

Knowledge Management, Leadership, and Social Capital: Community Leadership and Sustainable Development in Terengganu, Malaysia

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Abstract

In the context of sustainable and enduring development principles, the significance of community leadership and rural governance cannot be overstated. In their capacity as local leaders, individuals should possess the capability to exert influence over the local populace and actively engage them in the pursuit of accomplishing the vision. This research examines how the community leaders in Terengganu, Malaysia manages their communities and how that leadership style relates to the context of sustainable development.

It employed a qualitative research methodology involving interviews, engaging 7 informants comprising community leaders and representatives from stakeholders.

The findings indicate three important dimensions in rural community leadership and sustainable development i.e., knowledge management, leadership, dan social capital bridging and linking. This finding underscores the quality of rural community leadership within the framework of sustainable development, as explicitly articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; guaranteeing that citizens possess a participatory role in governance processes. The findings enable the formulation of key conclusions and suggestions for local leaders, supporting them as they continue to develop appropriate leadership behavior.

Keywords: Community leadership, sustainable development, leadership, rural, public participation.

Introduction

Malaysian government has made several attempts to promote rural communities in line with globalization and modernity so that this community might successfully improve their quality of life similar to the urban community. Rural regions are rapidly changing from a macro perspective for a variety of reasons, becoming sites of dynamic, diversified, and contentious patterns of production, consumption, and protection (Ilbery, 2014). However, the level of community leadership involvement affects how successfully rural regions grow (Rami et al., 2023). Efficient leadership, characterized by its fundamental ability to cultivate favorable associations with a wide array of stakeholders, including citizens, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, among others. The adept harnessing of social capital, is widely regarded as a pivotal determinant influencing the prosperity of local communities.

Community leadership however diverges from the traditional conception of leadership, which predominantly revolves around 'leaders' making requests, employing persuasion, and exerting influence upon the 'followers,' as articulated by Chen et al. (2019). In this context, this paper examines knowledge management, leadership, and social capital in the communities. Its aim is to contribute novel insights into Terengganu's rural governance. Its objectives are:

1. To Ascertain how leadership emerges in the contemporary communities.
2. To identify the important dimensions in rural community leadership towards sustainable development
3. To bridge the knowledge gaps by examining community leadership styles and their correlation with perspectives on sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

Community leadership typically assumes a less hierarchical structure and often centers on volunteer engagement. It places a significant emphasis on cultivating social capital, symbolizing transformative processes, and necessitates the implementation of numerous grassroots endeavors. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that community leaders are commonly individuals who hold no formal elected or official status, as noted by Onyx and Leonard (2011).

Sullivan (2007) adds that the boundaries of the specific community within which it operates delineate the contours of community leadership, a term that lacks a precise and universally accepted definition. Furthermore, a community might be led by a single person or by a group of people. According to Chan et. al. (2018), good community leadership improves social capital and community ties while also raising the possibility that the community will take action. A strong leadership fosters social capital, whereas attempts to enhance social capital foster the development of future leaders (Benit-Gbaffou & Katsaura, 2014).

In the broader context of national development, the second rural development plan, devised in 1962, underscored the importance of active rural resident participation in governmental initiatives. The Village Development and Security Committee (JPKK) emerged as the principal avenue for involving individuals in the conception, execution, and oversight of development projects specifically tailored to their needs (Rami et al., 2021). The JPKK assumes a pivotal role in steering overall village growth and serves as a crucial intermediary among diverse social institutions (Daskalopoulou, 2018). Vital success factors for sustainable rural development lie in the leadership competencies exhibited within the JPKK, particularly concerning village administration, the mobilization of community resources, event organization, agency network development, and the maintenance of community well-being.

The Malaysian federal government also recognizes the significance of robust community leadership in galvanizing local enthusiasm and participation in grassroots community development initiatives (Rami et al., 2020). The JPKK, focused on rural planning and development with a mission to mitigate regional disparities in the quality of life among rural inhabitants, frequently underscores income equality as a pivotal indicator of economic well-being. Participation in decision-making should be regarded as both a responsibility and a privilege by all members of any society and system, and community leaders play a pivotal role in creating the conditions conducive to such participation.

This assumes a heightened significance in the context of the challenges posed by sustainable development (Gastil, 1993). This perspective aligns with international politics and diplomacy, where one of the core principles of sustainable development, as clearly delineated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is to ensure that citizens have a voice in governance processes (Arnstein, 2019). The sixteenth goal of this agenda, titled "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions," aspires to establish "responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels." It is worth noting that there is limited scholarly exploration specifically addressing the role of rural community leadership in the context of sustainable development in Malaysia (Springer, Walkowiak, & Bernaciak, 2020).

Within the context of sustainable development, the village leader plays a pivotal role in steering development efforts towards one or several key sectors that serve as the foundation for progress. These sectors can range from agriculture, which benefits from active community engagement (Terziev & Arabska, 2016), to the application of advanced technology through practices like e-agriculture (Kumar & Venugopal, 2016), or the promotion of rural development in the digital era (Salemink et al., 2017).

Moreover, the local culture-based tourism sector thrives with the support of the local community (Aslam & Awang, 2015; Bole et al., 2013; Erokhin et al., 2014; Hyytiä & Kola, 2013; Petrović et al., 2018). It's imperative not to overlook the need for a holistic approach, integrating diverse sectors into rural development, with a focus on those sectors that are central to the region's development. Rural leaders, assuming the roles of development catalysts, must possess managerial and entrepreneurial acumen to engage, motivate, and empower local populations, transforming them from passive spectators into active participants in their communities' development. This role of rural leaders is intricately linked with the function of human resources in rural development.

Usually, government interventions, primarily through policy measures, holds significant importance (Chen & Scott, 2014). However rural development grounded in local management is considered a key success factor (Pollermann et al., 2013). Thus, it's crucial to emphasize that the involvement of other stakeholders is essential. Leaders, with the support of the community, drive development within their regions and are major actors who play a strategic role in addition to the government's function. The important dimensions in rural community leadership towards sustainable development lies in the knowledge management of community leadership, leadership qualities of community leaders and social capital. This theoretical framework is graphical presented in the Figure 1.

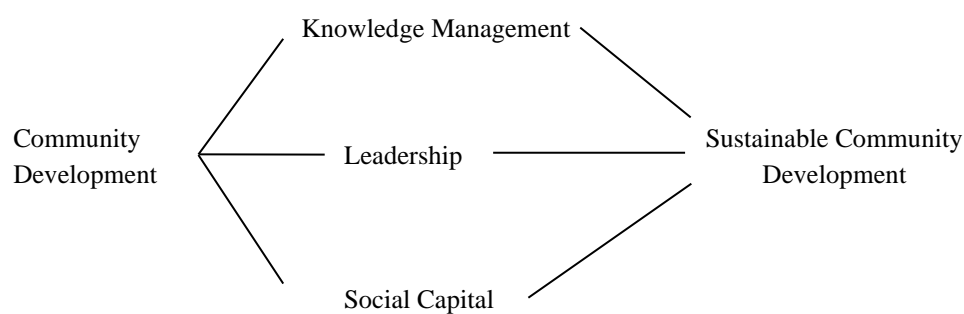


Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

Source: authors

Review of Literature

Literature dealing with this issue are in abundance. Among them, Bhalla et al. (2018) stress that the responsibility of rural leaders is to enable local populations to act as agents of rural development rather than passive observers of progress. According to Gilaninia (2015) Labianca et al. (2016) and Lowe et al. (2019), the overarching aim of rural development should be to enhance both people's quality of life and economic prospects. As such, effective leadership

hinges on the adept management and empowerment of resources, encompassing critical skills such as interpersonal, informational, and decision-making abilities, all of which are integral to resource empowerment, particularly in the realm of human resources. A leader overseeing the development of their village must also recognize the significance of various resources that underpin such progress. These encompass factors like the presence of supportive infrastructure (Cook, 2012), the adept adoption and utilization of advanced technology (Salemink et al., 2017; Shcherbina & Gorbenkova, 2018), and the facilitation of partnerships between communities and investors (German et al., 2016).

According to Horlings and Padt (2011), who have conducted research in rural regions of the Netherlands, the cultivation of commitment and local community support, along with the establishment of a climate of mutual trust by local leaders, emerges as a catalyst for identifying and implementing novel sustainable development trajectories. Key components such as shared values, emotions, enthusiasm, trust, and dedication form the bedrock for garnering backing from both public and private entities in pursuit of development objectives. Marks-Krzyszowska and Michalska-Zyła (2018) have uncovered a moderate level of citizen interest in local government decision-making in rural areas. Elevated levels of this willingness correlate with heightened trust in local authorities, satisfaction with commune governance, citizen influence over substantial community matters, and knowledge about local authority operations.

The role of public involvement in the rejuvenation of rural communities is underscored by Kulig, Mi'skowiec, and Ogórek (2018) in their examination of the Olkusz commune, where genuine community commitment has facilitated the identification of potential pathways for revitalizing the studied locales. Kosmaczewska (2009) has indicated that social capital plays a pivotal role in motivating society's active participation in governance and problem-solving at the local level. Rural leaders' actions are identified as one of the factors that foster the sustainable development of social capital (Bedzik, 2008). Chodkowska-Miszczuk, Biegańska, and Grzelak-Kostulska illustrate this phenomenon through the case of Je zowo commune, wherein the local leader's dedication led to increased interest in her initiatives, institutional support, and effectiveness in securing funding. In summary, existing research underscores the pivotal role of rural community leaders in engendering social capital, activating both endogenous and exogenous determinants of local social and economic systems, and charting transformative pathways.

This holds particular significance within the context of sustainable and enduring development objectives, necessitating a reevaluation of previous development paradigms and extensive societal engagement.

Research Methodology

This study was carried out in the State of Terengganu utilizing a qualitative phenomenological method to address this issue. The research employs qualitative approaches, which can assist researchers in obtaining thorough information: more precise, understandable, and allows them to connect descriptive components of the study (Creswell, 2013).

The study focus was four villages in the state, and information was gathered through interviews and observations. The utilization of several data collection methods allows for more precise triangulation view analysis. However, the primary approach for gathering information from the informants was interviewing them. This approach was employed to comprehend the functions that the local leaders performed in igniting quality of life in rural development.

Interviews were conducted with local residents and leaders of the community to learn more about their daily routines, leadership roles, and methods for resolving community issues, such as meetings and gatherings, as well as their interactions with associated external organizations. In this study, the researcher has found the appropriate informant to address the raised queries. Thus, a total of 7 informants, including community leaders, residents, and representatives of the local government institutions. The data were thematically analyzed based on the themes from the general issues that are identified and the categorization. Researchers are individuals who organize and analyze data based on the main themes. The researcher has also read the entire interview transcript and then reanalyzed the transcript to see the accurate

interpretation of the informants. After analyzing the interview transcripts, the main ideas were identified using an inductive approach in the formation of the main themes.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Informants

Source: Author

Informants	Position	Years of experience in community development
Informant 1	Deputy Director, Youth and Sport Department	20 years
Informant 2	Chairperson JPKK Kampung Kedai Buluh, Kuala Terengganu	More than 10 years
Informant 3	Secretary JPKK Kampung Kedai Buluh, Kuala Terengganu	4 years
Informant 4	Chairperson JPKK Kampung Pulau Redang, Setiu, Terengganu	3 years
Informant 5	Secretary JPKK Kampung Pulau Redang, Setiu, Terengganu	3 years
Informant 6	Chairperson JPKK Kampung Kayu Kelat, Besut Terengganu	More than 10 years
Informant 7	Secretary JPKK Kampung Kayu Kelat, Besut Terengganu	5 years

Source: authors

Results and the Discussions

Following table presents the themes, sub themes investigated and the sources of information

Table 2: Themes, sub themes and sources investigated

Source: Author

Main theme	Sub theme	Source
Knowledge Management	▪ Sharing Knowledge	In-depth interview and field notes
	▪ Collecting new information through social media	
	▪ Building extra knowledge on important topics and divest obsolete knowledge	
	▪ Assessing future information knowledge needs to fit the organization's strategy	
	▪ Enriching the deliverable with more insights to increase its added value	
Leadership	▪ Attentive leadership	In-depth interview and field notes
	▪ A synergy of leaders and community	
	▪ Community Program	
	▪ Economy booster	
Social Capital Bridging and Linking	▪ Channeling	In-depth interview and field notes
	▪ Volunteering	
	▪ Requires more assertive initiative	
	▪ Active collaboration with respective organizations	
	▪ Parenting	
	▪ Women Empowerment	

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management (KM) is an interdisciplinary process encompassing the creation, utilization, dissemination, and preservation of an organization's information and knowledge resources. It constitutes a multifaceted strategy aimed at optimizing the utilization of an organization's knowledge assets to attain business objectives, including enhancing competitive advantage, elevating performance levels, fostering innovation, facilitating knowledge sharing, and perpetually enhancing organizational efficiency. Within the scope of the current study, the significance of knowledge management is underscored across various dimensions, including the dissemination of knowledge, the acquisition of novel information via social media platforms, the cultivation of supplementary knowledge in critical domains, the elimination of outdated knowledge, the evaluation of prospective knowledge requirements aligned with the organization's strategic goals, and the augmentation of deliverables with additional insights to heighten their added value.

Sharing Knowledge

According to the discussion with the respective informant as cited below, he is extremely supportive of the sharing of knowledge through the youth association. As the informants said;

“...Youth development is not left behind; we encourage them to play their role actively in the youth association to increase their self-development...”

Informant 1

“...Youth association as a mediator between state government and community to sharing all the critical knowledge related to community development...”

Informant 2

“...We give so many opportunities to the youth to deliver their aspiration in several dimensions but the problem that we faced is a lack of participation.... thus, we need to do something relevant...”

Informant 3

“...In youth associations, we emphasize ‘back to the tradition’ activity...here our youth acknowledge what we have done before...in other words, we appreciate the mainstream knowledge and old traditions...”

Informant 4

Collecting new information through social media

Social media plays an important role in disseminating new information regarding development programs and humanitarian aid. The illustrates of idea as below:

“...All the career opportunities and useful information regarding the self-development of youth are published actively on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and online pamphlets. We as a state government recognize and reward the most outstanding youth associations to upgrade the self-development of youth...”

Informant 4

“...All the humanitarian aid and program are disseminated in WhatsApp groups among the community ...”

Informant 6

“...Social media plays an important role to share all the community programs, especially financial assistance...”

Informant 7

Building extra knowledge on important topics and divest obsolete knowledge

Information management is also vital in divesting obsolete knowledge through improving the level of acceptance towards programme and humanitarian aid. As the informants said;

“...Generally, the level of acceptance towards state government program in moderate level... hence the weaknesses of the programme are actively discussed for the future development...”

Informant 1

“...We have very positive feedback in delivering human humanitarian aid and programmes towards the community. However, there are some weaknesses that need to be improved. This information is very useful to us because we can improve our delivery performance...”

Informant 3

“...The positive feedback from the community helps us determine what we need to do for the next improvement...”

Informant 6

Assessing future information knowledge needs to fit the organization's strategy

In addition, assessing future information empowers the ability of local leaders to implement new strategic planning. This strategic planning is a vital matter among local leaders to bring a new idea to the community so they are not left behind in development. As the informants said;

“...Every year we have a strategic planning for youth development through the collaboration with the national youth consultative council...”

Informant 4

“...The importance of information management is clearly well known in brainstorming the new strategic planning for future especially for the community development...”

Informant 5

Enriching the deliverable with more insights to increase its added value

The community leaders encouraged development skills among the small-medium enterprises' owners. In this matter, they provide several training and development programs towards small-medium enterprises owners. The impact of the programme is vital to the added skills and competency of the owner in the future. As the informants said;

“...The training and development programme is crucially important to the development of small medium enterprises. We are conducting the training and development programme among us and justify what do's and don'ts to success in the future...”

Informant 1

“...Here, all the small medium enterprises owners are required to enroll in several training and development programmes. The training and development programme is important towards to the success of their business ahead...”

Informant 4

As a conclusion, the importance of knowledge management is clearly and well defined by the informants through many dimensions. From the essence of the participant, the researcher has identified knowledge management as a crucial agent for the local community development process. Without a proper understanding of knowledge management, local community is still searching the direction to bring the progress of the local community to a higher level.

Leadership

Profoundly, leadership pertains to the capacity of an individual or a collective entity to exert influence and provide direction to fellow members within an organizational context. Leaders are a ubiquitous and essential presence across diverse spheres of society, spanning realms such as business, politics, regional institutions, and community-based organizations. Not surprisingly, current informants have noticed that the essence of leadership is clearly demonstrated in the community. The multiple dimensions of leadership are well presented in attentive leadership, synergy of leaders and community, community program, distribution of information, and economy booster.

Attentive leadership

Collaborations with local authorities and government is the main contribution in attentive leadership for the current study. There is several important aspects to this respective collaboration such as to curb the drug abuse phenomena and other deviant affairs. The impact from these collaborations, is that the local communities gain the confidence to live in a safe community. As some of the informants said;

“...If a community issue such as drug abuse arises, we would collaborate with the National Anti-Drug Agency of Malaysia (AADK) to combat drug abuse among Terengganu youngsters. Additionally, we also conduct seminars and awareness campaigns about the risks of narcotics and provide information to local law enforcement and collaborate with the committee ‘gerak saraf’ to fight against the drug problem...”

Informant 3

“...Prior to conducting a youth program, we will monitor to ensure that it is appropriate for local youth; we will arbitrate prior to telling or informing the EXCO first, and the EXCO will then inform the JPKK...”

Informant 6

“...We will cooperate with the authorities by sending information to the police to overcome community problems such as narcotics, illegal racing, or other criminal activities. In addition, we also work with local government agency (AADK) in organizing campaigns and briefings on the dangers of drugs...”

Informant 2

“...We collaborated with the government to provide a boat to transport food supplies to people who had run out of food during the Period of Movement Control Order (MCO). Additionally, we aid with the delivery of food and medical supplies to the poor, elderly, and those in need...”

Informant 3

A synergy of leaders and community

The essence of leadership in the current study also produces an effective synergy between leaders and community. The levels of acceptance and social support are encouraging towards the local community programme. In line with the huge social support, the local community hopes several programmes need to be implemented for the future. As the informants said;

“...The reaction to the program undertaken in collaboration with JPKK has been really encouraging. The people were excited to join and be part of it...”

Informant 2

“...The community, regardless of age, works cooperatively to address issues like substance abuse, burglary, and so on. Each night, village members are assigned to monitor the village area to maintain its safety...”

Informant 4

Community Program

In addition, there are various community programmes that are implemented for the local community. Examples are those such as single moms and the disabled programme, blood donation programme, the distribution of food boxes, free van ambulance services, counseling and stress recovery services, and others health assistance. From the researchers' insights, the main impact of the community programme is wholeheartedly towards the community psychological well-being. As some of the informants said;

“...Initiatives that benefit underserved communities, such as single moms and the disabled. Several programs are offered, including a school donation, food basket, and festive programs...”

Informant 4

“...We collaborate with the ministry of health Malaysia (MOH) to hold a blood donation program...”

Informant 7

“...This support initiative is being implemented by Majlis Perundangan Pertubuhan Islam Malaysia (MAPIM) and the local NGOs to assist asnaf and others affected by the lockdown. The assistance includes the distribution of food boxes, free van ambulance services, counseling and stress recovery services, assistance in resolving rent arrears for desperate groups, assistance with hot food packs, construction of 15 nursing homes, wheelchairs, and medical beds, and mobile clinic services...”

Informant 3

“...To foster a strong sense of community among the villagers, the youths here conduct sports activities with the village residents. There were activities such as football matches and traditional game activities such as traditional coconut grater, “dikir barat”, “silat” and so on...”

“...The village has also organized a competition for the most beautiful house, with prizes awarded to the winners, in order to raise awareness and practice of environmental health and cleanliness in the process of establishing a united village and to foster community pride...”

Informant 4

Economy booster

As a respective leader, they should be alert and know what the crucial things need to address for the community's financial status. Communities have several entrepreneur skills such as online business, homestay and other social community businesses but the incentive also needs to be focused. However, to bolster the community's financial status, there are plenty of methods to apply the incentives. As some of the informants said;

“...In terms of business opportunities, we have provided information to youth to apply to the Yayasan Pembangunan Keluarga Terengganu (YPKT)...”

Informant 3

“...We have granted about RM2,000 in small entrepreneur development funds to youths who are interested in starting a business...”

Informant 2

“...With the initiative by the village head and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, a homestay project was introduced to this community to generate new income opportunities and improve the local community's socioeconomic *status*...”

Informant 4

In summary, the impact of the respective leadership in this study demonstrates that the community leaders always stick together with community members in many dimensions. The members of the community have strong relationships with the community leaders and this type of leadership is seen as a precursor to zero social conflict in future. Leaders can create a vision and motivate people to make it a reality with good leadership. Indeed, human capital is the differentiator in today's knowledge-based. As a result, leaders must attract, inspire, and ultimately retain as much talent as possible.

Social Capital

This study delves into a lively discourse on social capital encompassing bridging and linking facets. Bridging social capital pertains to associations that establish connections among individuals transcending societal divisions. These often revolve around factors such as race, class, or religion. These connections serve as conduits linking distinct communities, groups, and organizations. It is crucial to distinguish bridging and linking social capital from bonding social capital, as the latter is rooted within tightly-knit social groups characterized by dense networks of individuals who share a profound sense of identity and belonging. In this study, several dimensions are identified in social capital bridging and linking areas such as channeling, and volunteering which require more assertive initiatives, and active collaboration with various organizations, parenting, and women empowerment.

Channeling

As a community leader, an informant provides information to the community members to upgrade their businesses. In addition, training and development is accessible for them to increase their skill development. As some of the informants said;

“We do supply updated information and which channels need to be referred for youths to build their career and seek aid and also tokens to boost their businesses.”

Informant 6

“...Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Kawasan Pembangunan Pertanian Terengganu Utara (KETARA) have become our sole support for this village

tourism. For any community member that is interested to join homestay tourism, we will provide them with courses. It is to make them properly arrange and organize their houses...”

Informant 4

Volunteering

Volunteering is also a tool in upgrading social capital bridging and linking. The impact of the volunteer assistance is to give an awareness towards the whole community that welfare affairs is our priority. As some of the informants said;

“...We initiate several productive volunteering events with other organizations for the communities. As per our knowledge, floods recently occurred in our state (Terengganu). Hence, we made a program with mosque committees for the post-flood situation by encouraging the community to work hand-in-hand with our organization to clean and preserve their buildings that were affected by the flood...”

Informant 1

Requires more assertive initiative

Multiple initiatives are available nowadays, but we are lacking in the guidelines to sustain local registered organizations. Besides, we need some experts for the knowledge development of rural youth. As some of the informants said:

“...Indeed. Since there were changes in Malaysia’s political situation, plenty of previous initiatives also shifted or halted. So, this also undeniably affected local states’ affairs, especially in the matter of registered organizations. We need more firm guidelines and measures to ensure registered organizations sustain the purpose of their organization’s establishment...”

Informant 3

“...At the same time, our organization is in dire need of more experts to supply inputs and knowledge for the rural youths. Previously, we had experts for pallets and honey businesses. However, more experts are needed. So, we have the opportunity to educate people with more diverse knowledge...”

Informant 4

Parenting

Besides, parenting is also the main debate in social capital bridging and linking. As one of the informants said;

“...Social issues that have been going around in this community, especially regarding drugs, are awfully high in statistics. Nevertheless, it is vice versa in terms of crime. Even though most social problems are interrelated, it is different here. Due to the constant supply of money from the parents, youths seem didn’t face any trouble purchasing drugs/pills. Adding to the problem, parents either ignore or don’t care about their kids’ purchases. This loop is never-ending...”

Women Empowerment

Women are not left behind from the development and the contribution of women in the national economy creates a positive impact wholeheartedly. To help and empower women's

spirituality to succeed in their businesses, several intensive courses and loans are available for them. Informants said;

“...Department of Women’s Development, Yayasan Pembangunan Keluarga Terengganu (YPKT), and other women’s NGOs undeniably have provided so many courses and loans for women in Redang Island here, able to generate their own income...”

Informant 4

“...Additionally, women villagers manage small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to create and increase their income. Frozen satay, pumpkin donuts, rempeyek, salted duck eggs, banana snacks, and kelulut honey are among the items sold...”

Informant 6

In conclusion, the acknowledgment of the importance of collaboration, particularly within various organizations, as part of the framework of social capital bridging and linking, represents a pivotal initial phase in realizing the advantages associated with a collaborative workplace. Looking forward, it is evident that technology will serve as a potent catalyst for stimulating collaborative efforts. It is advisable for agencies to proactively enhance their utilization of electronic document management systems to facilitate and optimize such collaboration.

Discussion

According to these findings, this paper recognizes three dimensions in a role of community leadership towards sustainable development: knowledge management, leadership, dan social capital bridging and linking. Specifically, this kind of leadership well known as a transactional leadership and predominate in the governance styles of leaders in the rural areas of Terengganu. In knowledge management, the role of the rural leader clearly explained in terms of sharing knowledge and collecting new information through social media. There are several benefits of sharing knowledge such as generating critical information among the youth, upgrading the self-development of youth, and fulfilling the needs of youth development in the future. In addition, the state government recognizes and rewards the most outstanding youth associations. The state government also cooperates with the national youth consultative council to implement an efficient input towards youth development. Indirectly, the level of technology literacy is efficient among the current communities. On top of that, the state government is also actively organizing career carnivals to provide new career opportunities among the youth.

The primary purpose of the career carnival lies in offering substantial career prospects to young individuals and the broader community. Additionally, rural leaders play a pivotal role in acquiring new knowledge on crucial subjects while discarding outdated information. This multi-faceted role underscores the leaders' genuine commitment to the development of their villages, coupled with their awareness of the critical resources that underpin such progress. These resources encompass essential elements like supportive infrastructure (Cook, 2012), the adept adoption and utilization of advanced technology (Salemink et al., 2017; Shcherbina & Gorbenkova, 2018), and the cultivation of partnerships between local communities and investors (German et al., 2016).

Furthermore, rural leaders engage in assessing future knowledge requirements to align with the organization's strategic goals. These leaders, functioning as catalysts for development and possessing managerial competencies to motivate, inspire, and empower local populations, transcend the realm of mere spectators, transforming individuals into active participants in their community's development journey. This leadership role is inseparable from the broader function of human resources in rural development. The government's pivotal role in rural development is underscored, particularly concerning policy formulation (Chen & Scott, 2014) and other contributions to overall development efforts.

Lastly, another dimension involves enhancing the quality of deliverables by incorporating additional insights to augment their intrinsic value. Researchers, in their capacity as community leaders, actively foster skills development among owners of small and medium-sized enterprises. According to Bhalla et al. (2018), the responsibility of rural leaders is to empower local populations to actively participate in rural development as agents of progress rather than passive observers. The ultimate objective of rural development is to enhance the quality of life for individuals and contribute to economic prosperity (Gilaninia, 2015; Labianca et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2019).

In the leadership dimension, rural leaders in Terengganu exemplify a vigilant approach through collaborative efforts with local authorities and government entities to deter deviant behaviors and activities. This vigilant leadership assumes paramount significance within the framework of sustainable development, as it fosters creative problem-solving, learning, adaptability, and facilitates transformative change (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Moreover, rural leaders in Terengganu play a pivotal role in fostering robust community cohesion. Within the context of sustainable development, village leaders drive progress in one or more pivotal sectors, such as agriculture, often facilitated by active community involvement (Terziev & Arabska, 2016). The overarching aim of rural development should be to enhance the well-being of individuals and contribute to economic growth (Gilaninia, 2015; Labianca et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2019). Consequently, one of the key determinants of a leader's success lies in their ability to efficiently and effectively manage resources, including several critical skills such as interpersonal, informational, and decision-making capacities that are integral to resource empowerment, particularly in the realm of human resources. Researchers also acknowledge the vital role played by rural leaders in supporting community programs and bolstering the local economy.

The community programs in question represent grassroots innovations that typically adopt a problem-solving approach at the local level. They encompass both technological and social innovations (Seyfang & Smith, 2007). These programs are primarily motivated by the need to develop new services that address societal requirements, thereby contributing to the establishment of more sustainable and inclusive societies (Grimm et al., 2013). The success of community projects hinges on specific skills, including group collaboration, streamlining meetings, empowering groups to make decisions, and operating effectively within a team framework (Seyfang et al., 2014).

In terms of stimulating economic growth, rural leaders implement various initiatives and strategies aimed at enhancing the financial well-being of local residents. Within this context, rural leaders recognize the enduring role of the government in improving rural areas, which has been sustained over time through diverse development endeavors spanning political, economic, social, technological, and environmental dimensions. In conclusion, the current findings underscore the significance of economic well-being among local citizens, along with the optimization of human resources' value (Joesoef, 2018). It is evident from the research that defining a clear vision for development in rural communities is of paramount importance. Additionally, two pivotal components in the development process involve the cultivation of trust and the provision of support, with rural leaders assuming a critical role in meeting these challenges and inspiring local communities.

In this study, social capital bridging and linking as a role of community leadership towards sustainable development. Rural leaders provide an information to the community members to upgrade their entrepreneurship skills by training and development (Ibrahim et al., 2023). This situation indicates rural leaders having a good commitment to improving community well-being and the community supported the initiative. This situations in line with Kosmaczewska (2009), social capital is largely responsible for how willingly society is willing to participate in the governance process and solve local problems. Besides, rural leaders also creating more initiative to empowered parenting and women empowerment. The main issue is there is a lack of bonding between parents and children. Here, this is the potential reason several teenagers today are involved in criminal affairs. Parenting affairs is not a new issue but this issue is very worldwide and actively discussed especially in delinquent behavior nationally.

Rural leaders also interested to empower women's spirituality to succeed in their business and occupation by giving several intensive courses and loans are available for them. One of the factors promoting the sustainable development of social capital is the activity of rural leaders (Bedzik, 2008).

Chodkowska-Miszczuk, et al. (2017) has recognized an enhancement in social capital resulting from the dedicated efforts of local leaders. This improvement has manifested through heightened interest in community-initiated activities, increased institutional support, and improved effectiveness in securing funding. In the realm of volunteerism, rural leaders have made a deliberate shift towards emphasizing welfare-related issues by allocating more initiatives to address them. These developments align with the principles of community leadership within the context of sustainable development.

This approach has been employed, for instance, in the realm of social innovation, which aims to provide solutions to societal challenges while fostering individual well-being (Rey-Martí et al., 2016). Active collaboration with relevant organizations constitutes a sub-theme within the broader dimension of social capital. Such collaborations present promising prospects for the community's future endeavors. Social networks, particularly those facilitating the exchange of resources, knowledge, and skills, play a pivotal role in these processes (Raven & Geels, 2010). Additionally, intermediary entities can facilitate these collaborative efforts (Geels & Deuten, 2006). The capacity of extensive and deep social networks to connect stakeholders and pool resources benefits the specific niche being addressed (Smith & Raven, 2012; Verhees & Verbong, 2015).

Conclusions

This investigation delves into the realms of knowledge management, leadership, and social capital bridging and linking, shedding light on the caliber of rural community leadership within the sustainable development context of Terengganu. Sustainable development, as explicitly outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, underscores the imperative of granting citizens a voice in governance processes (Arnstein, 2019). Moreover, it pertains to the domain of peace, justice, and robust institutions, envisioning a landscape characterized by responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all echelons. The efficacy of rural development is substantially contingent upon the quality of rural community leadership attributes. Notably, strategic leadership assumes a pivotal role in the development trajectory.

From this standpoint, the findings of this study offer a foundation for formulating key conclusions and recommendations aimed at assisting local leaders as they further refine their leadership competencies. The insights generated within this research are poised to provide valuable guidance for scholars and societal advocates seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their initiatives within local communities.

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