

Asian Development Policy Review

ISSN(e): 2313-8343

ISSN(p): 2518-2544

DOI: 10.55493/5008.v12i3.5133

Vol. 12, No. 3, 238-242.

© 2024 AESS Publications. All Rights Reserved.


URL: www.aessweb.com


The relationship between social capital and community resilience among urban poor communities in Malaysia




 **Nor Fatimah Che Sulaiman**¹⁺

 **Suriyani Muhamad**²

 **Mohd Azlan Shah Zaidi**³

 **Nazli Aziz**⁴

 **Mohd Nasir Nawawi**⁵

^{1,2,5}Department of Economics, Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia.

¹Email: n.fatimah@umt.edu.my

²Email: suriyani_md@umt.edu.my

³Email: nasir@umt.edu.my

³Center for Sustainable and Inclusive Development Studies, Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor Malaysia.

⁴Email: azlan@ukm.edu.my

⁴Department of Policy Studies, Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia.

⁵Email: nazli_aziz@umt.edu.my



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 8 August 2023

Revised: 13 February 2024

Accepted: 15 March 2024

Published: 31 July 2024

Keywords

Community resilience

Social capital

Social network

Urban poor

Poverty

Well-being.

The problem of poverty remains persistent in developing countries around the world. Poor households, particularly those headed by women, young people, and informal workers, particularly those who live in urban areas, are those most affected by vicious cycles of socioeconomic disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This condition, therefore, will lead to urban poverty issues that decline individuals' quality of life and livelihoods due to the growing population and expansion of urbanization areas. However, there are limited numbers of empirical studies on the impact of community resilience on poverty. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between social capital and community resilience among urban poor communities. 481 respondents from urban poor communities living in the poor communities housing called, the People's Housing Project (PHP) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were given a structured questionnaire by cluster sampling from December 2021 to July 2022. Data were analyzed using reliability analysis, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings showed that social capital is positively significant in community resilience building through having a good relationship with the community's representative and having good involvement in the neighborhood. This study has proven that social capital in poverty adaptation among the poor should be given priority by the authorities in the poverty alleviation programs. The government must implement specific social capital policies and methods for upgrading the income of the urban poor with the aim of fostering resilience among urban poor communities in Kuala Lumpur in an effort to eradicate poverty.

Contribution/ Originality: This research focuses on the role of social capital in developing community resilience. This research reveals that good social networks indirectly give the urban poor communities access to more potential resources. Active participation in the neighborhood and having good relationships with community representatives are crucial in developing community resilience.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of poverty remains persistent in developing countries around the world. The vicious cycles of socioeconomic disasters have had a negative impact on millions of households worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic's decreased income, job losses, and labor stoppages made extreme poverty worse. The COVID-19 virus primarily affects poor households with women as the head of household, young people, and informal workers, especially those who reside in urban areas. This condition, therefore, will lead to urban poverty issues that decline individuals' quality of living and livelihoods due to the growing population and expansion of urbanization areas.

Urbanization implies a transformation in the economic, social, and cultural aspects of society that leads to the creation and expansion of the number of cities as urban settlements (Hussain & Imitiyaz, 2018). Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020) reported that the total population of Malaysia was 32.45 million in 2020. Population distribution by state indicated that Selangor was the most populous state (6.99 million), while Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, was recognized as the most densely populated area with 8157 persons per square kilometer. The urbanization rate has increased from 70.9 percent in 2010 to 75.1 percent in 2020. As the urban population rises, overdemand for limited resources leads to an increase in the cost of living and places stress on the existing social services and infrastructure. Communities with low skill levels may be left behind and need to struggle in order to cooperate with others in facing the daily challenges of urban life. The urban poor communities have limited access to basic services, job opportunities, and possibilities for social development because of a lack of income and resources to ensure adequate well-being. In other words, the urban poor are dealing with the risk of decreasing their quality of life and livelihoods. United Nations (2018) Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) aims to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, and based on the target, one of the strategies to alleviate poverty is through resilience building. Though the resilience concept has been broadly discussed, research regarding community resilience-poverty linkages is still limited, especially in Malaysia. Hence, this paper aims to explore the influence of resilience towards poverty alleviation, specifically on social capital factors in Kuala Lumpur.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

International and national organizations have recently embraced the resilience idea extensively in their policymaking. Resilience is typically defined as a system's ability to overcome stresses or shocks, and it has been recognized as a desirable characteristic in addition to being the solution to many challenges faced by today's uncertain world (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Holling, 1973; Scherzer, Lujala, & Rød, 2019). In this study, urban poor communities' resilience is examined in the context of poverty. Although the United Nations asserted that one strategy for reducing poverty is to build resilience among poor communities, there is still little research available on the connections between community resilience and poverty (Muhamad et al., 2019; Zeng, Yu, Yang, Lv, & Sarker, 2022). The literature that already exists only argues against community preparedness for natural disasters, including floods and coastal risks (Cai, Lam, Zou, Qiang, & Li, 2016; Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016; Kapucu, Hawkins, & Rivera, 2013; Sina, Chang-Richards, Wilkinson, & Potangaroa, 2019). There are six elements of resilience, according to Chen, Huang, Li, and Luna-Reyes (2019) study: community resilience, social resilience, economic resilience, institutional resilience, infrastructure resilience, and environmental resilience.

This study investigates how social capital affects urban poor communities' efforts to build resilience. Delilah, Pijawka, and Wutich (2020) defined social capital as a set of social networks that include trust, reciprocity, common rules and norms, and public engagement. They also stated that social capital helps us understand how a community manages itself to work with rapid change, so it is important to understand the relationship between resilience and social capital. Mpanje, Gibbons, and McDermott (2018) discovered that there are three categories of social capital in communities: bonding, bridging, and linking capitals. Hutanuwatr, Bolin, and Pijawka (2013) state that bonding social capital refers to the development of close relationships and mutual support among group members. Culture,

religion, ethnicity, and identity are frequently influencing factors in it. It speaks of the links that form between family members, close friends, and allies as a result of these relationships (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015).

Additionally, bridging capitals are advantageous for connecting various groupings and gaining access to outside resources. It is motivated by the desire for new information, uniting various organizations under a shared objective. People that are similar to one another through organizations or community links in various places are what make the network diversified (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004). By connecting social capital, a community can have access to non-local resources, including government financing, organizations that provide humanitarian relief, and outside donations. Therefore, social capital is vital in building community resilience because, without social support from family, friends, neighborhood, and colleagues, these urban poor communities might not be resilient to economic shocks and will not have good mental health.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this research, quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire through cluster sampling in Kuala Lumpur for a total of 481 urban poor communities. The respondents were selected from four zones in Kuala Lumpur. They were the occupants of the People's Housing Project (PHP), namely, PHP Muhibbah, PHP Raya Permai, PHP Seri Sarawak, and PHP Seri Alam. These areas were chosen because they have been identified as having the highest population of the urban poor communities (Ministry of Local Government Development (MLGD), 2022). The survey was conducted in 8 months, from December 2021 until July 2022, with the involvement of ten enumerators and assistance and cooperation from PHP's community representatives. However, out of 481 completed questionnaires, only 400 were usable for analysis.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part A consists of respondents' demographics, which include gender, age, race, marital status, education level, occupation, household income, household size, residency period, and house tenure. Part B consists of a few questions on social capital. The variables are neighborhood solidarity, involvement in community organization, and participation in decision-making. The measurement made use of a five-point Likert scale, with the lowest scale being one and the highest being five, or 'strongly agree.' The method of analysis includes descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis methods in SPSS.

The limitation of this study is that the population and samples are from the urban poor communities of PHP in Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, the results obtained in this study might not be applicable to representing other urban poor communities, such as squatters and suburbs, or urban poor communities in other states of Malaysia due to differences in neighborhood surroundings.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

As shown in Table 1, the aspects of social capital that have the highest Cronbach's alpha values are neighborhood involvement (0.804) and decision-making (0.730), while community resilience has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.833. When all of Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.7, it suggests that the items utilized can be used and accepted as measurements.

Table 1. Reliability analysis.

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Social capital	0.790	6
Involvement in neighbourhood	0.804	8
Decision making	0.730	4
Community resilience	0.833	25

The demographic profile of the respondents is as follows: Of the 400 respondents, the majority are female, with 52.3 percent being Malays, 28 percent being Chinese, and 19.5 percent being Indians. Marital status showed that

more than 70 percent of them were married, and 18 percent were either divorced or separated. In terms of education level, 54.8 percent had completed secondary school, followed by 35.3 percent primary education, and 1.5 percent claimed they had completed a degree. As 62.8 percent of respondents were 51 years of age and older, this explains on the large number of non-working respondents (157 people). Next, 81.5 percent of them only earn less than USD530 each month, with household sizes ranging from 3 to 6 people. Only 11.5 percent of them could afford to buy a PHP apartment, despite over 45 percent of them claiming to have lived there for more than 15 years.

This study has developed a model for the impact of social capital on community resilience. The findings showed that social capital was found to have a positive and significant relationship with community resilience. To be more specific, social capital indicators such as involvement in the neighborhood show a moderately positive linear relationship with community resilience of 0.460, while indicator decision-making shows a weak positive linear relationship with a correlation coefficient value under 0.3. The results of the correlation test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation analysis between community resilience and social capital.

Social capital	Neighborhood	Decision making	Resilience
Neighborhood	1		
Decision making	0.460**	1	
Resilience	0.295**	0.502**	1

Note: **p < 0.01.

Regression analysis on the impact of social capital on community resilience revealed that social capital contributed to the community resilience of the urban poor by 21.7% of the variance. Other factors have an influence on the variance's overall distribution. This analysis found that only indicator involvement in the neighborhood significantly influenced community resilience, while decision-making showed no significant value in the analysis. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression analysis between community resilience and social capital.

Social Capital	Coef.	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.803	15.033	0.000
Involvement in neighborhood	0.417	8.117	0.000
Decision making	0.086	1.671	0.096
R ² = 0.217			

5. CONCLUSION

This study showed empirical evidence on the influence of social capital on resilience amongst the urban poor community. The key findings from this study are that there is a significant correlation between social capital and community resilience in Kuala Lumpur. This study proves that the importance of social capital in building resilience among urban poor communities should be given priority by the authorities in their poverty alleviation programs. These findings are supported by Mpanje et al. (2018); Zeng et al. (2022) and Muhamad et al. (2019) regarding community resilience. Therefore, it can be concluded that having a good social network indirectly gives the individual access to more potential resources, and in the meantime, creates a better resilience in their life.

Funding: This research is supported by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (Grant number: FRGS/1/2020/S20/UMT/02/9).

Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia has granted approval for this study on 8 May 2022 (Ref. No. UMT/JKEPM/2022/101).

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Data Availability Statement: Upon a reasonable request, the supporting data of this study can be provided by the corresponding author.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Aldrich, D. P., & Meyer, M. A. (2015). Social capital and community resilience. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(2), 254–269.
- Cai, H., Lam, N. S.-N., Zou, L., Qiang, Y., & Li, K. (2016). Assessing community resilience to coastal hazards in the lower Mississippi River Basin. *Water*, 8(2), 46. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w8020046>
- Chen, Y., Huang, Y., Li, K., & Luna-Reyes, L. F. (2019). *Dimensions and measurement of city resilience in theory and in practice*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance.
- Delilah, R. A., Pijawka, D., & Wutich, A. (2020). The role of social capital in resiliency: Disaster recovery in Puerto Rico. *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, 11(2), 204–235. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rhc3.12187>
- Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2020). *Household income and basic amenities survey report 2019*. Putrajaya: Malaysia Department of Statistics.
- Fleming, J., & Ledogar, R. J. (2008). Resilience, an evolving concept: A review of literature relevant to Aboriginal research. *Pimatisiwin*, 6(2), 7–23.
- Holling, C. S. (1973). Resilience and stability of ecological systems. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 4(1), 1–23.
- Hussain, M., & Imitiyaz, I. (2018). Urbanization concepts, dimensions and factors. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, 9(1), 23513–23523.
- Hutanuwatr, K., Bolin, R., & Pijawka, D. (2013). Vulnerability and disaster in Thailand: Scale, power, and collaboration in post-tsunami recovery. In *Forces of Nature and Cultural Responses*. In (pp. 69–92). Netherlands: Springer.
- Imperiale, A. J., & Vanclay, F. (2016). Experiencing local community resilience in action: Learning from post-disaster communities. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 47, 204–219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.08.002>
- Kapucu, N., Hawkins, C. V., & Rivera, F. I. (2013). Disaster preparedness and resilience for rural communities. *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, 4(4), 215–233. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rhc3.12043>
- Ministry of Local Government Development (MLGD). (2022). *Selected statistic, strategic planning and international division*. Retrieved from <https://www.kpkt.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/700?mid=586>
- Mpanje, D., Gibbons, P., & McDermott, R. (2018). Social capital in vulnerable urban settings: An analytical framework. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 3(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-018-0032-9>
- Muhamad, S., Nawawi, M. N., Kulub Abd Rashid, N., Kusairi, S., Nik Mohd Kamil, N. F., & Samsudin, H. (2019). Livelihood resilience: The case of Sungai Terengganu Communities. *Greater Kenyir Landscapes: Social Development and Environmental Sustainability: From Ridge to Reef*, 271–286.
- Nakagawa, Y., & Shaw, R. (2004). Social capital: A missing link to disaster recovery. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies & Disasters*, 22(1), 5–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/028072700402200101>
- Scherzer, S., Lujala, P., & Rød, J. K. (2019). A community resilience index for Norway: An adaptation of the baseline resilience indicators for communities (BRIC). *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 36, 101107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2019.101107>
- Sina, D., Chang-Richards, A. Y., Wilkinson, S., & Potangaroa, R. (2019). A conceptual framework for measuring livelihood resilience: Relocation experience from Aceh, Indonesia. *World Development*, 117, 253–265. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.01.003>
- United Nations. (2018). *Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration: Report of the secretary-general*. New York: United Nations.
- Zeng, X., Yu, Y., Yang, S., Lv, Y., & Sarker, M. N. I. (2022). Urban resilience for urban sustainability: Concepts, dimensions, and perspectives. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 2481. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052481>

Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s), Asian Development Policy Review shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.