

# The Determinants of Sustainable Livelihood among Urban Poor in Malaysia

Aziz Amin, Sharifah Nurnadia and Asmawi Ibrahim

**Abstract**— Urban poverty issues still relevant with the people migrating from rural areas to urban areas. These people are still confronting with the high cost of living and lower income. This issue are critical in the national development agenda. Therefore, this study was undertaken to identify the determinants that affect the sustainable livelihood of urban poor in Malaysia. This study used a survey method using a questionnaire involving 400 respondents and the sample was selected using probability sampling method through random sampling procedure. The total of 430 questionnaires were distributed but only 400 questionnaires were used for data analysis. This finding showed that the level of life sustainability among urban poor was moderate. The three determinants of the study namely social capital, human capital and social wellbeing had positive relationships and become significant predictors to the sustainable livelihood of the urban poor in Malaysia.

**Keywords**—Life sustainability, Malaysia, sustainable, urban poor

## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability especially in the community remains a challenge and is frequently reviewed [1]. Although many researchers highlight various definitions as described by [2] but there is no specific method or way in studying the sustainable livelihood. According to [3] all components of social wellbeing such as security and social stability are important to achieve sustainability of life. This statement supported by [4] who explained that the core of Malaysia's Common Prosperity Vision is the development of social capital and social well-being which is an inclusive value to meet the aspirations of a holistic national development. In addition, social capital which contains a wide network especially in gaining trust and support from each other in the [5] study proved its influence and impact on economic growth and productivity as well as the sustainability of society. [6], [7] also stated the implications of well-being for the expansion of knowledge and the achievement of success, namely human capital in community development.

According to [8], this sustainability and well-being of life encompasses many aspects such as personal, family, community, social, educational and economic well-being. It is clear that this sustainability of life is a dynamic process involving human development based on individual income and economy.

[9] in their study said most developed countries focus on the concept of well-being as a national development agenda. Sustainability of life is important and is a key precondition in building conditions that are more geared towards peace and happiness in a community for each country [10]. The main precondition for creating a calm and cheerful atmosphere to the society is through sustainability of life [11] stated that one of the six National Key Result Areas (NKRA) is to improve quality of life. In order to achieve sustainable development, sustainable communities need to be formed based on the principles of sustainability. The study of [12] examines social capital as a dimension to study the lives of low-income residents. In his study proved there is a significant relationship between sustainable development with community capacity, socioeconomics and community participation [13]. Quality of life studies are usually based on movements to determine specific domains that influence life sustainability assessments by focusing on key elements of how assessments affect the environment.

This concept of sustainability is a paradigm of futuristic thinking by taking into account the environmental, economic and social balance in planning development and improving the quality of life. In simple words, it is a concept that underlies the principle that all necessities for life and well-being depend directly or indirectly on nature [1]. Efforts towards achieving a good quality of life are not only seen in terms of a built environment that provides comfort to residents but also the ability of the environment to provide economic opportunities, quality of life also demands economic balance and environmental care that involves change in society. and social systems [1], [8]. Along with the concept of sustainable development, life that starts from the awareness of each individual to practice a healthy lifestyle, able to meet all the needs for survival and free to develop the potential of the individual [10]. Each individual has a goal the same will form a community that cooperates and respects each other in a sustainable environment [1], [14]. Issues related to human capital, social capital and the social well-being of the urban poor need immediate action.

The objective of this study is to identify the determinants of sustainable livelihood among urban poor in Malaysia. There are three determinants associated with the urban poor

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livelihood namely human capital, social capital and social wellbeing.

## II. METHOD

The questionnaire for the sustainable livelihood in this study consists of 22 items by using the questionnaire Quality Life of Community developed by [15]. This questionnaire was developed using 22 items to identify three aspects of the quality of life in accordance with the definition as they are using. While [16] sustainable development studies contain of 19 items with five-point Likert scale. The validity and high reliability indices of Cronbach alpha reliability index for each study are 0.79 to 0.93. The decision is absolutely comparable to studies of other treatments [17]. However, the questionnaire for this study was a modified to measure the sustainable livelihood among urban poor in Malaysia. Items in this section has been modified by such studies that have been conducted by [18] in their studies entitled "Structural Modelling of Adaptation Social Change among Urban Poverty toward Sustainable Livelihood" which stated the sustainable livelihood of their study questionnaire validity and high reliability index where the Cronbach alpha reliability test were 0.951. In this study, questionnaire life sustainability using a five-point Likert scale containing 8 items in total.

A questionnaire-based survey method is a technique often used in social science research to obtain information which can be calculated (quantified) involving a specific population group [19]. Using the questionnaire survey method is also ideal for collecting data from a sample group of a large and special purpose to draw inferences on population studies [20]. The study uses the survey design by studying the population through measurement data from a determined sample size [17].

The population for this study is urban poor in Malaysia. For this study, urban poor is individual that earns below RM4,000 per month and live in low-cost housing areas. By using [21] reference sample size, which suggests 384 respondents for sample size of the total population more than 75,000 people was adequate. [22] also stated that the sample size is greater than 30 and less than 500 people is appropriate in most research. The number of samples taken for the study were about 384 people. The probability sampling procedures using simple random sampling strategy was carried out in this study. However, this study also chooses a few more additional respondents as a precautionary measure to ensure that the required number of samples can be achieved. Thus, a total of 430 questionnaires were distributed. A total of 400 questionnaires were answered and returned. It shows the rate of return of the questionnaires was 93 percent and the rate obtained showed a very good level in the review of the social sciences. [23] stated that the rate of return of questionnaires which reached 80 per cent is satisfactory.

## III. RESULT

The mean value of the sustainable livelihood is 4.05 and the standard deviation is 0.96. This shows that with the mean value of 4.05 (on level 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) of the level of sustainable livelihood among 400 respondents and standard deviation score of life sustainability

dispersed not far from the mean value implies that the majority of respondents have a relatively modest level of life sustainability. The stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 1 as follows:

TABLE I  
EFFECTS OF DETERMINANTS OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD

Independent Variables	Beta	Sig. (p)
Social Wellbeing	0.243	0.000
Social Capital	0.042	0.502*
Human Capital	0.604	0.000

Note. Adjusted R square = 0.290,  $p < 0.01$  (using stepwise methods) (\*  $P > 0.01$ , social capital is not a significant determinant attribute in this model)

From Table 1 above indicates that there is significant influence between independent variable of the determinants of life sustainability.  $R^2$  value three independent variables were tested, two variables have a significant impact on the human capital and social wellbeing. While only one variable that does not affect the sustainable livelihood which is the social capital. The stepwise multiple regression analysis was also conducted to identify the most critical factors affecting the sustainable livelihood of urban poor. Of the three determinants were tested, two of which have a significant influence on sustainable livelihood urban poor with a view to the beta ( $\beta$ ) of human capital ( $\beta = 0.60$ ), followed by the social wellbeing ( $\beta = 0.24$ ) and the social capital ( $\beta = 0.04$ ). To investigate further the effects of the determinants of social wellbeing and human capital to sustainable livelihood of urban poor, Table 2 presents a summary of the model.

TABLE II  
SUMMARY OF THE DETERMINANT MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.649 <sup>a</sup>	0.425	0.412	0.71
2	0.663 <sup>b</sup>	0.440	0.437	0.72

a. Determining: (Constant), Human Capital

b. Determining: (Constant), Human Capital, Social Wellbeing

Dependent Variable: Sustainable Livelihood

From Table 2, 41.2 per cent were found to influence the human capital of sustainable livelihood urban poor. When combined the influence of human capital to the social wellbeing, it has increased by 2.5 percent to 43.7 percent. Therefore, this study concludes that human capital and the social wellbeing affects 43.7 percent of the sustainable livelihood among urban poor. Influence of 43.7 percent consider moderate because there is still a significant effect in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, only can be shown a larger value of the variation in the dependent variable [24]. This means that this model has successfully accounted for 50.5 percent of the sustainable livelihood urban poor and the rest contributed by other factors that were not investigated in this study.

The finding of this study showed a significant difference between the independent variable of the determinants of sustainable livelihood.  $R^2$  value shows the determinants having an effect of 43.7 percent over the sustainable livelihood. These findings show that 43.7 percent of the variance in projected commitment by all independent variable,

namely the human capital and the social wellbeing. This means that there are as many as 56.3 percent of variance in the sustainable livelihood of the variables that cannot be predicted by this study. Of the three independent variables were tested, two variables have a significant impact i.e. the human capital and the social wellbeing. While only one variable that does not affect the commitment i.e. the attributes of social capital. The stepwise multiple regression analysis was also conducted to identify the most critical factors affecting the sustainable livelihood of respondents. Of the three determinants were tested, two of which have a significant influence on sustainable livelihood of urban poor with a view to the beta ( $\beta$ ) that is the human capital ( $\beta = 0.60$ ) and the social wellbeing ( $\beta = 0.24$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The study found that the human capital of the urban poor themselves affects their sustainable livelihood. The finding was consistent with studies conducted by [25], which shows a model of sustainable community participation in homestay program. This proves that the community is struggling to make life-sustaining decisions through human capital and social well-being. This finding coincides with a study from [16] which also shows the wellbeing of fisherman on the east coast of Malaysia. They include human capital, the important value that will change their lives. These determinants, as indicated by the findings, can contribute to the survival of the community. If used accurately, determinants can help stakeholders make a proper plan to improve the country's economy.

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