriously the government takes incorporating communities in each constituency in a range of entrepreneurship projects. However, it is uncertain to what degree those entrepreneurial endeavours will be successful in enhancing the quality of life in the community in question. But the solution might be found in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). TVET is the means by which recipients acquire the necessary competencies, knowledge, and appropriate attitude (Salleh et al., 2016). Participants in TVET automatically shift.

Harun et al. (2023) argued that entrepreneurship education has not yet had a very positive effect on the number of capable independent entrepreneurs. This weakness was identified by the institution's absence of an education system and several ignored aspects. It was suggested that the development of a comprehensive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) entrepreneurship curriculum should consider the integration of potential fields and human behavior theories.

According to Harun et al. (2023), the number of competent independent entrepreneurs has not increased much as a result of entrepreneurship education. A number of overlooked factors and the institution's lack of an education structure pointed to this

vulnerability. It was recommended that promising fields and theories of human behaviour be included into an extensive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) entrepreneurial curriculum.

Entrepreneurship education in the field of TVET is proven to be a key factor for one to successfully enter and succeed in a business (Fayolle and Gailly, 2015). In other words, Fayolle and Gailly (2015) found that entrepreneurship education provides people with the important knowledge and skills to communicate well in business. This will directly lead to a better living due to the TVET exposure. Recently, Malaysia has once again applauded entrepreneurship education in TVET by continuously calling for education providers to seriously embed TVET in the curriculum. According to Fayolle and Gilly (2015) to produce a graduate with entrepreneurial skills, practical exposure should be emphasised in the lesson plan.

Notwithstanding, if an efficient model with a defined execution strategy is followed, the government's entrepreneurial activities through various programmes can succeed in achieving their objectives. Furthermore, there is a proper way to guarantee that all knowledge transfers—a crucial foundation for business management abilities—can be carried out efficiently and effectively. Efficiency is the amount of time needed to ensure that knowledge is successfully transferred. Meanwhile, effective means that those with the necessary experience in the sector provide the knowledge and abilities that the community needs. Based on the work that is being done, there are a few models of knowledge transfer that can be applied and integrated. For this pioneering research, the rural communities in Sabah become the focus study.

The MADANI Community

Before that, it is vital to understand the Malaysia MADANI concept which is a comprehensive integrated initiative that aims to promote noble and civilized human characteristics in all matters involving

government policies and practices to safeguard the welfare and well-being of the people. The people's consultation and feedback were used as a catalyst for the concept of Malaysia MADANI. At the same time, this will contribute to the prosperity of the country. The six cores underlying Malaysia MADANI are Sustainability or *Kemampuan* (M), Well-being or *sejahtera* (A), Creativity or *kreativiti* (D), Respect or *hormat* (A), Confidence or *keyakinan* (N), and Courtesy or *ihsan* (I). Sustainability refers to the comfort of a balanced life that is loaded with knowledge. Well-being focuses on strengthening the economy, and social and environmental sustainability in all efforts. Creativity targets innovation that opens the mind to innovation and empowerment of human capital. The true unity of the people is due to a high attitude of respect between one another. This understanding is important to instill confidence in achieving the desired goal. Finally, Malaysia MADANI also supports the practice of compassion for fellow human beings where efforts are focused on human empowerment.

A community consists of individuals who share the same characteristics or live in the same area. Specifically, a community is defined as a group of individuals with various attributes who are connected by social bonds, share a common point of view, and work together in a particular place or environment. Based on this understanding, the MADANI Community can be described as an initiative that gathers cross-racial and ethnic, multi-racial and multi-religious community members who live together in harmony and peace to form a perfect bond of unity. Through such a community, all policies, and information on community development programs launched by the government in particular can be shared transparently and benefit all members of the community.

The MADANI community supports three main thrusts, namely, helping the marketing of government information, digitizing the community, and fostering the spirit of unity, patriotism, and nationhood. By doing so, the government's burden to improve the standard of living of the

people can be lightened. In addition, the benefits of the project or any form of aid that is intended to be channeled will be able to be extended as fairly as possible. At the same time, this will improve the well-being of people in every community.

In the MADANI Community, a high sense of care is instilled, including a sense of responsibility for efforts to preserve the environment to ensure that natural damage does not occur arbitrarily. If this can be used as a pillar of life and done together, then it will form a community group that always cultivates healthy practices and lifestyles and helps each other. Finally, this kind of attitude will guarantee a social balance that results in positive changes in the community members in particular.

COMMUNITY SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN SABAH

The location of the state of Sabah at the farthest from the Government Administration Center in Putrajaya certainly deserves to be given the main spotlight. This is coupled with the state's area of 73,904 square kilometers with a community composition that still has many living in rural and rural areas. The MADANI community is certainly capable of doing something that will lead to the prosperity and well-being of the people in the state of Sabah in a better and more convincing way. The hope is that the MADANI Community will be able to play an important role in researching and reviewing the best ways and methods to bring out the people in rural and rural areas in the state of Sabah from the cocoon of poverty.

The fact is, at the beginning of the 21st century, the success of socio-economic development programs for communities outside the cities and remote areas is not yet clear. It was reported in the early 2000s that various government programs and plans to eradicate poverty appeared to be ineffective due to a non-strategic approach. This has lasted until now due to several causes that have been identified.

Among them, is the lack of sensitivity to matching the suitability of the programme with the developed community. As a result, the poverty alleviation programme failed to become known as a touch-and-go project. The most obvious cause is when the community refuses to be fully involved in the programme brought to them by the implementing agency. Sometimes, even if there is community acceptance, it is only at the beginning stage. After some time, the interest to continue the programme simply dies and the project becomes unsustainable and no less is abandoned.

It was also found that the incompatibility of time and the duration of activities that are too long are among the main reasons for the failure of a knowledge transfer programme. Limited and inappropriate programme implementation space has caused discomfort. This also contributes to project failure. There are also situations where the community cannot convey the level of knowledge and skills, they have resulting in the suitability of the implementation of the knowledge transfer project not going well. In addition, there are also members of the community who are not very clear about what role they have to play in the development projects brought to them. Sometimes, too many advisory services are provided but the desired results are not obtained as they should be. All of these prompt community members to refuse to be fully involved in the new development programs brought to them afterward.

From this, it can be concluded that the models introduced need to have an approach that is aware of the needs of the community in addition to making the community itself a key player in ensuring the success of a development project. In other words, community development only happens if there is active involvement among the local community where the community is responsible for developing the quality of life of their community. Meanwhile, effective knowledge transfer models need to be introduced and implemented transparently by all parties involved. Only the participation of

government and non-government departments and agencies together with the local community in every development process guarantees the success of a community development programme.

Noteworthy, challenges to the community's socio-economic development in Sabah is not that hard. This is because the communities in Sabah have already reached a more harmonious state of unity compared to other communities in Malaysia. Unity is not mere rhetoric. This is the preamble to smoothly implement any entrepreneurship initiatives by the government. Cross-ethnic and racial marriages are normal and accepted with a high spirit of family harmony in Sabah. Even though family members have converted to Islam, the attitude of visiting and reaching out to the family on festival days still goes on as usual. The same goes for weddings et cetera. Among others, the Sabahan language plays an important role in empowering the harmonious state. Apart from their ethnic languages, the Sabahan language is a crucial part that enables them to be gentle and respectful of one another. Sometimes, members of different ethnic communities intersperse their friends' ethnic languages when conversing. Among them are "*bilang*" (ask), "*akun*" (agree), "*palan-palan*" (slowly), "*logot-logot*" (don't rush), and many more. This is what makes the community in Sabah sticks very close to one another. In short, the harmonious factor is a vital factor to enable various entrepreneurship initiatives to be successfully conducted.

Community Socio-Economic Development Model

Several model frameworks have been developed involving universities as leaders of knowledge-transfer projects. Among the earliest models is based on the Triple Helix model which specializes in the production and use of knowledge involving the relationship of three entities namely university, industry, and government. This model was later improved through the introduction of the Quadruple Helix Model which included the community as an important component that needed to develop their community in earnest. Through this model,

the community component is no longer seen as a beneficiary as in the Triple Helix Model, but it is one of the four components that determine its absolute success. The Quintuple Helix model is introduced by emphasising the "environmental" element. This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals agenda which emphasises this element. A new addition to this model is that it focuses on the socio-economic development of communities that use natural resources optimally in line with efforts to emphasise the Sustainable Development Goals. In short, the effectiveness of the model can only be ensured if the MADANI Community initiative is fully implemented among the members of the community involved. Accordingly, all the approaches in the introduced model can be refined again, and the status of the project updated and implemented in a more focused, organised, and systematic way.

Many approaches have been used in developing the socio-economic community. However, it is difficult to determine its effectiveness. In a knowledge transfer project led by Universiti Malaysia Sabah, one community, Bombon Marakau Ranau, was successfully developed jointly with the state agency and the community itself. Using a model called SHARE Model which is the abbreviation for Shared Leadership (SH), 6-Action Plan (6-Action Plan/A), and Relationship Building (RE). Shared Leadership (SH) focuses on the leadership responsibility of each entity that forms the helix as found in the Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix Models. Noteworthy, emphasis is placed on the leadership of the community itself which will continue to guide the commitment and determination of its community members to continue to develop their entrepreneurial activities.

THE APPGM-SDG PROGRAMME

In such a way, the APPGM-SDG programme can be considered as a community engagement project. Community engagement involves groups of individuals who share common interests or experiences to

address issues related to their well-being (CDC, 1977). It is also related to a process involving local people in decision-making, policy development, and implementation (United Nations, 2020) that strengthens the locals' sense of ownership, skills, and knowledge in decision-making. Consequently, it lifts communities' appreciation in establishing strong collaboration, and they are more eager to learn and take action on the knowledge they earn (Born, 2013; Nursey-Bray, 2020). Consultation, participation, collaboration, and empowerment are some key elements that appear in explaining community engagement. A more meaningful and impactful engagement with communities will develop further since the communities feel the shared power, and empowerment leading to behavioral changes towards promoting a sustainable environment as well as developed personal interest. Other aspects of community engagement include a higher level of social inclusion and belonging among the members. It is through strong community engagement that good solutions to the community can be matched. Strong community involvement ensures that the interventions or solutions developed are going to be effective since they are relevant to the needs of the people who will be using them (Al-Hassan et al., 2019; Singh, 2021; Bangani, 2023).

Five elements of community engagement were reported by UNICEF (2019) linking sector-specific development and humanitarian aims. Those are civic participation, inclusion, improved governance, social and behavioral change, social evidence, accountability to the affected populations, and strengthened public sector and community. There are many other approaches to community engagement. Nevertheless, the effectiveness depends on meeting the specific needs of the community and the issue at hand. The key to the successful implementation is related to how serious we are in acknowledging the community's voices.

Strategic Alliances in Community Development

In the effort to empower the community with SDGs, multi-stakeholders consisting of the government, businesses, civil society organisations, and academia could form a strategic alliance to ensure SDGs are well understood by the communities who are beneficiaries of the socio-economic development programme (Haywood et al., 2019; Eweje et al., 2021). In line with this, Nonet et al. (2022) introduced three processes of collaboration to improve the engagement of multi-stakeholders for the SDGs. First, multi-sector (relational coupling) focuses on the relationship between different stakeholders to foster effective collaboration and engagement toward achieving SDGs. Second, operational perception alignment (cognitive coupling) deals with the shared understanding of the issue among stakeholders. Third, goal and strategic alignment (material coupling) focuses on the relationship among the stakeholders to have the same vision in aligning the goals with the SDGs. The stakeholders can be divided into two main groups, the solution providers (SPs) who are represented by the relevant agencies, and academia, and the participating communities, who are the beneficiaries. The relationship between these two groups is successful once there is a top-down and bottom-up approach between them. The SPs provide expert knowledge and ease the decision-making process, this is following the act of a top-down approach. The communities, on the other hand, apply the bottom-up approach to ensure active participation as well as emphasising local knowledge towards achieving the desired goals (Rauss & Pourtois, 2013).

Noteworthy, is the role of learning institutions such as academia in shaping society through knowledge and community engagement (Pozi, Rahman, and Raziff, 2022). Their participation not only transfers the knowledge of particular entrepreneurial knowledge required by the communities but also disseminates information on how the knowledge is related to the targetted SDGs. Thus, this will enable the communities to inculcate SDGs in their entrepreneurial activities.

Mohd Salleh et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of creating a well-structured community engagement to inspire the communities as the beneficiaries to play a more active role in the APPGM-SDG project. Their findings showed some issues and mismanagement of projects handled by solution providers that require a relook at how the APPGM-SDG was being implemented starting from the identification of communities' issues, to the suggested solutions by the solution providers as well as how the appointment of solution providers was made. The execution process should also be well-planned and receive community feedback with relevant actions, and not simply a reaction. Impact evaluation also needs to thoroughly depict the actual implementation and real impact on the field.

Rahman et al. (2023) in their study concluded that women's participation in the projects under APPGM-SDG solution projects in Sabah had empowered them to assist in the generation of income for the family. The projects in a way managed to provide them with the relevant knowledge and skills for the entrepreneurial activities they are involved in. Most crucial for them is learning the system on how to register for proper licensing to proceed with the ventures that they are dwelling on or looking forward to engaging in related ventures.

METHODOLOGY

SDGs' Orientation on Economic, Social, and Environment

The APPGM-SDG is a remarkable flagship programme intended to localize SDGs to the Malaysian context (Ramli & Daud, 2022) while addressing various socio-economic challenges faced by communities. Seventeenth SDGs were aimed at improving global economic, social, and environmental development (UN, 2023). Likewise, the APPGM-SDG targets sustainable solutions in the aspects of the economy, society, and the environment. It carries the notion that to improve the income equality of the community, the socioeconomic life of the community must also go along with the awareness of environmental conservation. Therefore, the sustainable solutions for the APPGM-

SDG project centred on these three centrefolds economic, social, and environmental. Economics determines whether participants' income increases or not from the improvement made to the entrepreneurial initiative. Social reflects the relatedness of the project to the national issues and the sustainability of the solutions. Environment concerns the environmental conservation efforts towards safeguarding the endangered ecosystem.

The Four Phases of Effective Execution

The impact management on participating communities could be observed in four phases of APPGM-SDG programme execution. It begins with issue mapping (design) and is followed by capacity building (planning), solutions implementation, and finally impact evaluation. The goals are to increase participants' income through entrepreneurial initiatives, to tackle prevalent social issues, and to increase awareness of environmental conservation efforts especially protecting endangered ecosystems.

Three methodologies were employed namely, impact identification, impact verification, and impact validation. First, the impact identification is based on the information reported in proposals, progress reports, monthly reports, and completion reports which measure the impact of each project. Impact verification takes place during the FGD, and site visits where the inputs from the beneficiaries were probed along with the observation made and document reviewed. Finally, impact validation requires the evaluators to refer to the relevant stakeholders or the APPGM-SDG regional officer. The impact evaluation was concluded based on the six major elements of deep, wide, clear, high, SDG, and gender. Each of the dimensions receives a score of 1 to 5. The scoring of the six dimensions indicates the effectiveness of the projects delivered by the SPs. The higher the score, the more effective the project is. On the other hand, the lower the score, the more ineffective the project is. In brief, the evaluation

shows which project is successfully implemented and caters to the needs of the beneficiaries.

The APPGM-SDG Meta-Integral Framework (Meta-Integral, 2020; Rashila & Sity, 2023) is a multilayer framework consisting of four dimensions of impact namely, deep, clear, wide, and high. Deep refers to the psychological knowledge gained from knowledge transfer activities. The deep impact is related to the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional state of the stakeholders. Psychologically, beneficiaries will gain new knowledge, become motivated, and undergo mindset and behavior change. In brief, people with deep impact become more knowledgeable, spiritually inspired, and psychologically adjusted to the challenges confronted.

The clear dimension concerns the skills developed or sharpened from the knowledge transfer activities. People who have a clear impact are capable of handling tasks faster than before. For entrepreneurial skills, the one participating as a beneficiary might show his or her ability to use digital marketing after attending such a course. High designates the capability of the beneficiaries to systematically manage the activities.

It is related to the way the operation was handled which sees improvement or the introduction of a systematic way of handling matters. The systematic approach enables the endeavors to be smoothly and sustainably operated.

The wide dimension indicates one's ability to widen one's networks associated with the business or the entrepreneurial activities one deals with. In particular, good rapport with the relevant agencies and stakeholders may further improve one's connection to stay long in one's venture. According to Roddin et al (2020) and supported by Sharifah Syahirah et al. (2023), the head of household among the indigenous women was able to improve their income gap after

attending the upskilling training on product development such as handicraft courses. Not only do they learn the skills, but they are also capable of building networks and making full use of the connection. As long as the upskilling programme conducted is gender appropriate, there is a higher chance of getting employed even after undergoing imprisonment (Mohd Alif Jasni, 2022). Meanwhile, digital literacy is found to be a game changer (Choudary & Bansal, 2022) since it is crucial for learning this skill to be resilient in the entrepreneurial activities of a larger segment of the market governed by technological advancement and digitalization.

Table 14.1. Impact Evaluations

NO	IMPACT	MEANING	EXAMINATION
1	Deep	A change in stakeholder experience	Self-evaluation, psychometrics, satisfaction surveys, mood inventories
2	Clear	A change in stakeholder performance based on skills assessments	Analytic tools, observational instruments, KPI
3	Wide	How stakeholder relationship will change	360-degree assessments, relationship mapping, interviews, social impact evaluations
4	High	The evolution of stakeholder systems	Environmental impact assessments, financial impact assessments, input indicators, KPI
5	SDG	Beneficiaries' comprehension of SDG	Indicators and objectives
6	Gender	Evaluate the proportion of women on committees and among beneficiaries	Numbers of disaggregated data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The credibility of the reports

Noteworthy, the APPGM-SDG project still needs to be improved despite its ability to reduce income inequality (Wong and Chua, 2021). It was learned that some of the success stories reported by the solution providers (SPs) did not tally with what was being shared by the beneficiaries during FGD and site visits (Muhamad Azwan Abd Rahman et al., 2023). Reports lacked credibility in solving issues experienced by the beneficiaries in which impact sustainability is in doubt. Based on the FGD and the site visit conducted, it was learned that those four phase execution principles were not properly adhered to (Sharifah Syahirah et al., 2023). When the observations were compared to the SP's reports, they seemed to be falsified. In a similar tone, Puteh and Wan (2023) agreed that the reports by SPs sometimes contradicted other reports and were not consistent with what was stated by the beneficiaries. Hence, the validation process took time to be verified and required the secretariat of APPGM-SDG intervention for some clearances.

Project not needed

Somehow the knowledge transferred was not what the beneficiaries needed. Instead, the idea to offer courses comes directly from the SPs. Yet, the four approaches still can be improved by identifying and prioritising the critical issue in the community, as well as ensuring that the execution is guided by the right solution.

Incompetent SPs

Interventions should be from the experts and not any academics with unrelated expertise to ensure the successful implementation of projects like APPGM-SDG. Academics who are in the related field can formulate the right solution before the project takes place. The appointment of credible SPs needs to be done conscientiously to avoid more occurrences of failing projects that may widen the incidence of

poverty. Expanding the issue of poverty may only bring political instability in the long run (Teh, Teh, and Sumaila, 2020).

It is important to ascertain that only the right SPs with the right approaches are involved in the project so that the beneficiaries may acquire the needed knowledge and skills (Rahman et al., 2023). Perhaps, according to Rahman et al. (2023), the impact evaluators should be appointed earlier to assess the credibility of the SPs and their proposed approaches to ensure that only workable strategies are implemented in the APPGM-SDG programme.

Unclear Indicators and Improper Mechanisms

Some intriguing issues on project evaluation include identifying the right indicators for project evaluation, the poor mechanisms to collect feedback, and the lack of resources to properly evaluate the programs. In addition, the difficulty in finding honest and competent SPs deteriorates the issues further. Thus, to ensure the successful implementation of any socio-economic projects geared towards improving the life of the communities, it must be carefully supervised and given to those having expertise in the related project as SPs.

The Perplexities of SDGs

Puteh and Wan (2023) argued that some APPGM-SDG projects might not meet the objective due to unclear SDG targeted for the selected beneficiaries. Thus, it is crucial before focusing on the well-being of individuals and society (Pozi et al., 2021), it is also imperative to educate the beneficiaries about the SDGs. In addition, the implementors or the solution providers need to have the right approach on how to ensure that the SDGs' message is easily understood by the beneficiaries for a sustainable and impactful SDG-related project. Strong recommendations were proposed that in the future, clear communication about how the APPGM-SDG should be properly conducted needs to be well-understood by all parties involved (Puteh & Wan, 2023). Puteh and Wan (2023) urged the

improvement of the programme design and targeted the right and proper policy development to ensure sustainable solutions on economics, society, and the environment.

Rahman et al. (2023) disputed the effectiveness of the APPGM-SDG programme due to the beneficiaries' failure to relate SDG elements to the courses provided by SPs. The beneficiaries only know about the SDGs involved in the course after being informed by the course instructors or the SPs once the courses end. The beneficiaries are unable to put into practice practices related to the SDGs. This is because when they were asked by the impact evaluators about the SDG they were engaging with, all of them only memorized the name of the SDG but were unable to explain the relationship with the entrepreneurship initiatives.

VARIOUS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MODELS

In the past, the socio-economic projects mainly on entrepreneurship initiatives might either have a model to ascertain the success of the projects or not have a model at all. Unfortunately, less successful stories were heard. Projects might endure a short period before being completely abandoned and considered failed. Hence, identifying models that secure the potential of the socio-economic project in generating income for the community before project implementation and throughout the project is crucial. Some models seem to have effectively fulfilled this expectation if they are applied together.

Kirkpatrick Model

The Kirkpatrick model (1995) could be considered one of the earliest models in evaluating the impact of training effectiveness. The model is capable of measuring the impact of training that took place in the knowledge transfer project as well. Four levels are measured in this model as shown in Figure 14.1. Kirkpatrick (1996) argued that the training delivered in Levels 1 and 2 did not necessarily determine whether participants could perform well in their job context later on.

At Level 1, participants were evaluated on their reaction, while at Level 2, the participants were examined on their understanding and ability to make changes when returning to their workplace. In Level 3, the participants should be able to apply the knowledge and skills learned to the job context. Level 4 shows the results in the form of decreased costs, improved quality, enhanced customer satisfaction, and increased quality and productivity. Even though the model provides a good tool to assess the impact of an individual's training, it does have a limitation related to the contextual influences on the judgment.

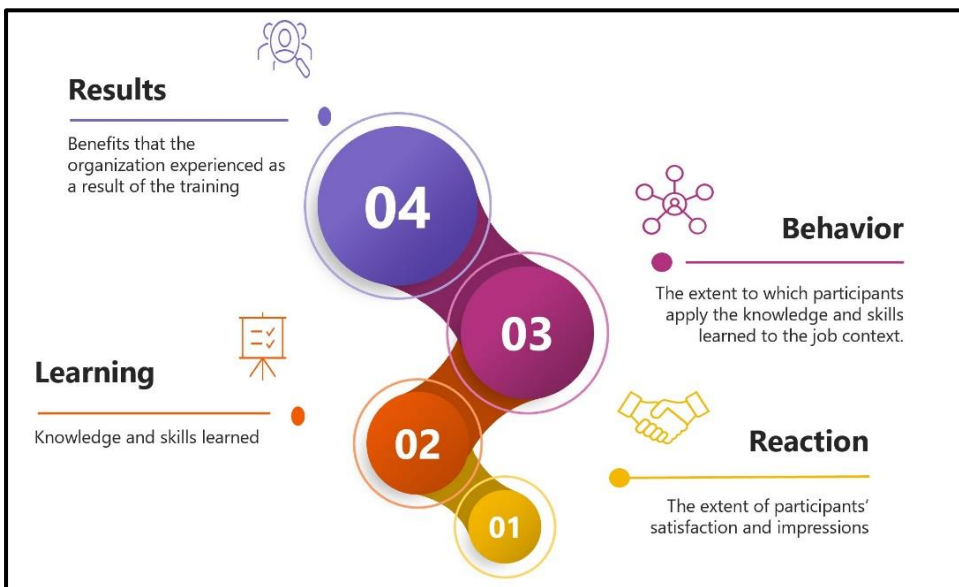


Figure 14.1. Kirkpatrick 4-Level Training Evaluation Model

Source: Kirkpatrick (1959)

Philips ROI Model

Phillips's (2003) ROI Model is the expanded version of the Kirkpatrick model. Every level was enhanced and an additional level of Level 5 which is on evaluating Return of Investment (ROI) was added (Table 14.2). Level 1 not only focuses on reaction but also on satisfaction and planned action. This level measures participants' satisfaction with a programme and whether they have plan to use what they have learned or not. Level 2 still on learning which assesses how much

participants have gained by attending the training. Yet, Phillips (2003) argued that it is not ascertained whether participants bring home what they have learned or not. Concerning Level 3, participants' tendency to practice what they have learned justifies behavioral changes. Level 4 looks at the impact of training on the business. Meanwhile, Level 5 is the new level measuring Return on Investment (ROI). This level displays the return on money invested in the training in which the relativity of profit to investment cost is shown. Despite improving the Kirkpatrick Model, the Phillips ROI Model also faced criticism on the timing and usefulness.

The Phillips model measures training outcomes at five levels:

Table 14.2. The Phillips ROI Model

LEVEL		BRIEF DESCRIPTION
1	Reaction, Satisfaction, & Planned Action	Measures participant reaction to and satisfaction with the training programme and participant's plans for action.
2	Learning	Measures skills and knowledge gains. Noteworthy, no assurance that these skills and knowledge will be used.
3	Behavior, Application and Implementation	Measures changes in on-the-job application, behavior change, and implementation.
4	Business Impact	Measure business impact to see if improvements were made
5	Return on Investment (ROI)	Compares the monetary value of the business outcomes with the costs of the training programme

Note: Taken from Bailey (2005)

Return of Value

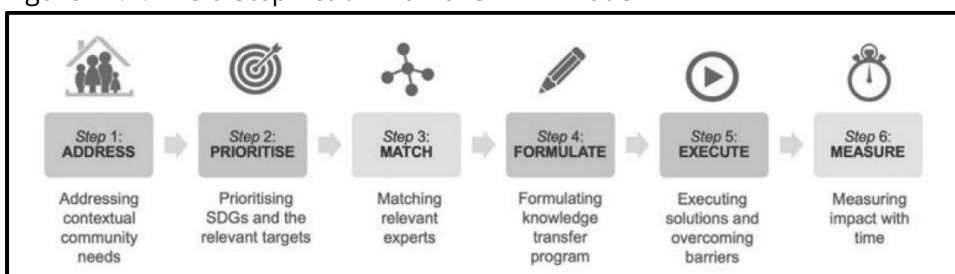
ROI can show financial benefits, but it is unable to take into consideration the creation of value, reputation, or personal fulfilment. The Return on Value (ROV) is therefore important. Stated differently, return on value (ROV) evaluates the return on non-financial aspects to determine the impact and effectiveness of an investment. Regarding

the knowledge and skills imparted, ROV controls the extent to which participants are satisfied. How the participants have benefited and been further motivated by the course. The ability to be more productive is also determined by the newly gained skills of the participants. Additionally, the participants will be prepared to advance if they can comprehend pertinent processes and procedures and how to put them into practice. In addition, ROV facilitates better stakeholder relations, decision-making, and the development of sustainable business models for individuals and organisations.

SHARE Model

An action-based 6-step plan technique as shown in Figure 2 is used to deliver the action-based domain which is derived from the SHARE Model (Dasan et. al, 2022). The SHARE Model was developed in response to the need to provide knowledge beyond that of the quadruple helix framework for sustainable community and social development. It is based on three main domains: shared leadership, action-based learning, and relationship-building. These domains are essential for developing practical and effective strategies.

Figure 14.2. The 6-Step Action Plan of SHARE Model



Source. Fatimah Ahmedy & Jakaria Dasan (2022)

Following a site visit to the communities where participants and the academics have interaction sessions, the first two steps of addressing and prioritised are completed. Understanding the community's primary challenges about socioeconomic growth, equality, accessibility to health and education, and the relationship between men and the environment is the first step. The root cause of the

current problems must be ascertained by performing a root cause analysis based on these difficulties. Following the identification of the root causes, the primary goals become evident, and the pertinent SDG is ranked accordingly. The essential component of Step 2 is aligning the primary goals with the desired SDGs. These steps are carried out beforehand to facilitate the seamless execution of the programme, and the results will be presented as case study evaluations inside the programme.

Participants in the programme will proceed with the task of finishing the Action-based 6-Step Plan after considering the aforementioned conclusions. Finding the expertise to suggest the optimal formula and approach based on the desired SDG and goals is necessary for Step 3. In this case, the expertise is not only concentrated on the academic specialisations but also on determining the necessary connections with the government agencies and business entities that make up the quadruple helix framework. Step 4, which comes next, is crucial because it calls for teamwork to come up with a solution that is not only workable now but also sustainable in the long run. In this case, community members must be actively involved as important participants, which is why any plan to be adopted must be actively studied and acquired by the community. In this step, an overview of the techniques and knowledge transfer initiatives that will be used must be created.

The latter two steps centre on the primary challenges that many academics encounter when attempting to engage universities and society in community development. The hardest aspects of a project to carry out are frequently the implementation and monitoring, which are primarily attributable to a lack of sustained community and university involvement that results in subpar long-term effects after the initiative is put into action. The goal of this programme is to create estimated milestones that would improve the delivery of execution within a workable time frame while addressing anticipated barriers

and ways to measure the long-term impact of tackling sustainability issues.

By integrating all the practices in the models and their approaches, a proposed model can be used in sustaining entrepreneurship initiatives to eradicate poverty in Sabah as follow;

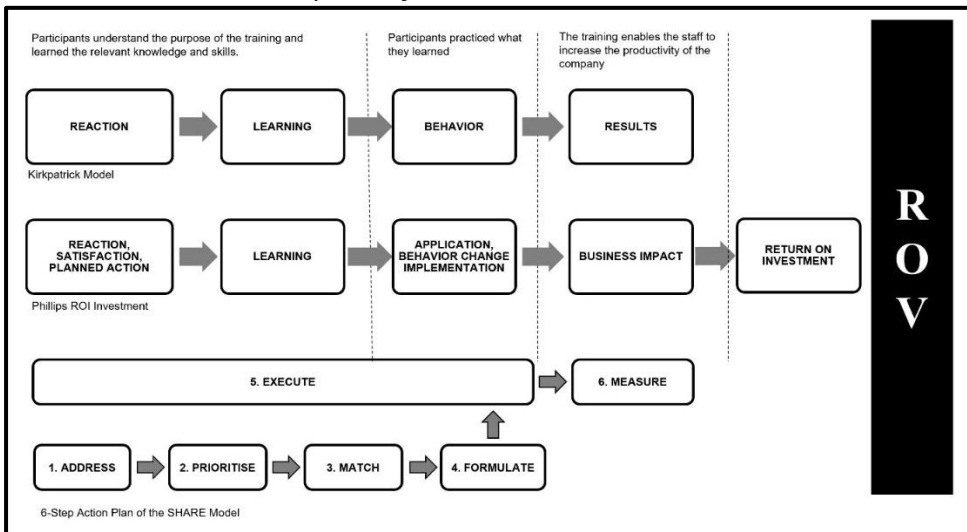


Figure 14.3. The Integrated Innovative Model

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship initiatives can be enhanced by adopting the appropriate model, which can be guided by the MADANI Community. The SHARE Model can be used to identify the important problem that requires a practical knowledge transfer initiative. It is possible to properly match important challenges with the appropriate academics or solution suppliers after they have been recognised. Subsequently, as demonstrated by the Kirkpatrick Model and Phillips ROI Model, it is imperative to comprehend the significance of receiving appropriate training to take meaningful action following the training. The ROV components should be stressed in addition to ROI to help the participants become sustainable business owners.

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Chapter 15

Kemiskinan: Solusi Ilmu Kemahiran Mencipta Aliran Tunai Dan Disiplin Pengurusan Kewangan, Permasalahan Sosial Membatasinya

Muhammad Fairuz Bin Bukari

PENGENALAN

Kemiskinan adalah satu perkara yang terjadi di mana-mana negara di dunia termasuk negara maju seperti Amerika Syarikat, China dan Jepun. Malah agenda membasmi kemiskinan seolah-olah tidak pernah berhenti dari sejak zaman tamadun purba sehingga hari ini. Permasalahan kemiskinan ini pasti tidak akan berhenti sehingga bila-bila. Cuma bagaimana masyarakat cuba berusaha untuk tidak terjerumus dalam kelompok ini dan bagaimana kepimpinan masyarakat dapat mengurus mereka yang menghadapi masalah ini dengan paling berjaya dan berkesan.

Budaya kemiskinan adalah suatu keadaan gaya hidup yang dikaitkan dengan sikap negatif seperti malas berusaha, kurang bermotivasi, tidak berkeyakinan, cepat berputus asa dan berserah kepada takdir yang menyebabkan seseorang atau sekumpulan orang kekal hidup dalam kemiskinan. Masyarakat Melayu dikaitkan dengan golongan yang mempunyai sikap negatif sehingga menjadi punca berlakunya kemiskinan. Di Malaysia, kaum Melayu mencatatkan peratusan kemiskinan paling tinggi berbanding kaum lain. Dari tahun 1970 hingga kini, peratusan kemiskinan kaum Melayu mencatatkan 0.8 peratus berbanding kaum Cina dan India, masing-masing 0.1 peratus dan 0.6 peratus. Sikap malas berusaha dianggap punca masyarakat Melayu hidup dalam kemiskinan (Aini Khairiah binti Samani, 2018).

LATAR BELAKANG

Kerajaan Malaysia saban tahun telah merangka pelbagai usaha untuk membasmi kemiskinan terutama kepada golongan majoriti yakni masyarakat Melayu. Sejak dari zaman koloni British, zaman pasca merdeka, Wawasan 2020 sehingga kini Malaysia Madani golongan miskin tidak terlepas dari agenda negara. Pelbagai programme dirangka bagi mengeluarkan rakyat dari belenggu kemiskinan. Pembentangan bajet 2023, sebanyak RM 1 billion diperuntukan bagi melaksana programme bertujuan tersebut (Nurhidayah Hairom, 2022). Namun dilihat seolah-olah usaha ini masih mencapai peratus keberkesanan yang rendah. Ini menyebabkan dana yang diperuntukan untuk melaksanakan programme seumpamanya seperti dibazirkan tanpa mencapai matlamat untuk mengeluarkan mereka dari belenggu kemiskinan. Saban tahun pihak kerajaan tetap akan ada peruntukan malah peruntukan itu ditambah, namun hasilnya belum memberangsangkan.

Selain sikap malas berusaha, antara punca yang dapat dilihat adalah perkaitan masalah kemiskinan dengan masalah sosial. Rakyat yang dikategorikan sebagai miskin antaranya terlibat dengan masalah sosial. Antaranya masalah penagihan dadah dan masalah rumah tangga. Hasil kajian mendapati dua permasalahan ini saling terkait oleh golongan asnaf dan miskin. Kedua-dua masalah ini seolah-olah menyebabkan mereka berputar dalam kitaran kemiskinan serta sukar untuk keluar daripadanya.

Menurut Buku Maklumat Dadah 2022, negeri Kedah mencatatkan seramai 13,267 orang penyalahgunaan & penagih dadah. Di daerah Kuala Muda seramai 1756 orang dan 260 orang tergolong dari pelanggan methadone di Klinik Kesihatan Bandar Sungai Petani (KKBSP). Menurut pihak KKBSP, dari jumlah pelanggan berdaftar anggaran 90 pelanggan yang dikategorikan sebagai "jinak" kerana ke klinik mengikut jadual dan menghadiri programme-programme yang dianjurkan oleh mereka. Antara programme yang menjadi indikator

kepada pengkategorian ini adalah Lawatan Rumah ke Rumah oleh pasukan perubatan dan pentadbiran KKBSPP bagi memantau tempat simpanan methadone mereka sambil menjalin hubungan baik termasuk ahli keluarga.

Bermula Nov 2023, PEMADAM Daerah Kuala Muda (DKM) telah bersama dalam aktiviti KKBSPP ini. Objektif PEMADAM DKM adalah untuk mendekati bekas penagih dadah yang telah mendaftar sebagai pelanggan methadone & "jinak". Kedua, membantu pihak KKBSPP bagi memastikan mereka ini tidak kembali terjerumus kembali sebagai penagih dadah secara tidak terkawal seterusnya ketiga, membantu pihak KKBSPP menjejaki pelanggan methadone yang "tidak jinak" dan menukar mereka kepada status pelanggan methadone yang "jinak".

MENJALIN HUBUNGAN BAIK BAGI MENGENALPASTI MASALAH

Programme ini dilihat memberi kesan dan menyumbang kepada penambahbaikan masyarakat Daerah Kuala Muda, selain tugas memeriksa rutin oleh KKBSPP, ianya diperkasakan lagi dengan penglibatan PEMADAM DKM sebagai jambatan membina hubungan baik antara pelanggan methadone dengan pihak KKBSPP dan pihak kerajaan amnya dieratkan.

Hubungan baik ini memudahkan urusan pemulihan serta meningkatkan kepercayaan mereka kepada KKBSPP dan PEMADAM DKM. PEMADAM DKM memainkan peranan sebagai "sahabat" tempat berkongsi masalah buat mereka. Didapati 75% dari pelanggan methadone kategori "jinak" ini mereka adalah dalam kategori golongan miskin, ada menghadapi masalah dengan ahli keluarga dan ada potensi untuk kembali menjadi penagih dadah semula. Mereka ini menjadi golongan sasaran pertama PEMADAM DKM.

Usaha diperkemas PEMADAM DKM untuk merapatkan lagi hubungan dengan golongan sasaran ini. Lawatan lebih kerap diadakan tidak hanya ke rumah malah di tempat kerja mereka. Lawatan melangkaui jadual

KKBSP bagi memastikan mereka lebih selesa dan tidak menganggap ianya lawatan rasmi. Perjumpaan lebih santai dan mesra untuk mendapatkan beberapa maklumat bagi memastikan programme yang dirangka lebih tepat dan memberi impak secara terus kepada mereka.

Dari sesi perbualan mendapati dua perkara yang amat membebani fikiran mereka. Pertama isu tiada pekerjaan tetap atau perlukan pendapatan tambahan. Kedua kerisauan gangguan dari rakan-rakan mereka yang masih menjadi penagih dadah serta pelanggan methadone "tidak jinak". Dari gangguan ini membuatkan ahli keluarga mereka terus berprasangka buruk seterusnya hubungan bersama ahli keluarga mengalami masalah.

PEMADAM DKM mendapati terdapat dua perkara yang perlu difokuskan iaitu permasalahan pekerjaan atau keperluan pendapatan tambahan serta memulihkan persepsi ahli keluarga.

MENGENALPASTI MASALAH YANG INGIN DITANGANI DAN SOLUSI ***Masalah 1: Pekerjaan atau pendapatan tambahan.***

Kebun Fitnezz byRuzYan nama diberi bagi programme yang digerak dibawah PEMADAM DKM. Programme ini diolah khusus untuk pelanggan methadone "jinak". Projek ini kini sedang dalam proses permohonan beberapa pihak seperti Ahli Jawatankuasa Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri Kedah, sekolah-sekolah peringkat menengah dan beberapa sekolah tahfiz terpilih yang berdaftar di bawah Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Kedah, beberapa NGO serta beberapa kuil masyarakat Buddha, Hindu dan Siam di dalam Daerah Kuala Muda.

Kebun Fitnezz byRuzYan ini terdapat 3 elemen penting di dalamnya; Pertama mewujudkan tapak kebun tanaman dalam kawasan sekolah/pusat pengajian agama. Kedua, mewujudkan KELAB KEBUN FITNEZZ di setiap sekolah tersebut dijadikan sebuah kelab berdaftar aktiviti ko-kurikulum. Ketiga, menerapkan ilmu pertanian, kecergasan

fizikal serta mental & kesedaran bahaya dadah melalui pengalaman pelanggan methadone kepada para pelajar sekolah.

Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan ini diilhamkan oleh Ruzyan Evolution Marketing. Pengarah Urusan yang juga merupakan ahli jawatankuasa PEMADAM, Daerah Kuala Muda atas galakan dari Pengerusi PEMADAM Negeri Kedah, Yang Berhormat Dato' Ustazah Hajah Siti Ashah bin Hj Khazali juga Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Luar Bandar, Kemiskinan dan Pembangunan Insan, Kerajaan Negeri Kedah agar satu projek dianjurkan PEMADAM DKM, terpanggil untuk mengemuka cadangan projek ini kepada Setiausaha Kerja Daerah, Sub. Inspektor (Bersara) Tuan Abdul Malek bin Baharuddin. Kertas kerja asal dan panduan mengerakkan projek ini diolah agar bersesuaian sebagai aktiviti di bawah PEMADAM.

Asas kepada Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan adalah mewujudkan kebun tanaman di dalam kawasan sekolah untuk menghasilkan benih dan hasil tanaman. Cadangan asal, jenis tanaman yang ingin diusahakan tanaman cili. Namun setelah dibincangkan serta mengambil nasihat dari beberapa ahli PEMADAM DKM, tanaman buah tembikai dipilih untuk merealisasikan projek ini kerana mudah ditanam dan tidak perlukan penjagaan rapi berbanding cili. Disamping beberapa kekangan termasuk proses penjagaan yang akan kebanyakan masa dikendalikan oleh pelajar sekolah.

Sekolah yang setuju terlibat akan ditubuhkan satu kelab aktiviti ko-kurikulum yang diberi nama "KEBUN FITNEZZ CLUB". Para pelajar yang berminat akan mendaftar sebagai ahli dan segala kelebihan seperti markah merit pelajar akan dikira sama seperti persatuan/kelab ko-kurikulum yang lain. Permulaan ini, keahlian hanya akan dibuka kepada pelajar tingkatan 1 atau setaraf. Pemantauan harian kebun akan dilaksanakan oleh ahli kelab dan secara mingguan oleh pelanggan methadone terpilih. Mereka akan hadir ke sekolah bersama-sama pelajar menjalankan tugas di kebun berkenaan.

Seorang guru akan dilantik sebagai Penasihat Kelab bagi memantau aktiviti setiap hari Rabu (hari ko-kurikulum) antara pelajar dan pelanggan methadone di kebun.

Pelanggan methadone bertindak sebagai "empunya kebun", datang secara mingguan memastikan tanaman yang diusahakan berada dalam keadaan baik dan dijaga oleh pelajar ahli kelab seperti jadual yang dibekalkan. Hasil buah tembikai yang dituai akan diproses menjadi produk minuman jus yang akan dijual kepada salah satu pasaraya di dalam Daerah Kuala Muda. Pasaraya tersebut telah bersetuju untuk membeli dan menempatkan produk ini sebagai salah satu sumbangan pasaraya tersebut kepada projek ini. Jus minuman tembikai ini akan dihasilkan dengan jenama KebunFitnezz.

Kedua produk tembikai sebagai cenderahati. Buah tembikai yang dihasilkan akan berbentuk khusus dan dijual dengan kotak pembungkusan menarik untuk dijadikan sebagai hadiah/cenderahati. Untuk penghasilan produk ini, satu perbincangan dibuat dengan Pejabat Pertanian Daerah Kuala Muda untuk menyediakan latihan dan bimbingan menghasilkan produk sedemikian. Oleh kerana ini adalah pertama seumpamanya di Daerah Kuala Muda. Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan akan menjadi kayu ukur samada produk sedemikian boleh dihasilkan mencapai standard dijadikan cenderahati atau sebaliknya. Jika berjaya ianya merupakan satu kerjasama terbaik antara PEMADAM dan Pejabat Pertanian.

Hasil keuntungan bersih jualan bagi kedua-dua produk ini akan dibahagi kepada tabung kebajikan sekolah, tabung Kelab Kebun Fitnezz sekolah dan pelanggan methadone yang terlibat.

Penubuhan "KEBUN FITNEZZ CLUB" juga memberi impak kepada pelajar dan pelanggan methadone. Aktiviti sesi perkongsian pengalaman oleh pelanggan methadone kepada pelajar tentang bahaya najis dadah secara berkala dan santai sambil berkebun dilihat

akan beri kesan. Para pelanggan methadone perlu menjaga disiplin, tingkahlaku dan menyampaikan segalanya berkisar kesedaran agar para pelajar tidak terjerumus dalam masalah dadah. Ini menjadikan mereka seorang motivator seterusnya akan menaikkan imej mereka di mata ahli keluarga.

Masalah 2: Persepsi Ahli Keluarga

Pesakit penagihan dadah sering dipandang negatif oleh masyarakat sejak dahulu lagi. Dengan kempen kesedaran untuk menerima golongan ini, masyarakat kini memberi ruang dan persepsi negatif sedikit berkurang. Namun peluang-peluang pekerjaan bagi golongan ini masih lagi terhad.

Melalui Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan ini, kesediaan pihak sekolah membenarkan pelanggan methadone masuk kawasan sekolah, mengusahakan tapak kebun buah tembikai dan bergaul dengan para pelajar serta warga sekolah bakal membuka mata masyarakat, golongan seperti ini boleh diberi peluang. Ditambah penglibatan dan sumbangan mereka melalui perkongsian pengalaman pasti akan meningkatkan persepsi masyarakat terutama ahli keluarga mereka. Ini secara tidak langsung dapat memulihkan hubungan mereka dengan ahli keluarga.

Untuk merealisasikan matlamat ini, Jawatankuasa Pendidikan, Agama, Komunikasi dan Penerangan, Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri Kedah diharap menyokong agar projek ini boleh dibawa ke dalam persekitaran sekolah. Sekolah satu kawasan kawalan ketat; Tidak sebarang orang atau aktiviti boleh dibenarkan. Jika kebenaran diberikan oleh Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri dan Bahagian Pendidikan, Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Kedah, ini pastinya memberi gambaran persepsi amat positif kepada masyarakat tentang keperluan memberi ruang dan peluang kepada pelanggan methadone dan seluruh pesakit penagihan dadah amnya.

Walaupun bagaimanapun penting pemberian ilmu dan pemantauan ketat secara berterusan pelanggan methadone yang terlibat oleh PEMADAM DKM. Terdapat beberapa modul yang telah disediakan dan perlu dijalani mereka sepanjang projek ini. Modul - modul ini juga akan menjadi silibus kepada para pelajar ahli Kebun Fitnezz Club.

Modul Perkebunan dan Kecergasan yang dikendalikan oleh Dr Zuraimay bin Zainuddin, Modul Pengurusan Kewangan yang dikendalikan oleh Encik Muhammad Fairuz bin Bukari, Modul Kemahiran Komunikasi Perniagaan & Jualan oleh En Mohd Syaheer bin A. Rahim bersama 2 orang ahli pasukannya dan dari segi pemantauan disiplin & pematuhan plan projek diketuai oleh Sub. Inspektor (Bersara) Tuan Abdul Malek bin Baharuddin turut melibatkan semua ahli jawatankuasa PEMADAM DKM.

Solusi: Ilmu mencipta aliran tunai dan disiplin pengurusan kewangan

Pemantauan Disiplin & Pematuhan setiap pelanggan dirangka akan menggunakan konsep "mentor-mentee". Seorang AJK PEMADAM DKM akan bertindak sebagai Mentor kepada maksima 3 orang pelanggan methadone sebagai Mentee. Para Mentor diberi manual, SOP dan latihan untuk bagi memastikan mereka dapat bertindak sebagai mentor. Gerak kerja pemantauan disiplin dan pematuhan ini diketuai oleh Setiausaha Kerja PEMADAM DKM sendiri agar segala pergerakan aktiviti ini dapat berjalan lancar dan misi projek ini tercapai.

Modul Perkebunan dan Kecergasan adalah satu modul yang dirangka untuk beri ilmu penanaman tembikai dan pengetahuan penanaman beberapa jenis tanaman lain yang boleh dijadikan aktiviti waktu sekang oleh para pelanggan methadone dan pelajar terlibat. Disamping mengisi waktu lapang ianya boleh dijadikan sebagai pendapatan tambahan atau makanan tambahan bagi diri dan keluarga di rumah. Modul ini juga diperkemas dengan ilmu sains kecergasan sebagai contoh mereka dapat mengira jumlah kalori digunakan melalui setiap aktiviti berkebun. Terdapat pelbagai lagi

ilmu berkait kecergasan yang akan didedahkan melalui aktiviti berkebun ini.

Modul Komunikasi Perniagaan dan jualan, satu ilmu utama dalam penghasilan pendapatan. Kemahiran ini akan mendedahkan teknik berkomunikasi dengan berkesan dalam proses jualan serta pemasaran. Modul ini akan 80% mendedahkan kaedah dan teknik jualan secara offline dan 20% secara online. Hari ini, oleh kerana terlalu memfokuskan aktiviti jualan secara online menyebabkan ramai orang terutama anak-anak muda sudah tiada kemahiran berkomunikasi secara bersemuka. Perkongsian ilmu dan aktiviti di dalam modul ini para pelanggan methadone dan pelajar akan diajar agar dapat membina pendapatan sekurang-kurangnya Ringgit Malaysia Satu Ribu Lima Ratus setiap seorang dalam masa sebulan.

Modul Pengurusan Kewangan, adalah pelengkap kepada penghasilan pendapatan tambahan. Hasil pendapatan yang diperolehi perlu diurus agar para pelanggan methadone tahu membezakan jenis perbelanjaan, pengasingan pendapatan sebagai simpanan dan seterusnya mengembangkan simpanan kepada perlaburan. Dalam modul ini juga ditekankan bagaimana untuk mendapatkan pendapatan pasif. Ilmu asas kewangan dengan pemantauan ketat ini perlu sehingga mereka berjaya mencipta pendapatan pasif sekurang-kurangnya sehingga Ringgit Malaysia Lima Ratus sebulan setiap seorang.

Dengan penghasilan pendapatan tambahan dan pendapatan pasif setiap pelanggan methadone yang menyertai Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan kohort 1.0 ini disasarkan berjaya menghasilkan secara konsisten Ringgit Malaysia Dua Ribu sebulan pada tahun 2025 nanti.

Jadual perancangan sepanjang tahun 2024 & 2025 dirangka bagi memastikan setiap aktiviti dijalankan tercapai sebaik mungkin. Projek ini yang pertama kali seumpamanya dalam PEMADAM DKM akan

menjadi penanda aras. Jangkaan keberjayaan projek ini dapat dilihat 6 bulan selepas projek ini dilancarkan. Jika projek ini boleh mendatangkan hasil; Bilangan tapak kebun akan ditambah, penglibatan sekolah-sekolah lain boleh dibuka dan lebih ramai penglibatan pelanggan methadone. Harapan ianya akan dikembangkan di seluruh Daerah Kuala Muda.

SDG'S DALAM AKTIVITI KEBUN FITNEZZ BYRUZYAN DI BAWAH PEMADAM DKM

Aktiviti di bawah PEMADAM DKM menepati dan selaras dengan konsep *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) ke arah mencapai pembangunan mampan untuk semua. SDGs ini telah dirangka oleh Perhimpunan Agung Pertubuhan Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu (PBB) [Resolusi PBB 70/1] pada tahun 2015 yang mempunyai 17 matlamat dan 169 sasaran khusus yang merangkumi matlamat membasmi kemiskinan, melindungi bumi dari kemusnahan serta memastikan keamanan dan kesejahteraan sejagat. (Buku Pembangunan Komuniti Mampan, Akademi MySDGs, muka surat 2)

Kebun Fitnezz by Ruzyan sebagai salah satu aktiviti di bawah PEMADAM Daerah Kuala Muda ini menepati SDG 3 (kesihatan yang baik dan sejahtera), SDG 4 (pendidikan berkualiti) dan SDG 8 (pekerjaan yang baik dan pertumbuhan ekonomi).

Di bawah SDG 3, aktiviti ini menepati objektif SDG 3.5, mengukuhkan pencegahan dan rawatan penyalahgunaan bahan, termasuk penyalahgunaan dadah, narkotik dan pengambilan alkohol yang memudaratkan. Selain itu, SDG 3.8, memperluas perkhidmatan kesihatan sejagat, termasuk perlindungan risiko kewangan, akses kepada perkhidmatan penjagaan kesihatan utama dan berkualiti serta akses kepada ubat dan vaksin penting yang selamat, berkesan, berkualiti dan berpatutan dalam projek ini kepada pelanggan methadone. (Buku Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan 2030, URBANICE MALAYSIA, muka surat 10).

Di bawah SDG 4, aktiviti ini menetapi objektif SDG 4.4, menjelang 2030 meningkatkan sebilangan besar golongan belia dan dewasa yang memiliki kemahiran teknikal dan vokasional untuk penggajian, pekerjaan yang baik dan keusahawanan. Selain itu, SDG 4.7 menjelang tahun 2030 memastikan semua pelajar memperolehi pengetahuan dan kemahiran yang diperlukan untuk menggalakkan pembangunan mampan termasuk antara lain melalui pendidikan untuk pembangunan mampan dan gaya hidup mampan, hak asasi manusia, ketidaksamaan gender, menggalakan budaya selamat dan bebas keganasan, kewarganegaraan global dan menghargai budaya serta menyumbang budaya kepada pembangunan mampan. (Buku Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan 2030, URBANICE MALAYSIA, muka surat 12 & 13).

Di bawah SDG 8, aktiviti ini menetapi objektif SDG 8.1, mengekalkan pertumbuhan ekonomi per kapita sejajar dengan situasi negara dan secara khususnya, mencapai sekurang-kurangnya 7 peratus kadar pertumbuhan keluaran dalam negara kasar setahun dalam projek ini diukur dalam komuniti pelanggan methadone. Selain itu, SDG 8.3, menggalakan dasar berorientasikan pembangunan yang menyokong aktiviti produktif, pewujudan pekerjaan yang baik, keusahawanan kreatif dan inovasi serta menggalakkan pemformalan dan pertumbuhan perusahaan mikro, kecil dan sederhana termasuk akses kepada perkhidmatan kewangan. (Buku Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan 2030, URBANICE MALAYSIA, muka surat 19). Jika matlamat SDG 8 ini dapat dicapai, ianya sekaligus akan meningkatkan persepsi masyarakat terhadap pesakit penyalahgunaan dadah terutama pelanggan methadone.

MYSDG MEMBANTU PROJEK KEBUN FITNEZZ BYRUZYAN AKTIVITI DI BAWAH PEMADAM DKM

Bantu kami 1: Geran Kebun Komuniti

MySDG ada menyediakan geran kebun komuniti yang mana ianya dapat digunakan untuk mewujudkan tapak semeaian benih dan kebun untuk tanaman tembikai di dalam kawasan sekolah yang terpilih. MySDG ada membuka peluang memohon geran sehingga RM40,000 bagi satu projek dan jumlah itu dapat membina dua tapak kebun di dua buah sekolah menengah atau setaraf. Satu tapak akan melibatkan 1 orang AJK PEMADAM DKM, 1 orang Guru Penasihat kelab, 3 orang pelanggan Methadone dan 20 orang pelajar tingkatan 1 mendaftar sebagai ahli "KEBUN FITNEZZ CLUB".

PEMADAM DKM mensasarkan sehingga Disember 2024 terdapat 5 buah sekolah dalam Daerah Kuala Muda bersetuju untuk terlibat dalam projek Kebun Fitnezz by Ruzyan ini. Sebagai permulaan, MySDG boleh membantu menjayakan projek ini dengan meluluskan peruntukan geran 2024 sejumlah RM100,000.00 untuk projek Kebun Fitnezz ini dalam Daerah Kuala Muda.

Bantu kami 2: Geran Pusat Pembangunan Komuniti

MySDG boleh membantu dari segi peruntukan untuk menyediakan Pusat Pembangunan Komuniti lengkap dengan peralatan-peralatan penyediaan tanah kompos & mesin-mesin berkapasiti tinggi bagi menghasilkan buku-buku berkait Kebun Fitnezz by Ruzyan. Tempat ini juga akan menjadi tempat perkumpulan semua ajk PEMADAM DKM, guru-guru penasihat, pelanggan methadone, ibubapa dan para pelajar yang terlibat dengan projek ini. Cadangan ianya ditempatkan di salah sebuah sekolah terlibat yang memberi kebenaran dan mempunyai ruang bersesuaian.

Pusat Pembangunan Komuniti ini perlu bagi pelanggan methadone berkerja menghasilkan tanah kompos khas yang akan digunakan ke semua tapak Kebun Fitnezz by Ruzyan di sekolah-sekolah. Penghasilan

tanah kompos ini juga digunakan oleh pelanggan methadone untuk menghasilkan tanaman sendiri di rumah masing-masing. Tanah kompos yang dihasilkan, digunakan sebagai bahan pembelajaran Modul Perkebunan dan Kecergasan dan satu dari produk jualan.

Selain itu, Pusat Pembangunan Komuniti ini juga dijadikan kilang percetakan mini bagi mencetak makalah-makalah pendidikan yang terkait dengan Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan. Ianya akan ditulis oleh mereka yang terlibat kemudian dijilid sebagai buku yang juga boleh digunakan sebagai satu lagi produk jualan untuk diguna dalam pembelajaran Modul Komunikasi Perniagaan dan Jualan.

Pusat Pembangunan Komuniti menjadi tempat perkongsian ilmu dan penghasilan produk-produk Kebun Fitnezz ini merupakan perkara MySDG boleh bantu bagi melengkapi projek ini secara holistik.

Bantu kami 3: Tajaan tenaga pengajar dan sesi latihan Pembangunan Komuniti Mampan

MySDG boleh membantu dengan menaja penghantar tenaga pengajar ke Pusat Pembangunan Komuniti secara berkala bagi menerangkan serta memberi semangat kepada semua yang terlibat dengan Kebun Fitnezz byRuzyan ini menghayati SDG's. Ini penting bagi memastikan setiap peserta faham dari "orang HQ" MySDG's sendiri bahawa projek yang dijalankan ini adalah berkait dengan agenda pembangunan mampan negara malah dunia. Secara tidak langsung ianya menjadi pemangkin untuk konsep SDG's ini dijadikan gaya hidup setiap peserta terutama pelajar-pelajar sekolah yang menjadi ahli Kebun Fitnezz Club.

PROJEK KEBUN FITNEZZ BYRUZYAN DI BAWAH PERSATUAN MENCEGAH DADAH (PEMADAM) SEBELUM TAHUN 2030

PEMADAM DKM mengharapkan Kebun Fitnezz ByRuzyan ini menjadi projek yang berjaya di Daerah Kuala Muda. Pada Disember 2025, 60% sekolah, institusi pendidikan dalam Daerah Kuala Muda bersetuju

untuk mewujudkan "Kebun Fitnezz Club" sebagai salah satu kelab ko-kurikulum rasmi dan membenarkan satu ruang tapak samaian dan tanaman tembikai.

Semua pelanggan methadone yang tergolong dalam golongan B40, asnaf dan miskin dapat dilibatkan dalam projek ini seterusnya berjaya bangkit keluar dari kancas kemiskinan dan meningkatkan taraf hidup mereka.

Pelanggan methadone yang berjaya dilantik sebagai Guru Pelatih "Kebun Fitnezz Club" bagi PEMADAM daerah lain dalam Negeri Kedah. Tahun 2026, projek ini mula dijadikan menjadi projek wajib bagi PEMADAM setiap daerah dalam Negeri Kedah dan tidak keterlaluan dengan kejayaan projek ini adalah berkat usaha kecil dimulakan oleh mereka dari Daerah Kuala Muda seterusnya penyumbang sesuatu yang penting kepada kejayaan Pembangunan Komuniti Mampan SDG's di Malaysia dan mungkin di peringkat dunia pada tahun 2030 nanti.

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Part 7:
**Empowering through Tourism &
Education to Overcome Poverty**

Chapter 16

Alleviating Poverty in Rural Tourism Destination: The Progress and Challenges for Kadamaian and Kiulu in Sabah

Yuzainy Janin, Kamarul Mizal Marzuki, Faerozh Madli, Awangku Hassanal Bahar Pg Bagul, Noor Fzlinda Fabiel, Mori Kogid & Marry Tracy Pawan

ABSTRACT

This paper is based on findings of our study funded by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) entitled *Sustainable Tourism Development for Poverty Alleviation*. The project was concluded at the end of 2020. The study location involved Kadamaian and Kiulu, two state constituency in Sabah located some 85 km and 47 km for Kota Kinabalu respectively. In 2019, Kadamaian recorded 217,000 tourist arrivals with RM2.57 million in tourism revenue while Kiulu received 54,000 tourists with RM5.45 million in tourism income. The focus of this paper is to share findings that hoped to provide some micro perspective related to this favorable development, as well as highlight the challenges associated with these two rural tourism destinations. From this study, we come to conclude that tourism should not be seen on its own as ‘the answer’ to the elimination of poverty but it can make a powerful contribution. The potential to develop more tourism and to channel a higher percentage of tourism spending towards the poor may be great in some areas and quite small in others. However, given the size of the sector, even small changes in approach when widely applied can make a significant difference.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty alleviation through tourism has been practiced by developing countries since the 1960s. However it is only in the last 10 years that it has become an academic discipline. Much like the terms “eco-tourism” and “sustainability” many academics debated what actually

constitutes pro poor tourism. In case of pro-poor/sustainable tourism, the local and international businesses should operate ethically and with integrity. The company should bring benefits to the community and must be environmentally responsible. But many argue that because foreign and private sector interests often the driver of tourism, it is not well placed to contribute much to poverty elimination. However, work on pro poor tourism has identified several reasons why tourism seems to be particularly relevant to poverty reduction and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2003).

The confluence of tourism and poverty, previously two separate domains (Bowden, 2005), reflects an essential change in the philosophy of tourism development and poverty alleviation. Traditionally, regional economic growth is predominantly set as the premier target of local tourism development, while poverty alleviation is either considered a sub-goal or a natural outcome of regional economic growth (Ashley et. al., 2000; Deloitte & Touche et. al., 1999). In contrast, contemporary approaches, for example, pro-poor tourism and ST-EP, aim to establish a direct link between tourism and poverty alleviation and emphasise the voices and needs of the poor in tourism development (Ashley et. al., 2001; UNWTO, 2002).

In contemporary approaches, the poor become the focus of concern; whether they can reap net benefits from tourism now is the primary criterion for justify any tourism-based development initiative. Such a new philosophy is believed to greatly enhance the chance of the poor to benefit from tourism (Hall, 2007). World Tourism Organization and ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty) advocate:

1. Employment of the poor in tourism enterprises.
2. Supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the poor or by enterprises employing the poor.

3. Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor (international economy) Establishment and running of tourism enterprises by the poor- for example micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs), or community-based enterprises (formal economy)
4. Tax or levy on tourism income or profits with proceeds benefiting the poor.
5. Voluntary giving/ support by tourism enterprises and tourists.
6. Investment in infrastructure stimulated by tourism also benefiting the poor in the locality, directly or through support to other sectors.

Yotsumoto (2007) argues that the more immediate approach to alleviate poverty is consciously targeting the poor in tourism development. This approach is called pro-poor tourism, a relatively new perspective in development. It is a promising idea for the poor. In the present world there are many organizations involved in poverty alleviation through tourism. For example, NGOs such as the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) have engaged in tourism projects in The Gambia, Vietnam, Laos, and South Africa. Finance organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Caribbean Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund are also involved in poverty alleviation projects in the Caribbean, Philippines, Cape Verde, Tanzania and Kenya. Developed countries such as Canada, Australia, USA and New Zealand also have agencies with projects many countries such as Nepal Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, India and Vietnam.

POVERTY ERADICATION INITIATIVES

Poverty eradication have always been in the agenda at the national and state level in Malaysia. As indicated in Table 1, poverty eradication programme has been implemented and can be categorized under several different names.

Table 16.1. Categories of Poverty Eradication Programmes in Malaysia

1.	Programme for the Provision of Basic Facilities, Social Infrastructure and Social Services
2	Productivity Improvement Programme
3	Land Reform Programme
4	Income Increase Programme (in the Form of Financial Assistance)
5.	Special Programme for the Poorest People - Development Programme for the Poorest People
6.	Special Programme for the Poorest People - People's Welfare Development Scheme

Source: Modified from Asnarulkhandi, (2010)

Adapted from Shah, J. M., Hussin, R., & Idris, A. (2023)

The eKasih National Poverty Data Bank, Malaysia introduced in 2007, is a database system that was developed to assist the government of Malaysia to be better able to plan, implement and monitor poverty eradication programs at the national level, and thus, improve the effectiveness of such programs. Information in Table 2 was sourced from eKasih depicting the total of poor and hardcore poor head household by district in Sabah.

As of 24 April 2024, news was released nationwide that the Sabah government will be prioritising giving land ownership for Native Title and Field Register as among none of the state government commitment to eradicate poverty (hmetro.com.my). This may be considered as the ultimate initiative that is hoped to pave way towards poverty eradication in the state given the association of Sabah being in list of Malaysia's poorest state. As further disclosed by Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli published on 14 March 2024 in www.nst.com.my (a) highlighting the rate of hardcore poverty in Sabah stands at 1.2 per cent in stark contrast to the national rate of 0.2 per cent with eight Sabah districts was higher than the national rate, with Tongod being the highest at 5.9 per cent, followed by Beluran (5 per cent), Pitas (4.8 per cent), Kinabatangan (4.6 per cent), Kota Marudu (4 per cent), Tuaran (2.6 per cent), as well as Ranau and Lahad Datu at 2.4 per cent

each. The release of this lists is not without reverb demanding further clarification whilst to some it is a welcome disclosure as it bring their district to the limelight and development radar.

It is at this end, where tourism brought to the stage, where it is introduced and hail as the saviour to this predicament. As a retaliation to the 14 March 2024 disclosure related to poverty, approximately two weeks later published at www.nst.com.my (b) a revelation made by Sabah Tourism Board chairman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai stated that Sabah Tourism Board recorded a total of 133 rural tourism products which also include those located in the listed 10 poorest district as highlighted by Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli previously. In this case, this clearly recognised that tourism is the knight in the shining armour for poverty.

MILESTONES DEVELOPMENT

Kadamaian

In congruent to that welcomed positive development associated to Kadamaian is the revelation of Kadamaian Development Masterplan 2020-2035 and the launced of three projects by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi on the upgrade the Kadamaian Rural Road (JLB), namely Jalan Tengkurus Lahanas Siba-Lahanas Sokid and Jalan Sayap which are already in the process of implementation and Jalan Podos Taginambur which is in the process of appointing a contractor(www.nabalunews.com).

Kiulu

As for Kiulu the transitioned of Kiulu Farmstay from Borneo Eco Tours to the local communities on 15 June 2023, after eight years being mentored is a welcomed shift aims to give local communities greater control over their products and foster cultural preservation in line with efforts towards community empowerment and sustainable tourism (www.thestar.com.my).

With all the pieces coincidentally fall in its places, therefore by connecting the dots including the study we conducted concluded before the pandemic halted, hence the objective of this paper is to share findings the extent how tourism may have contributed towards poverty alleviation in a state constituency of Kadamaian near Kota Belud and small town of Kiulu in district of Tuaran.

THE LOCATIONS

In Sabah, rural tourism has moved many rural villagers particularly in Kadamaian and Kiulu area into taking the opportunity to generate income and create quality tourism products in line with the state government's effort to develop rural tourism and elevate the people's economic status. In 2017, Kadamaian recorded 90,000 tourist arrivals with RM900,000 in tourism revenue while Kiulu received 53,000 tourists with RM4.3 million in tourism income (www.nst.com.my (c)).

As depicted in Figure 1, geographically both locations are essentially neighbour, with a straight-line distance of 21 km. However, based on Google Map, road access distance between these two locations increased to to about 50 km. Nevertheless, these two locations are categorised as rural areas, with a distance from the capital city of Kota Kinabalu with a mere 49 km and 70 km from Kiulu and Kadamaian respectively. It can be safely declared that majority of the population inhabiting Kadamaian and Kiulu are from Kadazandusun ethnicity.

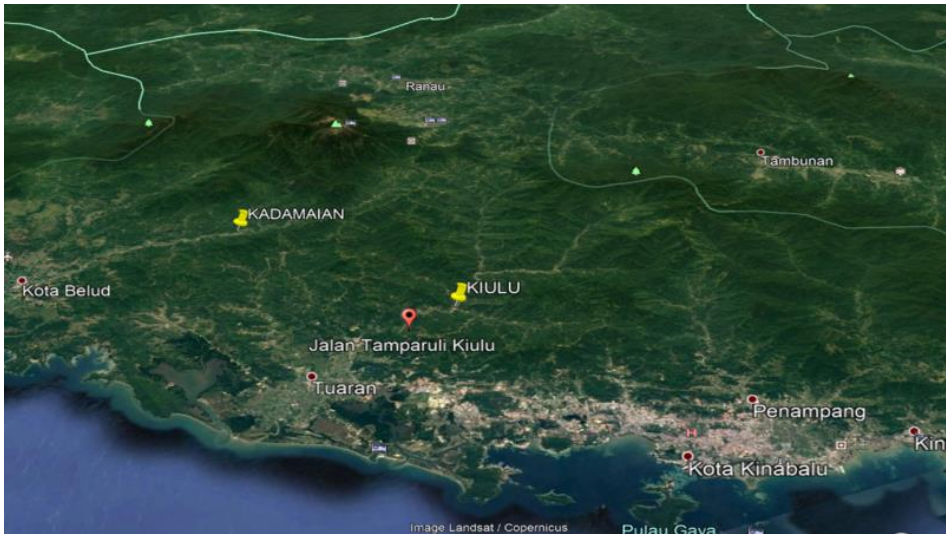


Figure 16.1. Location of Kadamaian and Kiulu

Source: Google Earth

As the largest 'mukim' in the district constituency of Tuaran, Kiulu has a land area of 647 square kilometre consisted of 105 villages (<http://pdkkiulu.sabah.gov.my>) and reported in 2023 the total population of about 17,300 inhabitants (<https://pdkkiulu.sabah.gov.my/>). On the other hand, the state constituency, Kadamaian, include a comparatively slightly larger area of 818 square kilometre but with 74 villages and a total of about 35,000 inhabitants as at 2019 (www.bharian.com.my). As a landlock locations surrounded by hills and jungle it is relatable that most of the economic activities in these two locations revolved around agriculture.

THE TOURISM PRODUCTS

Tourism products in Kadamaian and Kiulu are essentially similar, such as 1) recreational activities that revolve around river 2) adventurous activity such as hiking due geographical setting of the areas that consists of mainly hills and jungles. The availability of homestay which also can be found among the product offering there is a competitive advantage as homestay operation is able to create more job opportunity such as cooks, housekeeping and food supplier

(homestay could be a product on its own in term of cultural attraction) in a destination.

One obvious observation from tourism products at the two location is the community-operated tourism business (community-based tourism). Nevertheless, exemplary role of third-party involvement such as Borneo Ecotours in developing Kiulu Farmstay is an example on the importance of collaboration to ensure rural tourism could benefit to wider beneficiaries.

Table 16.2. Tuaran-Kiulu tourism products

1	Moninduk Sirung Kg Tiong Temburong
2	Kaliposuan Recreation View
3	Mitabang Homestay
4	Dapako Hill Lingga Eco-Tourism
5	Pusat Rekreasi Bambang Lama
6	Tongkoluson Campsite
7	Kiulu Farmstay
8	Kampung Stay Tombung
9	Sinorut Eco-Tourism
10	Lambing Park Eco-Tourism
11	Tukad Gonipis Sandangau
12	Pomompahunyan Sinompuruan Campsite
13	Sinansag Eco-Tourism
14	Lubok Riverside Campsite and Recreation Centre
15	Lokub Eco-Tourism
16	Ratau Eco-Tourism
17	Poturidong River and Nature Hike
18	Tagahas Cultural Group Pukak Village
19	Talantang Eco-Tourism

Source: <https://www.theborneopost.com>, 2024

From these two lists, another apparent repetition is the use of the word 'ecotourism' in the trade name the operating organizations. Ecotourism is now defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015). Education is meant to be inclusive of both staff and guests.

Table 16.3. Kadamaian tourism products

1	Miki Survival Camp	33	Gulliver Campsite
2	Guas Nabalu Homestay	34	Taginambur River Parks (Taripa)
3	Eko Pelancongan Kg. Kiau Teburi	35	Koperasi Masyarakat Tuguson Kota Belud Berhad
4	Eko Pelancongan Gompito	36	Pusat Pelancongan Komuniti Gaur
5	Dallas Kinabalu Waterfall	37	Uwogu ku Silou Silou
6	Eko Pelancongan Koung Ulu (KUETO)	38	Koperasi Pinolobu Berhad
7	Tanak Nabalu Homestay (TANAH)	39	Koperasi Fokus Kg Sayap KB Berhad
8	Podos Tourism & Heritage (POTHA)	40	Kowotuan Eco-Edu Tourism
9	Nopungguk Homestay	41	Aura Montoria Eco Edu Tourism
10	Norioucraft & Eco Tourism (NCET)	42	EkoPelancongan Pinonuntungan
11	Eko Pelancongan Kg. Melangkap Tiong	43	Eko Pelancongan Tagal Kg. Terintidon
12	Paramat Garden	44	Kilabi Batu Manggoi Trail, KB
13	Nahandang Melangkap Homestay & Campsite	45	Eko Pelancongan Tagal Kg. Talungan
14	Kisakot Camp Site	46	Kolam Polumpung Sumondot Wariou
15	Laini Homestay	47	View Valley Village (3v)
16	Eko Pelancongan Nohutu	48	Tegudon Tourism Village (TTV)
17	Mandahatan Melangkap Guest House	49	Rest & Joy Riverside Retreat Tourism
18	Juliet Melangkap Homestay	50	Eko Pelancongan Kalangadanku
19	Edna Melangkap Homestay	51	Singgah Wariou

20	Tongee Waigenatai Retreat Centre	52	Eko Pelancongan Kg. Lahanas Sokid
21	Melangkap Nabalua Rafflesia (MNR) Campsite & Homestay	53	Eko Pelancongan Pitimungan Lahanas
22	Lisa Melangkap Homestay	54	Eko Pelancongan Tomodu Paradise
23	Win Homestay	55	Eko Pelancongan Kg. Piasau
24	Sondot View Camp	56	Rumah Keramat Dudan
25	Topi Raja Mountain River	57	Mupu Upu Hill Gonok Gonti
26	Koperasi Pelancongan Tagal Kg. Lingkubang Kota Belud Berhad	58	Kapaladan Eko Tourism
27	Minakit Retreat	59	Taburan Beach Eco Tourism
28	Aki Nabalua Homestay & Rekreasi	60	Tempasuk Guest House KB Karanahan View
29	Eko Pelancongan Kg. Bayayat	61	Datau Nakapan Eco Tourism
30	Eco Camp Bayayat Kadamaian	62	Eva Homestay
31	Carpernaum Garden	63	Panansarayo Trail
32	Tahkitha		

Source: Author, 2019

CHALLENGES TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Given the existing highlighted scenario at Kadamaian and Kiulu. The quest towards poverty alleviation indeed exists. For example, support from federal and state government in terms of financial assistance, marketing and capacity building, accessibility improvement, attraction offerings, infrastructure development, alliances with third party, as well as formation of community-based enterprises. It may be safe to regard that to an extent poverty alleviation did took place. Nevertheless, findings from our study conclude two challenges towards an impactful poverty alleviation by capitalizing tourism as the mean;

1. Hindrance to involved in income generating tourism activities.
 - a. Having to shift to a job that require new skill sets create uncertainty. For example, customer service. Communication skill, cultural sensitivity. Language proficiency, problem-solving abilities, organization skills knowledge of destinations, sales and marketing skills, adaptability, teamwork, leadership skills and so on
 - b. Unsure about stability of income from tourism as it is subject to seasonality. Seasonality refers to the fluctuation in tourist arrivals and activities based on the time of year. The tourism industry often experiences periods of high demand (peak season) and low demand (off-peak season) throughout the year, resulting in fluctuations in visitor numbers, prices, and availability of services.
 - c. Limited knowledge about job available and compatible to venture.

2. Limited number of job opportunity able to be provided in the primary attraction/destination.
 - a. A primary tourism attraction refers to the main feature or destination that draws visitors to a particular area. It is typically the highlight or focal point of a tourism experience. The reliance on primary attraction/destination as the sole job creator as there is lack of or no secondary attraction available.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

1. A targeted tourism career awareness programme to instil awareness and inspire can be organised and followed by a mentoring or coaching to guide targeted intended individual to start his or her venture in tourism career.

2. Identifying and developing secondary attraction in the vicinity or route are to primary attraction may be able to create and supply additional job opportunities. This will ease the reliance on job creation solely on primary attraction. A tourism route, also known as a tourist route or tourist trail, refers to a predefined itinerary or path that connects multiple tourist attractions, landmarks, or destinations. These routes are designed to guide travelers through a specific region or area, showcasing its cultural, historical, natural, or recreational attractions.
3. Community formed organization such as Kadamaian Tourism Association and Kiulu Tourism Association are examples of platform that could play a major role reaching out to their community and become the lead of tourism initiative in their respective local area. Therefore, it is imperative to build the capacity of community association towards becoming empowered and self-sustain.

CONCLUSION

Poverty alleviation is the process of reducing and ultimately eradicating poverty in all its forms, aiming to improve the well-being and quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. The association of poverty and rural area is a typical postulation but somewhat it is aggregable and has its basis. When tourism is brought into the equation to alleviate (not eradicate) rural poverty, the effort identifying potential rural destination and eventually developing it should consider firstly consider whether an identified attraction is able to attract international, national or only local market (Sabahan and vicinity districts). This is because the nature of tourism attraction falls into it is natural attraction or man-made attraction. Even more when the concept of eco-tourism and sustainability being added into the equation the element of carrying-capacity must be adhered. Ultimately the expected end result of poverty alleviation would always prioritise

the financial improvement, which mean the only way is through creation of job opportunity and eventually have the targeted community categorised as poor fill these job supply.

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Chapter 17

Does community-based tourism suffer with the absent of resilience? Case studies of self-funded community-based tourism ventures in Kelantan

Velan Kunjuraman, Raja Norliana Raja Omar & Zakiyah Taharim

ABSTRACT

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a tourism segment managed and coordinated by destination communities in rural areas in many developing countries. It is well-known in Southeast countries, namely Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and is fully managed by local communities. According to tourism scholars, CBT in developing countries delivers many socioeconomic benefits to rural communities, allowing them to continue their livelihoods and become more resilient. Nevertheless, the CBT scheme is not free from challenges to remain sustainable. On the other hand, it is evident that CBT and its actors have a high level of resilience to stay afloat during crises and continue to flourish and empirical evidence on this issue is still scarce in the previous literature. Therefore, this study addresses this void by exploring the success of CBT and its resilience factors using case studies from Kelantan, Malaysia. Using qualitative inquiry with three CBT entrepreneurs, the findings identify several internal and external resilience factors which are become a pillar of CBT success and remain active amid of COVID-19 pandemic. This study offers readers an understanding of the resilience factors owned by the CBT entrepreneurs at this critical time and serves as a reminder to all small tourism businesses about the potential challenges in their business recovery and the need for feasible management strategies for a probable future crisis.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has gained significant attention worldwide to become a major contribution for other economic sectors, rural development, and sustainability. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council report in 2021, tourism in 2019 had a significant impact, contributing US\$8.9 trillion to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which represented 10.3% of the world's GDP, creating 330 million jobs, and accounting for one in every ten jobs across the globe (Dias et al., 2022). Despite that, rural tourism has a significant impact on rural economic development and sustainable livelihood, thus community-based tourism (CBT) through National Tourism Policy 2020-2030 and continuous development of homestay support activities at various villages around Malaysia is actively supported by Malaysia government (Azmi & Ahmad, 2022).

CBT has gained significant attention in recent years as a sustainable tourism model that empowers local communities, environmental sustainability, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes economic development in rural areas. CBT is an alternative form of tourism that is managed and coordinated by owners and destination communities, rather than by external tourism companies (Giampiccoli et al., 2020). In many developing countries, CBT has become a viable option for rural communities to engage in tourism activities while preserving their traditional way of life (Zielinski et al., 2021). This model of tourism has been successfully implemented in Southeast countries, such as Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, where local communities have taken full control of tourism activities and have reaped many socioeconomic benefits (Trupp, et al., 2020). Despite the potential benefits of CBT in developing countries, the rural tourism model is not without challenges. To remain sustainable, CBT must overcome various obstacles, including limited resources, lack of funding, poor infrastructure, and the need for capacity-building initiatives. Moreover, CBT entrepreneurs must be resilient and adaptive to overcome potential setbacks, such as natural disasters,

economic downturns and uncertainty such as the pandemics like COVID-19.

Since the first recorded case of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Hubei, China in December 2019, the pandemic has impacted many aspects of global livelihood and public health, with no reservation to the travel and tourism industry. Based on a report by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2020), the global inbound and outbound expenditure was forecasted to plummet by 60–80% due to travel restrictions imposed by many countries, including those of key players in global tourism and economies, and this has since affected other smaller countries that rely heavily on international tourism (Abbas et al., 2021). The spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which infects the human respiratory system and causes the coronavirus disease, has jolted the world in recent years (COVID-19). This outbreak is classified as a health-related crisis (Berebekova et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is essential to explore the resilience factors that enable CBT entrepreneurs to succeed and sustain their businesses, even in times of crisis. Previous CBT survival resilience studies have focused on community resilience in various contexts such as forest farms (Herman, 2016), shocks and global changes (Shwarz, et al. 2011), and community perceptions towards resilience (Bec, et al. 2018). Thus, there is a significant scarcity of research on CBT resilience in Malaysia which focuses on discovering the fostering factors of CBT resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The knowledge gap is especially notable due to the various challenges encountered by CBT entrepreneurs in Malaysia, such as entrepreneurial capability, insufficient local capacity, dependency syndrome, ineffective leadership and organisation, limited understanding of the market, inadequate targeted marketing, shortage of trained human resources, and concerns regarding safety and security (Hamzah & Mohamad, 2012; Kunjuraman, et al. 2015; Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017).

This study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on CBT by investing in the success of CBT in Kelantan, Malaysia which has retained its business operation through the crisis and its resilience factors. Kelantan is a state located in the northeastern part of Malaysia, where CBT has been uniquely implemented as a sustainable tourism model. By conducting qualitative research with seven CBT entrepreneurs, the current study identifies the internal and external resilience factors that contribute to the success of CBT in Kelantan. The findings of this study offer insights into the potential challenges faced by small tourism businesses and the need for feasible management strategies to overcome these challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the COVID-19 outbreak towards the end of 2019, the disruption of global flows and mobility has triggered economic loss to the tourism industry (Gössling, et al., 2020), affected human freedom and travelling rights (Baum & Hai, 2020), while also challenging public services and hospitality (Anguera-Torrell et al., 2021), job precariousness (Allan & Blustein, 2022), and emotional health and wellbeing (Lades et al., 2020). The pandemic impacted smaller establishments business, including CBT operations (Noorashid & Chin, 2021).

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a type of tourism that emphasises community involvement and ownership in the development and management of tourism activities (Lo & Janta, 2020). CBT has gained popularity in recent years as a sustainable form of tourism that can provide economic benefits to local communities while promoting cultural and environmental conservation (Mtapuri et al., 2022). In Kelantan, Malaysia, CBT has been implemented to promote rural development, alleviate poverty and reduce income gap. Kelantan is a state in Malaysia known for its rich cultural heritage and natural resources. The state has implemented various initiatives to promote CBT, including homestay programs and cultural tourism activities.

These initiatives have been successful in attracting tourists to the region and providing economic opportunities for local communities. However, being in the poorest states in Malaysia (Mustapa et al, 2018), CBT entrepreneurs basically operate in vulnerable ecosystems with infrastructure problems such as flood problems, lack of clean water supply and poor road quality (Ismail & Ariffin, 2021). Despite operating in poor conditions and struggling with pandemic impact, the CBT entrepreneur has shown strong resilience skills. Therefore, their resilience factors are significant to be further investigated.

Entrepreneur resilience is critical for the success and sustainability of small businesses, including those in the tourism industry (Abonil et al., 2023). Entrepreneur resilience refers to the ability of entrepreneurs to adapt and recover from challenges and setbacks in their business ventures (Zhao & Wibowo, 2021). It involves the capacity to overcome obstacles, manage stress, and maintain a positive outlook in the face of adversity. Entrepreneur resilience is a critical factor in the success and sustainability of small businesses, including those in the tourism industry. Entrepreneur resilience is required throughout the lifespan of a business venture, from the initial planning and development stages to ongoing operations and growth (Badzaban et al., 2021). Entrepreneur resilience is facilitated through a range of interpersonal characteristics, strategies and practices, including the development of strong support networks, the cultivation of positive attitudes and mindsets, the adoption of flexible and adaptive business models, and the implementation of effective risk management strategies. It involves ongoing learning and development, as well as the ability to identify and capitalize on opportunities for growth and innovation (Prasanna Pattanayak & Padhy, 2023).

However, some self-funded CBT ventures have shown resilience by adapting to the new normal, such as by offering online experiences or focusing on domestic tourism. Resilient entrepreneurs are more agile and flexible in times of adversity than non-resilient ones and have a

higher propensity to take actions (Gorgievski and Stephan, 2016), which promotes the capabilities of coping and adaptation with regards to organisational resilience. Recent studies highlight that crisis and resilience are two sides of the same coin (Doern et al., 2019; Herbane, 2019). Resilience refers to “the process by which an actor (individual, organization, or community) builds and uses its capability endowments to interact with the environment in a way that positively adjusts and maintains functioning prior to, during, and following adversity” (Williams et al., 2017: 742). The survival ability of small enterprises, such as the CBT businesses, to withstand COVID-19 challenges and recover primarily relies on entrepreneurial resilience capability (Branicki et al., 2018). According to Kromidha & Bachtiar (2024), the importance of business survival during the current crisis is how entrepreneurs acquiring resilience skills in uncertain environments demands further investigation. Entrepreneurial resilience such as personal characteristics, mindset and psychological traits, shape how business owner reacts and respond to challenging conditions, thereby making their business more robust.

Meanwhile, entrepreneur resilience is affected by social networks which is the social capital which helps business owners build the resilience ecosystem. According to Setini et al., (2020), entrepreneurship and social capital are the main factors that drive SMEs’ innovation and performance. Additionally, (Elshaer & Saad, 2022) identified three key entrepreneurial actions that can be taken in response to crises, including planning activities and resources, adopting a frugal approach in managing resources, and managing human and social capital with emotional openness and sharing feelings (Elshaer & Saad, 2022). Social capital support improves the cognitive action and entrepreneurial mindset of businesses, it is necessary to overcome the dangers associated with following established paths. This will ultimately enhance their ability to innovate and ensure business survival and sustainability (Shan & Tian, 2022). Thus, empirical research has demonstrated that social capital

enhances entrepreneurial action and decision-making and assists them in successfully navigating their business towards survivability (Dinh et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the resilience of CBT ventures during the COVID-19 pandemic is a critical topic that requires attention (Mirtsch et al., 2023). Thus, the present study will propose a framework which provides a valuable tool for future researchers to study the resilience of CBT ventures and address the challenges posed by unexpected events.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterised by an exploratory design that utilises a qualitative approach. The interview protocol incorporates open-ended questions, with some of these questions adapted from existing literature sources (Adam & Alarifi, 2021; Najib et al., 2021, Yang & Yu, 2020). In this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen to elicit comprehensive and in-depth insights from a sufficiently substantial group of participants. Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews offer enhanced flexibility, enabling the interviewer to ask follow-up questions when clarification or additional relevant information is needed. Besides, purposively sampling was employed, involving the selection of seven CBT entrepreneurs. The criteria for participant selection were based on CBT entrepreneurs, and their businesses must have been operational from the onset of COVID-19 in 2019 to the present.

The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each and were conducted in either Malay or English, depending on the preferences of the participants. The interview protocol was organised into two sections: business profile and the impact of COVID-19 on sustaining the business. The researcher individually examined the interview transcripts of the participants and employed content analysis to analyse the interview data. This process encompassed identification,

examination, comprehension, and interpretation of the meanings conveyed in the textual data transcripts from the field, aiming to provide coherent responses to the research questions.

Subsequently, a coding system was utilised to categorize the participants' responses. This process aimed to identify meaningful patterns and themes for further scrutiny and review. Cresswell (2009) concurred that while codes prove more convenient for covering a broader theoretical perspective in the research. To ensure the identification of appropriate thematic classifications, the researcher diligently repeated the process multiple times. Furthermore, a member's checking was carried out to assess the validity of the findings. To facilitate the analysis of the interview data, the participants were assigned codes, such as Participant A (PA), Participant B (PB), and Participant C (PC). Table 1 shows the CBT entrepreneur profile.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Three participants, identified as Participant A, Participant B, and Participant C, willingly took part in the interview sessions. Table 1.1 presents details about the CBT entrepreneurs who participated in this study. The findings align with the research objective and are organised around the themes derived from the data. Quotes from the participants substantiate each theme.

Table 17.1. Participant's Profile

PARTICIPANTS	LOCATION	AGE	GENDER	YEAR OF OPERATION
PA	Kubang Kerian, Kelantan	68	Female	15 years
PB	Kota Bharu, Kelantan	70	Male	23 years
PC	Ayer Lanas, Kelantan	64	Male	6 years

The results of the interviews indicate that all participants acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their ventures, with each reporting a significant decline in revenues and operational disruption ventures resilience. They faced an unusual difficulty with the COVID-19 epidemic, but they demonstrated adaptability and resilience to keep their ventures running. According to Abonil et al. (2023), the personal traits of a business owner have a big impact on how quickly the business can change, recover, and develop. The main findings are described as follows:

Entrepreneur Personal Characteristics

The impact of the pandemic on community-based tourism has been significant. However, according to findings, the CBT business owners have been able to pivot and adapt to the new circumstances by utilising their internal and external resources and capabilities they have. Entrepreneur resilience capability has strengthened the CBT ventures to effectively respond to sudden changes and continue to sustain their business operation. The key factor that contributes to CBT business survival is the resilience of entrepreneurs are shown through their perseverance, entrepreneurial passion, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial creativity.

Perseverance

Despite encountering obstacles, the participants demonstrate a relentless determination in their endeavor to attain their target. In other words, resilience CBT entrepreneurs will not attempt to avoid or give in to the pressures they encounter but will instead overcome them by setting meaningful goals. According to Hartman (2022), business owners who exhibit perseverance behavior demonstrate enhanced survival capabilities in unpredictable environments. The following quote provides the scenario;

“For survivability ... we create a concept near here, the concept of self-sufficiency.” [PA]

"Some people decided to close, right but we didn't close... So, we keep that happening even if we are in a difficult situation." [PB]

"...but I insisted on doing it until today..." [PC]

Entrepreneurial Passion

Entrepreneurial passion defined as "consciously accessible intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur" (Cardon et al., 2009, p. 517). Under this definition, entrepreneurial passion is seen as arising when the entrepreneur exhibits intense positive feelings towards a specific entrepreneurial activity or "domain" they undertake in relation to their entrepreneurial venture, such as inventing, founding, and developing, and considers that the activity or "domain" is central to their self-identity (Cardon et al., 2013). The results of the interviews indicate that the participants had positive feelings about their ventures in CBT to become resilient. They show that they are able to keep their passion in CBT ventures. The participants made the following statement;

"...originally Min House Camp, we don't proposedly do it as business, we want to do it as family activities... as we are interested in (family gathering site)." [PA]

"I really see that the tourism sector is important... my intention is to help people in my village.. to help the community to get a job." [PB]

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1997). McGee *et al.* (2009), defined entrepreneurial self-efficacy as "a construct that measures a person's belief in their ability to successfully launch an entrepreneurial

venture." This belief is vital to succeed and acts as a forerunner to the entrepreneurial intentions i.e. the intention to engage in entrepreneurship (Sequeira *et al.*, 2007; Wilson *et al.*, 2007). Self-efficacy is an individual's estimation of his or her ability to perform a particular task (Gist and Mitchell, 1992). Bandura (2000) emphasised that self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to organise and carry out a series of actions required to achieve specific goals. McGee *et al.* (2009) define entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a person's belief in the roles and responsibilities of an entrepreneur. Some participants explained the matter;

"...they (children) don't help much and my family (relative) here doesn't help either.. I struggle on my own and do it my way with the help of the existing management (employee)." [PB]

"Because this place used to be where there were tigers and elephants, a place where no one dares to develop but I'm the main settler aaa.. to find ways to make it happen... to increase the economy of the community, I had made up my mind..." [PC]

Entrepreneurial Creativity

Entrepreneurial creativity is defined as the generation and implementation of novel and useful ideas for products, services and processes, as well as business models to establish a profit-making new venture (Amabile, 1996, pp. 1e15). Creative entrepreneurs need to develop a mix of creative and business skills at different stages of their careers (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999). Their dual role as an artist and at the same time as an entrepreneur requires creativity skills related to imagination, divergent thinking and intuition, as well as entrepreneurial skills and capacities in business planning, communication, management and marketing (Phillips, 2010). Creative entrepreneurs' networks seem to be critical for both artistic creativity and entrepreneurial alertness which are conducive to increased

entrepreneurial satisfaction and aspiration (Chen and Tseng, 2021). The following is the participant's statement;

"We don't have a problem because we do it naturally here, we do aquaponics... we do a self-sufficiency concept..." [PA]

"For your information I use my own principle. My name is A S R I.. I must be a Trustworthy person, I must be a Patient person, I must be Content, I must be Sincere and Istiqomah, I hold this principle." [PB]

"...I endorsed this idea to him... for us to open a different business to other people... That was in 2017" [PC]

Social Capital

Despite personal characteristics, the role of social capital support is crucial in understanding the response of CBT entrepreneurs towards the COVID-19 outbreak. Tiwari and Shruti (2022) argue that social capital plays a pivotal role encouraging the growth of resilience and favorably affecting the recovery process and subsequent action. According to Yetim (2008), social capital is a resource that is found in people's social networks and ties whether they are formal or informal. Social capital can offer two direct benefits which include information and influence that could be relevant to entrepreneurs (De Carolis and Saporito, 2006). Social capital is a resource that is owned by society in the form of norms or values that facilitate building cooperation through a harmonious and conducive network of interactions and communication that relies on cultural roots. The findings confirmed the importance of social capital to entrepreneur and business resilience (Shan & Tian, 2022). Following are the factors and the participants made the following statement;

Spouse and family support

Spouse and family support are crucial for entrepreneurs. Family plays an essential role in the entrepreneurial process because of robust

associations between family embeddedness in business and entrepreneurial actions or outcomes (Xu et al., 2020). Spouses and family members often provide emotional, financial, and practical support to entrepreneurs, which can have a substantial impact on their entrepreneurial journey (Welsh et al., 2021). The following is the participant's statement;

"Actually here, when we do little by little like that, when things have enough equipment, right.. so the two houses are from my pension money, the other side is my husband's pension money." [PA]

"Alhamdulillah with my wife around, we started to move and also towards change." [PB]

Community Support

Community support encompasses the network of individuals, organizations, and institutions within the local community that provide resources, assistance, and encouragement to entrepreneurs. Community support can take various forms, including access to networking opportunities, funding sources, and business incubators or accelerators. Research suggests that entrepreneurs who are embedded within supportive communities are more likely to succeed in their ventures. Supportive communities provide entrepreneurs with valuable social capital, facilitating access to information, expertise, and resources that can help them overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities. Additionally, community support fosters a sense of belonging and collaboration among entrepreneurs, which can lead to knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Furthermore, community support can contribute to the sustainability and growth of local economies by promoting entrepreneurship and creating job opportunities. The following is the participant's statement;

"The community is also involved.. like this river there are lokans. Villagers also come to collect lokan, and eat. near here we take care of their breeding." [PA]

"The surrounding community also helps indirectly." [PB]

Psychological & Emotional Stability

Spiritual

Spiritual defined as often have a deep connection with God and use it as a guide in their business decisions. The concept of spiritual leadership has received notable scholarly considerations since the 1980s, the earlier writings primarily relied on biblical principles to portray and operationalize the notion of spiritual leadership (Dibbert, 1989; Sanders, 1980; Townsend and Wichern, 1984). Entrepreneurial spirit is an attitude that exists in someone who is entrepreneurial to work more actively by devoting all the abilities he has in order to make his work finish faster with expected results (optimal). The spirit of work in the new normal era will motivate an entrepreneur to continue to survive despite these difficult and uncertain times (Hidayat et al., 2021). The following is the participant's statement;

"So, the most important thing is to pray to Allah and be patient ... be a human being who has a (positive) impact on others, you hold that principle, Insya Allah, Allah will provide you with generous sustenance." [PB]

"We focus on our practices so that Allah protects us, all the calamities that come, stress and so on. Even big problems become small. So, we ask Allah, no one else, right." [PC]

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is defined as focused on self-management and self-regulation of emotions and feelings, awareness of personal purpose and role. Generally, mindfulness refers to a receptive attention to and

an awareness of internal and external experiences as they occur (Brown et al., 2007). "Live in the present," which is an ancient piece of advice, has been corresponded by the ever increasingly popularity of mindfulness in both academic and practical fields. Much evidence has shown the associations of mindfulness with individuals' physical and psychological well-being (e.g., Keng et al., 2011; Hopwood and Schutte, 2017). Additionally, with regards to the antecedents of individual resilience, previous psychological research provided enough evidence that mindfulness plays a positive role for individuals in face of adversity and is positively related to individual resilience (Liu et al., 2022). The following is the participant's statement;

"I try to make it the purpose of my life that I have to guide myself, this is what I need to have until now. I live by the motto (Trust, Patience and Redha)." [PB]

"We must.. must be strong.. strengthen ourselves." [PC]

Overall, the findings show that three factors, namely entrepreneur personal characteristics, social capital, and psychology and emotional stability contribute to entrepreneur resilience in the CBT ventures during COVID-19. In times of adversity, CBT entrepreneurs with resilience

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of resilience in the tourism industry. Many CBT ventures in Kelantan have been affected by the pandemic, with travel restrictions and reduced demand for tourism services. Therefore, this study examines the CBT resilience factors among Kelantan entrepreneurs. The study indicates three key findings for CBT resilience factors which are entrepreneurial personal characteristics, psychological traits and social capital support. The internal capability and external support proposed the CBT resilience factors on how business owners were able to retain

business in the face of unforeseen challenges. The study helps scholars understand the importance of business owners' strengths and the social network support they received in developing ecotourism resilience during market uncertainty and environmental challenges. The theoretical insight gained from this study can help academics and practitioners alike to better understand the complexities of ecotourism, leading to the creation of more effective and sustainable ecotourism initiatives. Several limitations have been identified as the study employs a qualitative design and has been concentrating on Kelantan CBT owners. Therefore, it is suggested that future research to discover more resources and capabilities of CBT survivability.

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Chapter 18

Exploring the Empowerment of Knowledge Among the Indigenous Community of Kg Pabai Rembau Negeri Sembilan

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the development of the indigenous community in the struggle to explore knowledge. The goal of SDG 4, which is to ensure quality education coincides with this study where the experience of the researchers saw their determination and perseverance in demanding knowledge every week despite the squeeze of poverty and poverty because the average participant is self-employed and some rely only on day pay and the rest are still in school. The participants selected in this study were 20 people among them who were women, children and adolescents. Their learning centre is located in the nearby surau which is nearby. The government must look back at the convenience of their standard of living by providing more perfect, conducive and interactive learning initiatives so that these communities do not fall behind and thrive in tandem with other communities and nations. This is because their surau other than as a place of worship is also used as a learning centre which is seen as very dhaif and requires perfect infrastructure. In addition, the participants were also instructed to continue digging for knowledge despite having to sacrifice their daily work to get off every Saturday to attend the SDG-funded classes in the hope that some of them would be the catalyst to continue their learning sessions there even without any more tutors and be able to be independent and generate their income in the future. The expectation of resolving this issue is that the participants will be able to take advantage of all the omissions of

teaching and learning materials to be used in the future. The role of all parties in helping this community should be further enhanced regardless of government or non-governmental bodies. This is to ensure that they continue to love the knowledge and strong belief in them, especially among them. The strength of this research is due to the enthusiasm of the researchers who are willing to go down to the community every week despite having a busy schedule as a lecturer as well as the distance of a relatively remote location (Kuala Lumpur – Negeri Sembilan). It does not prevent the researchers from continuing to research and also to pour out knowledge. To support this community to survive is to continue to encourage and utilise the provisions given by the SDGs and thus stand on their own and contribute to the community from among them. The study was entirely qualitative, using interview methods as well as observation methods.

INTRODUCTION

Based on JAKOA data in 2014, 178,197 Orang Asli people live in peninsular Malaysia. (JAKOA e-Damak Information System 2014). The majority were from the state of Pahang at 67,506 people followed by Perak at 53,299. The least number of Orang Asli is Kedah at 270. While by tribe, the most populous population is Senoi (97,856), followed by Malay-Proto (75,332). The least is Negrito (5009). This statistic proves some parts of the Orang Asli settlement in Malaysia (Abdullah, I. N., & Don, A. G. H. (2019). With this data, the community has long established itself in Malaysia and is within its range, especially in rural areas and villages.

Therefore, this community should not be marginalised, especially in terms of intellect as well as the generation of knowledge. From the researchers' research, the average participant of this community had a high fighting spirit. It's just that in the early stages, they need to be guided and encouraged because some of them are too inferior and

shy to move forward. The funds provided by the SDGs are very helpful in making this programme a success.

This study discusses the exploration of efforts to strengthen knowledge through the learning classes of the indigenous community located in the rural areas of Negeri Sembilan, Rembau based at surau Al Hidayah, in Kg. Pabai. This programme is named the 3M Religious Development and Education Programme of the Orang Asli Community. A total of 20 selected participants participated in the SDG-funded programme. This Surau Al-Hidayah besides being a place of worship such as prayer, this surau is also used as a local learning centre for the community.

STUDY ISSUES

According to al-Qaradawi (1986), Humanitarian knowledge can be divided into several important aspects, namely related to the soul, society, and morality. All of this knowledge has a very important role in dealing with humans, especially the Orang Asli community who in nature have different ways of thinking, way of life and even the way they understand religion are also different (Abdullah, I. N., & Don, A. G. H. (2019). Therefore, knowing is important at all levels without being limited by other obstacles including the aspect of poverty.

On the initiative of that importance, this writing was highlighted to discuss that the issue of poverty faced by the community is not an obstacle and is an attempt to be overcome to participate in this 12-session learning programme on an ongoing basis. 20 participants were involved, 10 of whom were adult participants where two (2) day jobs i.e. village workers (there are jobs with salary), three (3) monthly salary people working as Assistants and Factory Operators and another five (5) non-working people. Another 10 are teenagers and children who are still in school (Shamsol, 2024).

Inland and remote areas are also among the issues identified in this study due to inadequate infrastructure and the placement of learning centers that need to be improved to ensure the smooth running of the learning process.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The programme runs for 12 sessions from January 2024 until April 2024 every Saturday. The community learning class is divided into 3 slots, namely the 3M Slot which focuses on learning English, Fardhu Ain Basic Slot and Study Slot. To ensure that this community is properly defended in exploring knowledge despite the poverty, it requires various approaches and roles that need to be played by all parties to ensure that the community continues to be literate in line with other communities in the country. The role of the SDGs in funding this programme can run smoothly means a lot to them in addition to valuable experience for us as researchers, instructors and programme management administrators.

Best Methods / Practices Taken by Communities for Survival

Through the observation of researchers throughout 12 sessions with the indigenous community there, they found that among the methods made by them was self-employment to cover the cost of living. In an interview with Mr. Shamsol, who is a civil servant at the Negeri Sembilan Islamic Religious Affairs Department (JHEINS) stated that on average they are self-employed and earn a day's salary, like "there is a job with a salary":

"Some are tapping rubber and indeed they depend on the day pay. With the provision of this attendance booster allowance to some extent ease their burden and enable them to take these learning classes..." (Shamsol, 2024).

Despite the assistance, incentives or initiatives that the government has put in place to help the local indigenous community, it cannot be

denied that it is still not enough to ensure their survival. The approach taken to get out of the daily problems by the participants was able to give them a little breath to survive while showing progress from the socio-economic point of view of the area itself. Those with skills on traditional knowledge that can be used to generate income such as the skills of knowing plants for planting and herbs. Some of the participants took the approach of collecting forest products such as yam to be sold to the farmers.

The work of tapping rubber depends on weather conditions and the quality of the planted rubber trees. Many hope to increase sales revenue to maintain their daily lives. Besides that, almost all the residents of Kampung Orang Asli Pabai receive financial assistance from the government such as Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BR1M) for each family. BR1M has now been renamed Bantuan Sara Hidup Rakyat (BSHR). However, it should be borne in mind that they should not rely too much on purely state assistance.

The method or practice taken by the participants is to work for her living even if a wife is not obliged to earn a living in the teachings of Islam, but to ensure a more secure survival, the choice to work is made. The best approach in their work is to take into account the geographical factors of the position of the living quarters and the surrounding areas that indirectly pattern their workings and thus ensure positive movement from a socio-economic point of view in their place. They are not very picky in finding work because of their educational background, but that is not their barrier to work. Jobs such as maintaining a grocery store, gardening or tapping rubber are enough for them to continue to be plagued by poverty.

The definition of progress is also often associated with the economic growth of a society (A. Samah & H. Hamsan, 2008). From this point of view, the researchers found that the definition of progress has been triggered by the economic growth rate that has existed among the

villagers including the participants involved in the programme. When there are job opportunities that are welcomed by the participants and the local indigenous community, this will provide an opportunity for progress from a small scale and can open their eyes to greater employment opportunities in the context of rural communities, especially for the indigenous community.

The well-being and quality of life of the Orang Asli community can be assessed through their socioeconomic circumstances. They are engaged in two main types of economic activity: those aimed at earning money, such as tapping rubber, and collecting rattan and cashews, and those focused on meeting daily needs, such as fishing, hunting, and collecting forest produce (Er Ah Choy et al., 2010). Research conducted by Kamal Solihin et al. (2016) shows that the Orang Asli community in the Belum-Temenggor Valley is involved in self-employment efforts such as agriculture, collecting forest products, and handicraft work. Therefore, the criteria used to assess their quality of life in the Kamal Solihin et al. study revolved around occupations that had daily wages and were self-employed. These criteria are demonstrated by the participants of this programme where their '*nature of work*' is indeed based on the same type of work and this job practice gives them the space to continue to have a decent life.

As a result of the researchers' research on the participants during these 12 sessions, although the average participants were categorized as economically incapable as well as the learning centre infrastructure facilities that needed improvement, we found that several potential participants had the talent to be highlighted as instructors as a result of the monitoring and performance shown throughout the learning session. The following are participants who are identified as having the potential and hope to generate their income in the future.

Table 18.1 Results of Participant Performance Review of the Knowledge Empowerment Process (Category Adult Women)

NAME	AGE	WORK	PERSONALITIES
Jumiah bt Chari	43 Years	Housewives	She is one of the oldest participants and is very committed and quick to catch every learning session
Rahanum Bunchit	44 Years	Housewives	She is categorized as simple, but able to help show teaching to other participants
Hatitah Bunchit	50 Years	Kemas Assistant	She was one of the active, easy-to-understand participants and was the leader among the women indigenous community there.

Table 18.2 Results of Participant Performance Review of the Knowledge Empowerment Process (Child / Teenagers Category)

NAME	AGE	WORK	PERSONALITIES
Aleeya Farhana Azrizan	16 Years	Still in school	Quickly catch and smart and can help tutor peers and the elderly
Muhammad Nadzmi Mohd Adzhar	15 Years	Still in school	Originally, the contestant was a bit shy, but from time to time he became more confident and had an intelligent mind.
Nur Aqilah Najwa Mohd Adzhar	17 Years	Still in school	Among the most advanced teenage participants, are geniuses and smart.
Nur Hanis Sumaiyyah Abdullah	11 Years	Still in school	The most enthusiastic participants, sitting in front of the class
Muhamad Faiz Abdullah	10 Years	Still in school	Although still a child, this participant is quick to understand what he is learning and can help his peers.

Source: Results of the researchers' observations of participants throughout the 12 sessions

From the table above, two categories can be highlighted where the categories of adults, as well as children/teens, have been identified as having the potential to get out of poverty and further highlight the existing talents to generate their income through knowledge and latent talents in the future. For the adult women category, there is no problem, because they also have their community leaders and can continue learning sessions in the surau besides in the community they also have their takmir teachers teaching the indigenous community. For children and teenagers, their talents can be highlighted and they can receive the wages or allowances provided by the surau there (Shamsol, 2024).

It can be formulated here, that although some of the participants used the method of falling into the job scene even if they were just working in the village, on average, some were not working and became housewives. Therefore, the approach adopted in this programme is to open the space for the participants to hone their talents in the chest not only for life guides but can be used to generate income in the future by becoming an instructor from among them. This is because the average participant in the programme has talent but is latent due to the still-thickened inferiority.

Challenges Faced by The Community in Continuing Knowledge Empowerment and Its Solutions

According to Cohen and Uphoff (1977), '*participation*' is an important element especially for the Orang Asli community so that the community feels participating in every involvement of the process without feeling isolated. During the 12 study sessions with the Orang Asli Kg Pabai participants, the dominant challenge was to ensure that the community's involvement needs remained until the end of the session. This is because some participants are unable to commit to attending every week due to financial constraints as well as employment and employer instruction.

The next challenge is the physical constraints of the elderly participants. This is because of the 20 participants, 10 of them were mothers (old) and some were senior citizens. For the elderly or the elderly, the involvement is slightly disrupted due to health factors that do not allow it. However, the participants of this category showed great interest in organising this programme with proof through good attendance, commitment to sitting in front of the class as well as diligence asking questions during the learning session and being ready to be guided.

Restraint on the lack of self-confidence is also one of the challenges for the programme. According to Ildil, Emria and Zofla (2018), self-confidence is an important element, especially in the development of students. Self-confidence is an inherent feeling in which it can produce the attitude of going forward, knowing the level of self-sufficiency and being able to express positive success. It also affects the formation of a positive physique. Among the examples of behavior shown by the participants regarding lack of self-confidence were being embarrassed to try, having difficult giving views and ideas, and being shy to ask.

However, as a result of our observations as researchers and instructors, among the solutions to this challenge is to provide participants with a weekly attendance allowance as a booster for them to attend classes and also as a *top-up* for their income because they are unable to work on the day due to their presence in this learning programme. In addition, for the elderly or the elderly who are not able to sit on the floor during the learning session, we provide a chair with a table to make it easier for them to read and write.

In addition, we also reward any potential participants during the Q&A session or Group Training (GT) session, providing correct and bold answers going forward. We also try to keep ourselves closer to them so that there are no gaps that make them feel ashamed, humble and unconfident.

The issue of poverty is not a foreign polemic especially when it comes to matters related to the social development of society. If referring to past efforts, many joint ventures and energy linkages have been implemented by the government and non-governmental authorities in eradicating this poverty issue. However, the issue of poverty remains the polemic of the country despite the many efforts that have been planned and implemented by the authorities. At the same time, the issue of poverty is also often used as a cause or constraint in every social development planning. This is a counterpoint to the poverty factor which is one of the factors that is often set aside in describing this issue of poverty (Brown 2007; Rogers 1992).

According to Chamhuri Siwar (2009), the issue of poverty and education is closely related to enhancing competitiveness globally and globally as well as improving quality of life. The role of education is very important in particular in impacting the acquisition of higher opportunities as well as reducing the current income inequality gap of society. The expected implementation of the programme especially in this educational cluster can have a significant impact on the issue of community poverty especially involving the Temuan indigenous community in Rembau.

This is evidenced by the implementation of the People's Wellbeing Development Scheme (SPKR) which has been implemented by the Malaysian government to generate income focused on education, training and skills programs. In addition, the element of poverty has been made a key element in eradicating poverty through the implementation of the ASEAN Six-Year Work Plan. Therefore, through this evidence and recommendations in turn, it will be a strong assumption in reducing this polemic. A joint effort carried out by the educators of the University of Poly-Tech Malaysia and assisted by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) - Parliamentary Cross-Party Group (APPGM) is expected to have an impact on the selected community.

The joint implementation of this development project has selected the indigenous community in the Rembau district as a participant in the success of the aspiration to increase educational resources in the community in need. The main objective of the implementation of this project is to focus on the development of education at the basic level which is from a religious point of view (focused on fardu Ain knowledge and recital) and 3M learning angle (Reading, Writing, and Counting in English). The result of the implementation of this project is expected to be the starting point, especially in producing an educated society at a basic level as a whole.

Strength in Conducting Research

Islam strongly encourages its ummah to demand, spread, and glorify knowledge. In evidence, the decline of the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH through verses 1-5 of surah al-Alaq mandates the search for knowledge (Aemy Aziz et al. 2021). There are two divisions of knowledge in Islam; ilmu fardhu Ain (basic of faith, sharia, morality, and the foundation of the Quran) and the knowledge of fardhu kifayah (current knowledge consists of various fields of skills (Yuri Indri Yani, Hakmi Wahyudi & Mhd. Rafi'i Ma'arif Tarigan, 2020) which is the tipping point of mastery in basic 3M skills; reading, writing and counting. Human domination in both branches of knowledge regardless of their ancestry background including the indigenous people will make them a strong and civilized nation (Mahani binti Othman & Awang Azimin bin A. Rahman, 2019). On the other hand, the failure in mastering it makes them live in ignorance and setbacks.

Based on a study conducted by (Ain Nathasha Omar et al. 2017) on the teaching module for the converts at Institut Dakwah Islamiah Perkim (IDIP) found that the teaching modules applied in the syllabus of study for the converts are not comprehensive. Instead, it is only focused on studies based on faith (Azman Ab Rahman et al. 2020). Hence, the researchers suggest that the content of the teaching modules applied to the converts including the indigenous people should cover the

whole aspect of basic education that should be given to them. At the same time, the implementation of its teaching process must be carried out continuously and systematically.

The initial implementation of the SDGs project together with the indigenous community was faced with various challenges; Among them are the constraints of getting participants to meet the set targets, the commitment of the participants at each class session to the end, the proximity of the project site which is relatively far from the residences of the instructors, the time constraints of the instructors with the basic tasks, and the lack of basic infrastructure. However, in the spirit of jihad and high commitment (https://www.islam.gov.my/images/ePenerbitan/jihad_dan_konsepnya.pdf) all the challenges were successfully overcome and the implementation of the programme went well as planned with little change-based on current development factors. The fighting spirit to bring out the indigenous community from the shackles of ignorance of the basic knowledge as a Muslim as well as mastery of 3M as the basis of building self-confidence to be born as a person and a civilized society is an injection of spirit to the research group to put aside all the obstacles (Amini Amir Abdullah, 2014), instead considering it as an opportunity to contribute to the community in line with the policy implementation goal. SDGs (Aji, S. P., & Kartono, D. T. , 2022).

SDG Involvement in Science Empowerment Programs

According to the United Nations, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are global collective plans to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet by 2030 (Aji, S. P., & Kartono, D. T. (2022). The SDGs are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to drive a more forward-looking future. This agenda is intended to address global problems, such as poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, and justice (Aji, S. P., & Kartono, D. T. (2022). In addition, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

is a world programme that aims to prosper the community and preserve nature (Mas, S. R., Sukung, A., & Haris, I. (2021). This is included in the welfare of society from the aspect of science where the large role of SDGs in bringing people to a better and perfect life.

In this SDG-funded programme registered as APPGM-SDG (NO. Y23-SP209), P131 Rembau, Negeri Sembilan aims to produce a community of knowledgeable indigenous communities including Fardhu Ain and Fardhu Kifayah. The geographical factors and constraints of life that are half overcome are just the spirit and commitment shown in this programme but overcome by taking the initiative to work even if it is just working in the village such as rubber menorah, collecting forest products, and others. In this programme, also absorbed and polished the talents available from among those who can help their community by guiding their community. For example, in this programme, researchers have identified one of the talented participants to re-teach the knowledge that the instructors poured into their friends. This stage can be expanded so that one day they will be able to generate their income by making tuition classes for their group. This is what the instructors always emphasise to them every learning session.

The Role and Initiatives of All Parties to the Orang Asli Community

Royal Party (Ministry of Education Malaysia, KPM)

The Orang Asli community is one of the indigenous people in Peninsular Malaysia who live in the rural areas and are still backward in the country's development. Various programs have been implemented by the agency in this community including education, training and skills programs, health, income generation, infrastructure, and social facilities, but the quality of life of this community is still low compared to other communities in Malaysia. (Manaf, N. A., & ABDULLAH, R. (2021). Therefore, it is only natural that this community is not marginalised and ignored.

The government through the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) has developed a variety of holistic approaches to help improve the mastery of the indigenous people in the aspect of learning. This approach does not only apply to Aboriginal children but also to aboriginal parents. Among the programs was the implementation of the Orang Asli and Penan Parents Adult Class (KEDAP) initiative as an effort to overcome the problem of dropouts. Through this programme, the MOE will strengthen its activities and approaches so that the goal of reducing illiteracy among the indigenous community will be reduced. Among the activities carried out is the provision of 3M learning classes to aboriginal parents to assist their children's academic assignments at home (Berita Harian Online, 31 December 2022).

Apart from the KEDAP programme, the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) has also conducted an Aboriginal functional literacy programme (PLFOA) targeting adults, youths – Beliwani, and Teenagers who drop out of Formal Education (Adminute, 2022). The PLFOA programme implemented in 2019 has benefited the Orang Asli community to get out of illiteracy. This is because the main objective of PLFOA is to eradicate illiteracy to increase the level of literacy targeting rural and rural areas through 3M (Reading, writing, counting) towards improving the quality of life of the community. The programme, which lasts a four-hour day for 23 days, is a collaborative programme between JAKOA and KEMAS kindergarten teachers as instructors. The teaching module based on the 3M method of reading, writing, and counting is also JAKOA's effort in collaboration with KEMAS to improve the quality of life of the Orang Asli community.

The MOE has also identified Malaysia's development plan (2013-2025) which emphasises the transformational aspect of the curriculum, namely the quality of teaching and learning (PnP) in Malaysia to be comparable to developed countries (MOE, 2021a). Through this plan, MOE has taken steps to produce a national education system based

on five key aspirational characteristics, namely access, quality, equity, unity, and efficiency.

Based on the efforts of this government, there is no doubt that the indigenous community is not spared the strong support from the government and the surrounding community so that there is no dropout, especially in the aspect of 3M education, *fardhu ain*, and *mengaji*. Various activities and periodic approaches are carried out so that the indigenous community continues to receive direct education that not only focuses on the education of the children but also includes education for their parents.

Civil Society

Apart from the MOE's efforts in improving the quality of learning for the Orang Asli community, a holistic effort was undertaken by the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and CIMB Islamic by establishing the UKM- CIMB Islamic Education Centre themed 'School to Community'. The positive achievement was seen immediately after the construction of this community education centre was established both from the point of increasing the number of student admissions up to the achievement of 3M literacy mastery (reading, counting, and writing). As a result, the centre has successfully opened hearts and attracted Orang Asli parents and children to mainstream schools (Rokiah Omar et al,2020).

In addition, to help the basic literacy of Orang Asli children, UPSI has improved the PdP element by providing the Development of DH3M Learning Kit (Didik Hibur Reading, Writing & Counting). Teachers are provided with QR Code technology for some simulated videos as a more interactive learning guide. This DH3M kit has managed to make the learning atmosphere more exciting and relaxing. At the same time, the goal of 3M studies can be implemented (Abdul Halim Masnan et al, 2021).

Total Support for the Community Muallaf Orang Asli Community: From Zero to Hero

The Ministry of Economy through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) programme proposes 17 main thrusts (Ministry of Economy, 2024) aimed at ensuring well-being and happiness by 2030. Therefore, in supporting change and mobilizing indigenous communities to build resilient communities, four SDG goals have been identified, namely Core 4: Ensuring quality education, Thrust 10: Reducing inequality among the community, Thrust 16: Producing peaceful, fair and sustainable institutions at all levels as well as Thrust 17: Strengthening and intensifying Global Cooperation for sustainable development.

Therefore, this core selection is suitable to help the education of the indigenous people to preserve 3M and at the same time educate them in preparation to be a facilitator to the local community specializing in 3M, the foundation of *fardhu ain* and study while ensuring the sustainability of activities does not cease as far as the SDG session. The programme can be continued through efforts such as providing suitable primers, focusing sessions on potential participants to become instructors, improvement of *surau* facilities as a comfortable learning centre, and through the role of JHEOA Rembau, *imam surau* as well as the District Islamic Religious Officer himself.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, in supporting change and mobilizing the indigenous community towards building a resilient community, especially in the aspect of knowledge generation and empowerment i.e. 3M education (Reading, writing, Counting), the basis of recital and the basis of *fardhu ain*, several suggestions can be considered:

1. Integrated educational programs can be implemented through the provision of holistic and integrated educational programs that focus not only on academic aspects but also on religious aspects. The programme can include formal and informal

learning sessions, as well as involving local communities and local religious leaders.

2. Community involvement is a programme that actively engages the indigenous community in planning, implementing, and evaluating educational programs. This includes involving parents, adults, indigenous leaders, and religious figures in the process of learning and teaching.
3. Through mentorship and mentoring, this sustainability can be continued to assist the indigenous community in the development of reading, writing, counting, basic reciting, and basic fardhu ain skills. This can involve volunteers from local communities or qualified outside parties.
4. Since technology is an affordable device for humans today, the provision of technological educational resources can support access to quality educational materials, including mobile applications, online learning platforms and interactive software. This can increase the accessibility of education in rural areas as well as enable the children of the indigenous community to learn independently.
5. Provide training and professional development to teachers, preachers and volunteers involved in indigenous community education. This training should include teaching skills, understanding of indigenous culture and learning approaches that are appropriate to their context.
6. To conduct awareness-raising programmes on the importance of 3M education, the fundamentals of study and the foundation of fardhu ain as the main agenda of resilient indigenous development. The programme can involve promotion campaigns, talks, educational exhibitions, and other

community activities aimed at raising awareness and support for education

7. To collaborate with government agencies and non-governmental agencies (NGOs), and experienced private sector and resources to support the development of indigenous community education. This includes leveraging funds, technical assistance and human resources to improve access and quality of education among indigenous people.

Through these efforts, it is hoped that the indigenous community can be given sufficient support in the construction of resilient communities, especially in the field of education that is the foundation of holistic human development.

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Chapter 19

Combating Poverty through Education: A Small but Significant Project at SK Sinulihan, Tuaran, Sabah

Rainah Ginsad, Davylandon Rubbin, Jimmy Anak Betal & Rasil Ginsod

ABSTRACT

Malaysia has achieved international recognition for its efforts to eradicate poverty. Many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for global development were met or exceeded by Malaysia. However, efforts to reduce poverty have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result, since 2019, the rate of poverty has drastically increased and hindered the achievement of SDG 1: No Poverty. Furthermore, some states have different challenge levels, which has contributed to the slow achievement of the development goals. Concerning indicators include the relative poverty rate in general and the disparity between relative poverty in urban and rural areas. Sabah is one of the states facing major challenges in achieving this goal. Although the effects of poverty are well recognised to be multidimensional, quality education can be a key factor in eradicating poverty. Unfortunately, due to the numerous obstacles that still prevent access to quality education in Sabah, many schools in rural areas have been left out of the promise of quality education. A small project by PIKOS at SK Sinulihan has played a significant role in increasing quality education and combating poverty in Sabah. This paper highlights the issues, implementation, challenges, and outcomes of the project at SK Sinulihan, one of the primary schools in the rural area of Tuaran district. The project (to upgrade the existing classrooms into a more conducive space for teaching and learning activities) managed to solve the issue. This project contributed to the achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 1: Ending Poverty.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's achievement in eradicating poverty has achieved global recognition. Many of the global development targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were met, and Malaysia is among the fastest country to achieve the first goal of halving the poverty rate by 2010 (Economic Planning Unit Malaysia, 2017). Similarly, at the state level, Sabah has shown excellent achievement in poverty reduction between 2002 and 2016. Sabah recorded 16 percent of absolute poverty incidents in 2002, reduced to 2.9 percent in 2016 (DOSM, 2022). The strategy for eradicating poverty in Malaysia has placed a strong emphasis on creating job opportunities, expanding education and training facilities, and modernizing rural communities. Furthermore, government partnerships with the business sector and non-governmental organizations have also been utilised to provide services to the poor.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered the efforts to eradicate poverty in Malaysia. As a result, since 2019, the rate of poverty has sharply raised, making it more difficult to accomplish SDG 1: No Poverty. Malaysia recorded a drastic increase from 0.4 percent in 2016 to 6.2 percent in 2022. Similarly, in Sabah, incidence of poverty increased more than 500 percent from 2.9 percent in 2016 to 19.7 percent in 2022 (DOSM, 2022). Furthermore, Sabah states facing major problems in reducing relative poverty between urban and rural areas, contributing to the challenges of achieving SDG 1: Poverty.

In all its forms, education is an essential element in both eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable economic development (Zhang, 2021). The role of education in alleviating poverty has documented by many scholars around the world. (Spada et al., 2023) reported that increasing education among European countries reduce poverty. Increasing education can be in many forms. Reynolds et al. (2019) discovered that early childhood preventive programs are an effective strategy for fostering academic achievement and economic stability.

Moreover, Majumder & Chowdhury Biswas (2017) highlighted that increased in literacy and investment in education evidently contributes to poverty eradication in Bangladesh. This is supported by (UNESCO, 2017) which concluded that if every adult completed secondary education, the global poverty rate would be reduced by half.

Developing the education sector is very challenging in Sabah due to various reasons. Among the major factors are the geographical features and development inequality between rural and urban areas. Many schools in rural areas still facing the problem of inadequate facilities. Hence, the government spending of 2024 has prioritised the poverty in education, apart from eradicating hardcore poverty. Poverty in education includes poor decent facilities in schools. This paper presents the issue, implementation, challenges, and outcome of a small project funded by *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Impak Komuniti Sabah* (PIKOS) at *Sekolah Kebangsaan Sinulihan* (SK Sinulihan), Tamparuli, Tuaran (P170). The project is upgrading the existing classrooms into a more conducive space for teaching and learning activities.

BACKGROUND OF THE ISSUE

SK Sinulihan (Figure 19.1) is located in the Tuaran district, one of many schools in rural area near mountain Kinabalu. There are currently 32 students, 8 teachers, and 10 administrative and operational staff at the school.



Figure 19.1. SK Sinulihan, Tuaran 3

Source: PIKOS media

The school received a budget from the government to build a school building with four rooms (Figure 19.2). Two rooms dedicated to the teachers' office, headmaster's office, operation room, and information communication and technology (ICT) room. Therefore, only two rooms are available for students' classrooms. In fact, the school needs four classrooms to accommodate the total number of students. Hence, it is crucial to find solutions to ensure conducive learning facilities for students.



Figure 19.2. The New School Building

Source: PIKOS media

After a discussion among teachers and staff, it was decided to install partition walls in both classrooms. This will provide an additional two classrooms and resolve the shortage of classrooms issue at the school. The picture below shows the classroom before the partition wall was installed.



Figure 19.3. The classroom condition before the partition wall was installed.

Source: PIKOS media

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project implementation described chronologically as follows:

DATE	ACTIVITIES
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teacher from SK Sinulihan reached out to PIKOS regarding the current challenges they are facing and requested a donation. • PIKOS agreed to their request to install partition wall for two rooms.

DATE	ACTIVITIES
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchases of partition wall materials. • Installation works in progress involving teachers and parents. • Communal works involving several stages between 16th to 19th February 2024.



Figure 19.4



Figure 19.5



Figure 19.6

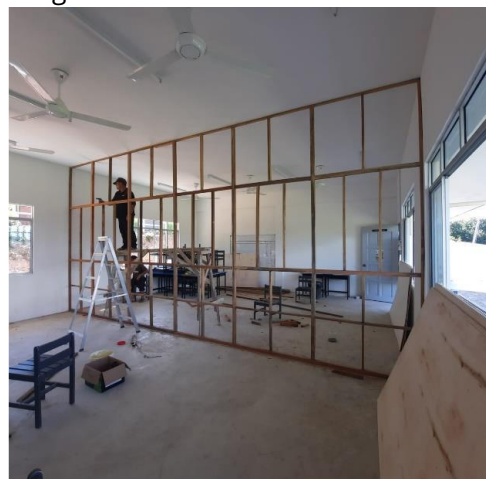


Figure 19.7



Figure 19.8



Figure 19.9

Figure 19.4 – Figure 19.9 Project Implementation Progress

Source: PIKOS media

DATE	ACTIVITIES
March 2024	Project completed.



Figure 19.10. Completed project

Source: PIKOS media

Project Implementation Challenges

This project faced challenges such as:

1. Poor road conditions
Poor road conditions affect delivery time.

2. Time constraints

Communal work can indeed be challenging since many teachers and parents have busy schedules with work, family, commitments, and other responsibilities.

PROJECT OUTCOME

Figure 19.11 and Figure 19.12 showing the comparison before and after the project implementation:



Picture 19.11. The classrooms before the project implementation

Source: PIKOS media



Picture 19.12. The classroom after the project is completed

Source: PIKOS media

SDG ACHIEVEMENT

Table 19.1. SDG Goals and project contributions

GOAL	TARGET	INDICATOR	PROJECT CONTRIBUTION
<p>GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY <i>End poverty in all its forms everywhere.</i></p>	<p>Target 1.a: Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions</p>	<p>1.a.1 Total official development assistance grants from all donors that focus on poverty reduction as a share of the recipient country's gross national income</p> <p>1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)</p>	<p>GOAL 1 Contributing to the achievement of poverty reduction through development in education services.</p>
<p>GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION <i>Ensure inclusive and equitable Quality education and promote</i></p>	<p>4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to</p>	<p>4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum</p>	<p>GOAL 4 Contributing to the achievement of quality education by upgrading the education facilities.</p>

<i>lifelong learning opportunities for all.</i>	relevant and effective learning outcomes.	proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	
		4.1.2 Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)	
	4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.	4.a.1 Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service	

CONCLUSION

Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Sabah had shown remarkable progress in reducing poverty. However, after 2019, Sabah recorded a sharp increase in the incidence of poverty, which hindered the achievement of SDG 1 (no poverty). The role of education as a powerful measure to eradicate poverty cannot be denied. PIKOS has funded a small project at SK Sinulihan, one of the primary schools in the rural area of Tuaran district. The project of upgrading the existing classrooms managed to solve the issue of inadequate classrooms at the school. This project contributes to the achievement of SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 4 (quality education). Although the project is small, the initiative is undoubtedly significant.

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Community Approaches to Poverty Alleviation in Malaysia, edited by Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir provides an in-depth exploration of various strategies and initiatives aimed at addressing poverty within Malaysia. This book is divided into seven distinct parts, each focusing on different aspects of poverty and offering insights into community-driven efforts to foster development and resilience.

- **Part 1**, *Understanding the Landscape of Poverty*, explores Malaysia's research trends on poverty and the role of social capital in shaping poverty outcomes. It also includes personal stories of individuals who have overcome significant challenges.
- **Part 2**, *Navigating Challenges in Poverty in Sabah*, addresses issues like educational disparities and environmental challenges, such as plastic waste management on Pulau Mabul, that contribute to poverty in rural communities.
- **Part 3**, *Navigating Challenges in Poverty in Peninsula Malaysia*, examines poverty in Peninsula Malaysia, analyzing future poverty scenarios and the impact of migrant workers on poverty levels.
- **Part 4**, *Leveraging Agriculture to Overcome Poverty*, highlights agriculture as a key strategy for poverty alleviation, with case studies showing how community projects in Sabah have improved livelihoods and promoted economic stability.
- **Part 5**, *Economic Empowerment to Overcome Poverty*, explores how marketing knowledge and essential training can empower rural communities, helping them achieve economic self-reliance and overcome poverty.
- **Part 6**, *Empowering through Entrepreneurship & Financial Inclusion to Overcome Poverty*, discusses entrepreneurship and financial inclusion as effective tools for poverty reduction, with examples of successful training interventions and innovative models in rural areas.
- **Part 7**, *Empowering through Tourism & Education to Overcome Poverty*, examines the role of tourism and education in poverty alleviation, showcasing case studies where these sectors have driven social and economic development in impoverished communities.

This book offers a multifaceted perspective on poverty, highlighting the importance of community engagement, local knowledge, and sustainable practices in creating long-term solutions to poverty in Malaysia.



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