

Mediating Role of Government in Rural Development

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Abstract: Despite the progress made in improving the social quality of rural community development in Malaysia, there are still several challenges and issues that need to be further and significantly addressed. These include the economic security of the rural community, fulfilling social inclusion, social cohesion amongst members of the community and effective and efficient government support initiatives and systems. Based on these background, the main objective of this study is to indicate the influence of the community development indicators on social Quality in Baling, Kedah, Malaysia. This study was exploratory study using cluster sampling technique of which the population is divided into three constituents of Baling. Based on the convenience sampling technique, the sample of 400 respondents were selected from three clusters that are conveniently accessible. The findings of the study showed that the social quality was most directly influenced by the characteristics of social development indicators; social economic security, social cohesion, and social inclusion, with government support acting as a major mediator and having a considerable impact. It is recommended that similar studies with other significant indicators on social quality of rural communities are conducted in other rural areas of Malaysia.

Keywords: *Social Quality, Social Economic Security, Social Cohesion, Social Inclusion, Government Support.*

I. Introduction

Malaysia is aiming to achieve a high-income nation status within the next five years, and its Shared Prosperity Vision by 2030 (MDEC, 2019). Several efforts have been made to expedite the country's development including social economic development of rural areas. Government spending on rural socio-economic and technological infrastructure such as roads, hospitals, schools, water systems, electricity grids, and telecommunications are all examples of rural social development that contribute to economic growth and the provision of essential services. It has been argued that if rural communities had more opportunities to compete with metropolitan ones, they would see faster socioeconomic progress (Koehler, 2020). Economic and social conditions, the reduction of rural poverty, and the development of rural residents are all expected to improve as a result of government public spending on infrastructure particularly in the rural areas. (Pieper et al., 2019). In this study Baling, Kedah was chosen as a case in point.

This study is crucial for the development of the rural community in Baling, Kedah, Malaysia. The objectives of the study are to establish the perceived social quality levels of rural communities through an analysis of social economic security, social cohesiveness, and social inclusion and the impact of government supports on the development of Baling District. The results of this research are going to be used as a basis for building better rural community development in Baling, Kedah.

II. Social Quality in Rural Community

Improving social quality of rural community initiatives helps bolster indigenous communities' economic foundations and provide local job opportunities. In

creasing agricultural production, expanding job opportunities, and expanding nonfarm employment have all been connected by Malin Arvidson and Helen Kara (2013) to reducing rural poverty and raising rural standards of living. Multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits are thought to result from rural development. Wei & Yan (2018)'s research in rural China shows that rural infrastructure is essential for reducing poverty, fostering community development, and fostering agricultural growth in developing countries. In addition, they identified eight crucial measuring criteria for determining the benefits of investment in rural development that conclude the **second research gap**; the satisfaction and social quality with regards to education, job, standard of living, accommodation, family life, health and social life on which raising the employment rate, the quality of

life, the standard of living, the availability of connected amenities, the benefit to safety, the air pollution index, the degree of surface water pollution, the solid waste pollution level, the effect on water, and the soil loss.

Abbott & Wallace, (2012a) defines rural development as a constant effort to improve the quality of life in rural areas via changes in the social, cultural, economic, and environmental spheres. The key drivers of social and economic development in rural areas are the promotion of economic growth and the alleviation of poverty (Naguib & Smucker, 2009). The only way to alleviate poverty and improve the standard of living for people in rural areas is through economic expansion. For instance, Thangiah et al., (2020), argued that a systems approach may be more suited to assessing the function of rural educational institutions, with "the community system" referring to the combination of relatively objective variables of economic infrastructure and the satisfaction of essential social demands. Unit Perancang Ekonomi, (2015) investigated the impact of community empowerment on sustainable development in rural districts of Malaysia. The authors discovered that the relationship between community empowerment and project sustainability is strengthened by a feeling of community, which in turn helps inhabitants improve their living standard. The standard of living is the degree to which individuals and groups have access to and are integrated into the different institutions and social relationships of everyday life. Like this, a **third research gap** that was developed on the exogenous backdrop is required on the perception of the social quality of rural communities when looking at social inclusion.

According to a research conducted by Mnguni et al., (2017) the overall improvement in development is judged by a combination of areas of community interest. Societies with a vested interest must choose and agree upon social development indicators (Vasstrøm & Normann, 2019). Smirnovs et al., (2019) determined that the essential interference measures and circumstances must be met to meet a sustainability norm. Community development must take into account the wants and requirements of the local population if sustainability is to be achieved. Investment strategies at the national level in infrastructure projects and development plans are crucial for community development and will continue to be an important part of a state's strategy with respect to social welfare and economic growth (Gordon, 2012). According to Hussain et al., (2022) sustainable rural infrastructure projects can successfully advance development goals.

Even though academics and researchers have published numerous articles in the past about improving socioeconomic sustainability, there is an absence of study that combines and standardizes the relationship between social development characteristics and social quality in the setting of rural areas, particularly the northern region of Malaysia (BNM, 2020). By presenting and evaluating a conceptual model of how social development indicators can affect social quality in rural areas, this study modifies earlier studies. This study's main goal has been to improve understanding of social quality initiatives from socioeconomic development in order to fill in this knowledge gap (Yee & Chang, 2009). Thus, by examining the impact of social development indicators, The purpose of this study is to fill in some of the gaps left by previous research. These indicators are social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion, that contributes to social quality which drives the community development in the context of rural territories in Baling, Kedah.

III. Research Questions

Based on detail mapping on the theoretical, empirical and statistical gaps on the social quality of rural community as well as social development indicators, four research questions were set up for the current study, representing a structural model that was postulated using a causal effect relationship approach. The first three research questions investigated the linear or direct relationship between social development indicators as exogenous factors and social quality as an endogenous variable. In addition, the fourth research question contributes to the indirect impact link, which mediates the connection between social development indicators and social quality. The research questions listed below are aligned with the research aims, hypotheses, and conclusions.

- RQ1** *Does social economic security give significant direct effect on rural community's social quality?*
RQ2 *Does social cohesion give significant direct effect on rural community's social quality?*
RQ3 *Does social inclusion give significant direct effect on rural community's social quality?*
RQ4 *Does government support mediate between social development (social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion) and social quality?*

IV. Research Objectives

The current study established four research objectives, and its clearly established direct and indirect effect relationship between social development indicators and the social quality of rural communities, as well as the mediating effect of government support on the suggested structural model. The following are the specific research objectives that correspond to the problem statement, research objectives, research hypothesis, and research findings.

- RO1** *To determine the direct effect of social economic security on the social quality of rural community.*
- RO2** *To determine the direct effect of social cohesion on the social quality of rural community.*
- RO3** *To determine the direct effect of social inclusion on the social quality of rural community.*
- RO4** *To determine the mediating effect of government support between social development (social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion) and social quality of rural community.*

a. Significance of the Study

Social quality refers to the overall well-being and quality of life experienced by individuals within a society, including factors such as access to healthcare, education, employment, social support, and political participation. The study presents contributions to theory, context, and methodology. Similarly, it provides policymakers and practitioners with profound insights for enhancing the social quality of rural communities in Baling, Kedah, and notably in Malaysia via social development indicators. The present study is expected to contribute to the existent body of knowledge in multiple ways. Firstly, the present research study contribution was to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework of social quality through social development indicators and mediation of government support.

b. Scope of Study

The scope of the study is determined by the parameters under which it will work. This involves establishing the research topic and articulating precisely what the researcher is examining, including the permissible range of variables (Simon and Goes, 2013). Consequently, this study focuses solely on the rural village of Baling, which is located in Kedah, Malaysia.

c. Thesis Structure

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 1 developed the problem, research gaps, and problem statement on the basis of epistemological and ontological evidence. The chapter presented study questions and research objectives on the hypothesised model's causal effect connection settings for variables. As the primary purpose of the study, there are four research questions and objectives. As scientific rationale for doing research on the social quality of rural communities as predicted by social economic security, social cohesion, and social inclusion, the significance of the study is offered. Furthermore, the present study proposes government aid as a mediator in the interplay between exogenous and endogenous variables.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Using systematic review procedures, underpinning hypotheses for the creation of a hypothesised model are tabulated on a series of mapping. Chapter 2 defines research variables as both hypothesised and observed variables as item measurements that support underlying ideas. A thorough examination of the causal effect relationship among variables will provide a set of pathways that translate into a model of rural community social quality based on social development indicators. The construction of a conceptual model as hypothetical routes on the model of the social quality of rural communities was thoroughly reviewed in Chapter 2 as well.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Using techniques from Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Chapter 3 established a quantitative model of an advanced nature. Using cross-sectional data and a multivariate data analysis method, the interaction between exogenous and endogenous variables has been identified in depth. The timescale for the aforementioned cross-sectional is June to November 2022, and Chapter 3 also deals with the platform for screening preliminary data, demographic profiles, hypothesis testing, and the trip toward the validation of the hypothesised model. Additionally provided were the measurement's pre-test and pilot test.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussions

All major findings from Chapter 4 are presented as outcomes. All relevant findings are presented logically and impartially. Figures and tables have been used to present clear and specific findings. The use of subjective interpretation of results in this chapter's discussion section is discouraged. Chapter 4's detailed conclusions and explanation of the study of the quantitative data. This study used a descriptive study design and the SPSS method (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Baling's rural community's demographic profiles have been tabulated using descriptive frequency analysis. The early portion of the hypothesised model was strengthened by a series of preliminary screenings till reliability and validity of measurement. This study primarily created, tested, and validated a hypothesised model of a rural Malaysian community. An analysis of hypothesis testing based on the goodness of model fit made a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge and served as the primary manual for practitioners in Malaysia's public sector management.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The fifth and last chapter discusses the significance, relevance, and significance of earlier acquired results. The chapter focuses mostly on reviewing and describing the findings while determining their link to the

research topics and hypotheses that was presented previously. This chapter illustrates the compatibility of the findings with the current body of knowledge, the contributions of new insights, and the implications for theory and practise. Chapter 5 describes in depth the accomplishment of research objectives and the synchronisation of the research journey. Conclusions and suggestions are presented. The research journey was summarised with written support for the contribution to the body of knowledge and practitioners. This study has constructed an empirical model of the social quality of a rural community using the deductive method, based on the rule of thumb of structural equation model. Limitation of the study and suggestion for further research will finalise the research scene significantly.

d. Operational Definition

The following terms are defined to illustrate their application in this research:

i. Social Quality

Instead of focusing just on health outcomes, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the concept of quality of life (QoL) in 1947 to encompass an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. But since 1995, the phrase has been expanded to encompass how people see themselves in relation to their goals, aspirations, standards, and worries, all within the context of their own culture and set of values. It is a broad concept that incorporates in a complex manner a person's physical health, psychological state, degree of independence, social links, personal ideas, and relationships with key environmental factors. Overall, social quality is an all-encompassing notion encompassing all aspects of an individual's existence (Hays and Reeve, 2010).

ii. Social Economic Security

"Economic security" can be defined as the ability of people to satisfy their needs on a regular basis. "Economic insecurity," on the other hand, occurs when there are insufficient resources to pay for food, housing, medical treatment, and other necessities (Gimenez et al., 2012). Cultural standards influence what is included in the list of necessities for economic security, implying that both what counts as economic security and how it is calculated have evolved over time (Griffiths et al., 2013). The International Committee of the Red Cross, a non-governmental organisation that works to improve global economic security, has identified five essential livelihood outcomes to monitor economic security: food consumption, food production, living conditions, income, and the capacity of civil society organisations and governments to meet people's needs.

iii. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion, as defined by the (Ruggeri et al., 2020), is a concept that includes values and principles which aim to ensure that all citizens, without discrimination and on an equal footing, have access to fundamental social and economic rights. Social cohesion is a guiding principle that requires ongoing communal vigilance and awareness regarding all forms of prejudice, inequality, marginalisation, and exclusion. From an operational point of view, a strategy of social cohesion refers to any kind of action which ensures that every citizen, every individual, can have within their community, the opportunity of access:

- to the means to secure their basic needs;
- to progress;
- to protection and legal rights;
- to dignity and social confidence.

iv. Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities, that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life (United Nations, 1995). Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

v. Community Development

Community development is the process by which a neighborhood's social environment influences the well-being of its members through the characteristics of their social relationships, such as the degree of mutual trust and sentiments of connection. According to Putnam (1993), residents of "close-knit" neighbourhoods are more likely to work together toward common goals like cleaning up litter and making public spaces safer, sharing information about childcare and jobs, and enforcing informal social controls like discouraging crime and other undesirable behaviours like drunkenness, littering, and graffiti.

vi. Government Support

The rise in deepening and expanding public engagement globally, the importance of community development has become pivotal for well-functioning, twenty-first century democracies. Constructive relationships between communities and the institutions of government make community development not only desirable, but necessary and viable as it is likely to lead to more equitable, sustainable public decisions and improve the social quality of the rural community (Dinesen, 2019). Community development helps governments improve the efficiency, legitimacy and transparency of their decision making. By embracing and encouraging participation, it enables policy makers to make more informed decisions by engaging with, and carefully

mapping out the needs, opinions and visions of social quality of the rural community on issues that matter to them.

e. Summary

Chapter 1 determined the research journey's introduction, which configured the problem statement, research questions, research aims, and importance of the study in detail. The present study clearly focused on the social quality of rural community in Malaysia on the social development indicators, namely social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion evaluation in Baling. This study also revealed the moderating effect of government assistance on the structural model analysis of rural community social quality.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will comprehensively review the literature relevant to the study. It will first look at the focus area, which is social quality. Next, it will review the factors that contribute to social quality, namely social economic security, social cohesion, and social inclusion. This is followed by a look at government support that acts as the mediator variable. The chapter closes with the development of this study's theoretical framework.

2.2 Social Quality

The more options individuals have to prepare for the future, the more likely they are to be happy with their lives, and the greater the quality of society, the more likely people are to participate socially. Economic performance and the quality of governance in a society have a close relationship, as do individuals' perceptions of the quality of their society (Bohnke2006;Watson et al.2009). Individual impressions of the options accessible to them are influenced by their position in the societal opportunity frameworks, as is agency and the potential to build competencies. It is anticipated that societal quality to have a significant impact on subjective life satisfaction, a good society should have contented people (Abbott & Wallace, 2012).

The concept of social quality originated in the 1990s as a result of scientific and political concerns over the preponderance of economism in discussions on the future of the European Union (EU) and in a number of its member states, including the United Kingdom (Beck et al.1998). The origins of the social quality paradigm can be traced to the efforts of European academics to counteract a societal climate that prioritised economic development over social welfare (Bouget, 2001). Originally, social quality was described as *"the extent to which people are able to engage in their communities' economic, social, and cultural life under conditions that improve their well-being and individual potential"* (Beck et al. 1997). Social quality, as a measure of societal advancement, offers both advantages and disadvantages.

Social quality is a broad notion that refers to the quality of people's daily lives. It is more focused with the social in a larger context than GDP, which measures "the economic" in a narrow sense - it extends the measure to the social aspects of societal progress (Yee & Chang, 2009). As such, social quality starts with the fact that people are social by nature, which is different from the way neoliberalism focuses on the individual. The realm of the social is made up of two things: the quest for self-realization and the creation of the many groups that help people do that. Two sets of tensions—between individual or biographical development and societal development (micro vs. macro), and between institutions and organisations, on the one hand, and families, groups, and communities, on the other—underlie the interaction between self-identity and collective identities (Holman & Walker, 2018). Social quality is defined as a function of the constant tension between individual self-realization and participation in the various collective identities that constitute everyday life (micro and macro world), and between the world of organizations and the one comprising informal relationships (system and life world) (Yee & Chang, 2009).

For this social process to take place in any given group or culture, several basic criteria must be met. These include things like human rights and the rule of law (personal security), individual competency (the capacity to engage socially responsibly), and the openness of social organisations or collectives (social responsiveness). Reflecting on these assumptions, Beck et al. (1998) proposed the definition of social qualities as *"the extent to which people are able to participate in the social, economic and cultural lives of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential"* (Beck et al.1998:4).

A key concern for social quality policy is how many factors affect people's ability to fully participate in society and be recognised for their contributions. Despite the enduring belief that social inequities are the root of disease, a focus on socioeconomic security in particular reveals elements that can be changed (e.g. household costs) (Dinesen, 2019). But social quality extends far beyond the realm of economics to show that issues with social inclusion, cohesion, and empowerment are basic causes in and of themselves (IASQ, 2022). Increasing civic participation, trust, and interdepartmental networks may benefit public health, but this will only be the case if the varying means by which individuals gain access to these networks are taken into consideration (LI, 2014). Individual rights, political efficacy, and social identities are all fascinating new frontiers for social policy study.

According to Holman & Walker (2018), social quality offers the chance to look beyond specific socioeconomic status variables and evaluate comprehensive policy approaches because it is a theoretically grounded framework focused on the social ties that support society. The focus should not just be on the wealth and power that come from various social positions, but also on how society as a whole supports and encourages inclusion, cohesion, and socioeconomic security. This is necessary to sustain public health for all members of society. According to Phillips (2007), social quality varies from social quality since the social quality approach does not equate the quality of the social to the accumulation of life quality of each individual member.

Both objective and subjective definitions of social quality have been proposed by several scholars. While the latter focuses on how people feel about those situations, the former emphasises the objective conditions, such as products and services that secure people's existence. For the past three decades, academics have argued about whether the concept of a quality life should be based on objective circumstances or subjective experiences (Prescott-Allen, 2001).

Ali & Lin (2019) also agreed to the approach of studying both subjective and objective indicators for social quality. The authors argued that social quality studies have traditionally concentrated on the conditional factors, using social quality indicators as the reflectors of social reality for cross-national comparison (Berman 2000; Van der Maesen and Walker 2011). However, by contrasting the described realities and people's perceptions, this comparison can be brought into a deeper level of analysis.

In their investigation into the social climate in Peshawar, Pakistan, Ali & Lin (2019) found that family and friends were the most common sources of financial assistance, and that there was little public support available for those who were struggling. As a result, the informal network's support appeared to be rated higher than the public sector's in terms of socioeconomic security. The inclusion segment illustrates that society is extremely stratified and that vulnerable social groups frequently experience disrespect. In spite of these drawbacks, society nevertheless holds numerous social events and meetings and takes great pride in its country. In terms of cohesion, trust in friends, neighbours, and the legal system is still strong, while it is weaker when it comes to strangers, the government, and public employees. Empowerment achieved the lowest score. Specific factors like role in political issues and voluntary participation were notably low. The study's findings demonstrated that social quality is influenced by social quality and perceived social quality from the perspectives of wealth, gender, education, and age, in various metrics, and is frequently underestimated in several subjective well-being studies as a whole.

To know what makes a society liveable, it's important to measure people's subjective contentment with that culture. People are viewed as social beings who need to be empowered to meet their own needs because they are considered as embodied beings who are social beings who are situated in a certain moment and place. Subjective well-being cannot determine this on its own (Abbott and Wallace, 2012).

Maesenv.d. (2004) opined that resources and social connections are key components of social quality. Individuals are engaged in a variety of social relationships, and some societies are more exclusive than inclusive when it comes to particular categories of people, such as immigrants and underprivileged groups. The four dimensions that make up the theoretical foundation for social quality are socio-economic security, social cohesiveness, social inclusion, and social empowerment. Each dimension has a distinct theoretical focus and is interdependent with the others. Beck et al. (2001) had earlier suggested that each dimension of social quality has its own domain and subdomains that can express their core values and indicators that can measure the objective welfare circumstances of a society and the subjective feelings of its members towards social quality. That is, social quality is unrelated to the conflict between people (agency) and society (structure).

Abbott and Wallace (2012) proposed the Social Quality Model, a multidimensional concept grounded in sociological theory. Society is seen of as the outcome of deliberate social and institutional integration, which in turn affords individuals the opportunity to act. The model offers a sophisticated methodological and analytical framework for assessing and explaining societal quality, expressly challenging the notion that economic growth alone automatically leads to a greater standard of living for people and communities.

The Social Quality model serves as the foundation for a meta-theory for formulating and implementing public policy, as well as identifying policies that may be useful in this regard. The consequence is that the strategies required to produce social quality and enhance levels of life satisfaction are relatively consistent and can be identified across all European countries. As a result, they can serve as a foundation for social policy.

According to Abbott and Wallace (2012), the social quality approach evaluates how satisfying one's interactions with others are on a daily basis. This satisfaction is thought to result from a reciprocal relationship between the formation of group identities and the individual's pursuit of self-actualization. It bridges the gap between the need for assistance and subsequent action, as well as economic and social development initiatives. It takes into account the structural aspects of societies and their institutions as measured by their influence on occupants to determine if people are able to maintain a certain level of living through their day-to-day lives. Economic and social systems, as well as structure and agency, combine to create what is called "the social" in this definition.

All citizens deserve to enjoy a comfortable level of living, and economic policy, labour market policy, and social policy provide the building blocks for this. The policy framework not only influences the quality of society, but also influences society itself through the various human and social requirements that are reinvested into the policymaking procedure. Economic policies that foster autonomy; labour market policies that encourage participation; social policies that foster individual dignity and social solidarity; and empowerment (made possible by education and health policies, as well as advisory practises) to form the space for action would all constitute a social quality-informed public policy. Social quality serves as the foundation for a concept for formulating and implementing public strategy, as well as identifying policies that may be useful in this regard..

The European Foundation for Social Quality (EFSQ) developed 95 social quality indicators between 2001 and 2005, dubbed the European Social Quality (ESQ), and utilised these indicators to assess the social quality of individuals in 14 European nations. The idea of social quality was the most often used method of gauging individuals' wellbeing before the spread of social quality theory from Europe to Asia.

Van der Maesen (2018) suggests that research on social quality indicators should be expanded to include indicators useful for understanding the societal repercussions of environmental processes, and vice versa. The author presents a study that attempts to connect the social quality approach (which has previously focused primarily on societal processes). The study reviewed the work of the internationally operating Plastic Soup Foundation, which is dedicated to environmental processes as a result of the ongoing pollution of waters with plastic, as well as in a large number of landfills. This relationship intends to improve the social quality approach in order to become effective for contributing to environmental movements aimed at restoring ecosystem balance. Van der Maesen's study initiated a demonstration of the features of the four-dimensional approach to overall sustainability, namely examining processes in the socioeconomic/financial, socio-political/legal, sociocultural/welfare, and socio-environmental dimensions to investigate the nature and activities of the foundation.

A study on the use of social quality indicators in China conducted by Wei and Yan (2019) concludes that China's socioeconomic/financial component has improved greatly in recent decades as a result of the country's economic growth. As a result, it is appealing to examine the evolution of the four conditional components of social quality in China. This research is motivated by the assumption, based on prior social quality evaluations in this country, that the country's existing level of social quality is not truly sufficient. The study's conclusion was that the level of socioeconomic security as a whole is very far behind what people really need. It is still much lower for people who live in the country than for people who live in cities. In terms of social cohesion, the authors suggested that most people don't trust each other very much or at all. Most of the respondents implied that they didn't have faith or morals in the current Chinese society.

A study by Mahoney and Kearon (2018) investigated the relationship between social quality and the event of Brexit in Stoke-on-Trent Trent, England. The study provides evidence to support the idea that the West's failure to fix the lack of social quality that disadvantaged, excluded, and marginalised people experience every day will lead to populist anti-EU movements across Europe. They examine the situation in Stoke-on-Trent, a city in the United Kingdom that had one of the greatest percentages of Leave votes, which led to Brexit. According to earlier related studies, these voters were inclined toward nationalism, populism, and euroscepticism (Corbett 2016).

Mahoney and Kearon (2018) covered both the constitutional elements, which are used to study subjective aspects such as feelings, attitudes, and the like, as well as the conditional factors, which are used to examine the objectively observable structural difficulties. Personal security, social recognition, social responsiveness, and personal capacity are examined via in-depth interviews with Stoke communities. Residents' opinions of how newcomers (immigration) affect their neighbourhoods are pertinent. Their stories highlight a sense of alienation from and frustration with politics, which accentuates their experience of deprivation.

The authors claim that the narratives about migration offered by the poor and vulnerable in Stoke are very different from those offered by liberal think tanks, academic institutions, and a large portion of the political establishment, all of whom acknowledge the significance of migration for the socioeconomic life of the United Kingdom. There seems to be a correlation between specific conditional elements that lead to extremely low social quality in impoverished daily situations and their attitudes, sentiments, and constitutional social quality-related factors.

The authors went further to indicate that deprived communities should be helped by politics and policies in a way that enables them to grow fresh perspectives and build collective power for bettering their own everyday conditions. Their exploitation by populist parties will be addressed by encouraging this type of social empowerment. It is not surprising that social empowerment is stressed as a vital component of social quality.

2.3 Factors contributing to Social Quality

To investigate the nature of social quality, an analysis of its four conditional factors is required. These are socioeconomic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and social empowerment, and they serve as the indicators of social quality. It's worth pointing out that the word "social" comes from the idea of "the social" that was developed in the social quality theory (Wei & Yan, 2019).

As stated by Maesenv.d. (2004) in the previous section, socioeconomic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and social empowerment make up the theoretical foundation for social quality. Each of these four dimensions has its own theoretical focus, and they are interdependent with one another.

In the context of social interactions, socioeconomic security can be defined as the degree to which individuals have sufficient resources (both material and immaterial) over the course of time. This component's macro-level dimensions include financial resources, housing and environment, health and care, job, and education, respectively (Keizer, 2004).

The level of access that people have to institutions and interpersonal relationships is known as social inclusion. It has to do with structural reasons why equality and equity exist as well as their guiding ideas. The job market, social networks, public and commercial services, and citizenship rights have all been cited as areas for social inclusion (Walker and Wigfield, 2004).

The nature of social links based on common identities, beliefs, and conventions is referred to as social cohesiveness. The mechanisms that build, protect, or destroy social networks and the social infrastructures that support them are the focus of this component. Trust, integrative norms and values, social networks, and identity are some of its domains (Berman and Phillips, 2004).

The term "social empowerment" describes how much social relationships (networks and institutions) improve people's individual capacities and capacity for action. Knowledge base, labour market, openness and support of institutions, public space, and interpersonal interactions are all areas of social empowerment (Hermann, 2004).

The next sub-sections will explore social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion in more detail. These dimensions are the independent variables adopted in this research. This study proposes government support as the mediator, and it will also be elaborated.

2.3.1 Social Economic Security

The degree to which individuals have enough resources (both material and immaterial) over time in the setting of social relationships is known as socio-economic security (Wang, 2009). With a focus on resource availability and environmental quality, Pieper et al. (2019) defined social economic security as assuring access to commodities and services, constructive involvement in exchanges and transfers. Smirnov et al. (2019) proposed a definition of social economic security of municipal administrative areas as a "*complex category which is based on the ability of a municipal government to establish mechanisms for implementation of its autonomous functions and spheres of activity, to ensure social-economic security on the basis of a sustainable growth of its indicators, as well as to contribute to a maximum satisfaction of the infrastructure needs of the residents and entrepreneurs on its territory*" (pp.665).

Smirnov et al. also suggested that security is more than one notion. From a philosophical point of view, it can be looked at least on two levels: one is personal security, and the other is the security of society or the state. Any objective or subjective factors that represent a threat on a larger scale also do so on a smaller scale. The failure of security on a macro level can also be sparked by underestimating the significance of security at the micro level. Financial resources, housing and environment, health and care, job, and education are macro-level areas for this category (Wang, 2009). Smirnov et al. (2019) further opined that security is always related to the satisfaction of needs and the absence of threats. The authors then proceeded to elaborate that the system of micro- and macro-levels and the political and economic framework of the state determine how threats are categorised. Protection, or certain types of forms and circumstances that shield the item from harmful interference, is what security always implies. The synchronisation, calmness, and equilibrium of the parties involved in an interaction are thought to be the condition of security.

Social and economic security is a dynamic and multifaceted idea. One reason for this complexity is the vast number of economic, social, and financial processes that this idea entails. On the other hand, the processes of globalisation and the rapid rates of economic processes and phenomena at both the national and global levels determine the complexity (Smirnov et al., 2019). It should be understood as a key component of national security that provides resources and a dynamic balance for other system elements. It is a vital measure of national, regional, and global security that every person, community, national state, etc. should aim for, and a top priority of governments, regional organisations, and international organisations that work to provide and guarantee an individual's global security.

Smirnov et al. (2019) also proposed the following points to further describe social economic security:

- the protection of vital interests of a society, a nation, and its citizens, as well as national values and ways of life from both external and internal threats.
- a basic human right. It is the state in which risks and dangers are managed for the protection of people and communities.
- a resource that people and groups need for daily life in order to realise their individual or group objectives.
- the interaction of external and internal elements that support the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services created by a national economy
- both governmental and non-governmental organisations are crucial to the accomplishment of social-economic security on a national, regional, and international scale.

Because the formal support system is underdeveloped, the conditional component of socioeconomic security is highly influenced by the resources of an informal network of support, particularly from friends and family. Due to people's indifference in and unwillingness to engage in political matters, there are more opportunities for engagement than there are instances of societal status stratification and discrimination. The perception of safety in the communities was substantially greater than the general trust indices (Ali & Lin, 2019).

2.3.2 Social Cohesion

Over the course of centuries, the concept of social cohesion has been thoroughly investigated, primarily from the viewpoint of theoretical and empirical studies, but also through experimental investigations that use observation to quantify social cohesion. Social cohesion is a crucial concept that is at the core of what mankind needs right now, yet it lacks a single uniform definition and measurement tools and techniques. There are numerous techniques to studying social cohesiveness, as indicated by the various methods used in experimental investigations to monitor and assess, impact group cohesion or its resilience, and encourage social cohesion (Fonseca et al., 2019). It is a complex social construct due to the fact that different societies have different geographies, political representations, economics, and problems (Bruhn, 2009). According to Fonseca et. al. (2019), it was Le Bon's (1897) idea of contagious behaviour and collective behaviour that is the foundation for much of the major research on social cohesion. He makes a distinction between various crowds/communities, noting that they each have a variety of traits, viewpoints, and beliefs that have an effect on the people who are a part of them. Fonseca et. al. further studied the works of Braaten (1991) and found that the author defined group cohesion as analogous to a good relationship for an individual, and when present, it can assist an individual in becoming the person he or she aspires to be. He investigates factors such as group cohesion and its role in a healthy relationship, and develops a multidimensional model that promotes the establishment, maintenance, and achievement of a high level of cohesion (Fonseca et. al., 2019).

The ability of a society to ensure the welfare of all of its members while minimising inequities and avoiding marginalisation is defined by the Council of Europe as social cohesiveness. It is distinguished by mutual fidelity and solidarity, the strength of social links and shared ideals, a sense of belonging, trust among community members, and the lowering of inequities and exclusion (Europe, 2008). Earlier, Berman and Phillips (2004) referred to social cohesiveness as the nature of social links based on common identities, beliefs, and conventions. The mechanisms that build, protect, or destroy social networks and the social infrastructures that support them are the focus of this component. Trust, integrative norms and values, social networks, and identity are some of its domains. According to Larsen, cohesion is the inhabitants' perception of a country as having a moral compass, which creates a foundation for trust. The degree to which people trust one another is then used to define and quantify it (Larsen, 2013). With a focus on trust, loyalty, commitment, and emotions, social cohesion is defined as fostering solidarity, caring relationships (such as those within and between generations), trust, cooperation, and self-expression (Pieper, Karvonen & Vaarama, 2019). Four dimensions of Social Cohesion were identified by the authors which are Trust in public institutions, Trust in other people, Altruism/helping others, and Social networks in living area.

Ohmer contends that by fostering collective efficacy, low-income communities can reduce violence and its wide-ranging effects. This include the ability to cooperate, have faith in one another, and be prepared to step in to solve problems that affect everyone (Ohmer, 2016). The author demonstrated how social capital and social cohesion play a role in collective efficacy. Mixed neighbourhoods are preferable to isolated groups of densely populated, extremely cohesive communities (negative cohesion), as they provide a broader range of activities, lively opposition, and a balance between social cohesiveness and cultural autonomy.

Diverse experimental study methodologies (to monitor and quantify, impact group cohesion or its resilience, and encourage social cohesion) also suggest that there are numerous techniques to studying social cohesion (Fonseca et. al., 2019). One of the most challenging, yet crucial, issues facing most countries is promoting social cohesion. There is general agreement that social cohesion affects economic and social growth and that fostering a more cohesive society is a crucial policy objective in and of itself, but there hasn't been much progress in attempts to measure it and monitor improvement in this area over time. Some scholars use the term "social cohesion" to refer to the connections or relationships that exist between neighbours and within close-knit social

groups, particularly in environments where there is ethnic diversity (Schmeets, 2012; Bruhn, 2009; Burns et. al., 2018).

Social cohesion is not a modern concept; rather, it has its roots in a long line of theoretical discussions on what makes a society's social order and why it may endure through times of social change (Green and Janmaat, 2011; Green et al., 2009). In their study, Schiefer & van der Noll (2017) were able to isolate six distinct aspects of social cohesion that appeared frequently in articles, abstracting from particular approaches: Social connections, identity, focus on the common good, shared ideals, standard of living, and (in)equality. Literature has provided numerous definitions of social cohesion, and it is unclear whether there is a unifying, rigorous definition that can be applied to empirical studies. The following definition of social cohesion was proposed by Chan et al. (2006):

“Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations” (p. 290).

Bottoni (2018) then put forward three levels to distinguish social cohesion:

- a macro level that depicts relationships with institutions, linkages within the larger community, and a sense of belonging therein;
- a meso level reflecting relationships with secondary groupings (bigger social in- and out-groups that might offer social identities);
- a micro level that indicates close relationships and trust with others (mostly within families and between friends)

As evident in a study by Lalot et. al., (2021), following major tragedies or natural catastrophes, social cohesion may increase, although this feeling of unity is sometimes temporary. The authors conducted a cross-sectional survey that compared perceptions of social cohesion in six English local authorities that have prioritised investment in social cohesion over the last two years to three other areas that have not as Britain slowly emerged from its first national lockdown in June 2020. The findings revealed that the six local authorities (at the micro, meso, and macro levels) had a higher sense of social cohesion than other areas. Stronger, more interconnected, and more welcoming communities that can better weather times of crisis are the result of investments in social cohesion.

It is expected of people to work together in times of crisis since coordinated and unified action is required to address global concerns. In the wake of economic collapse, natural disasters, and mass tragedies, for instance, social cohesion and solidarity efforts have historically strengthened. For a society to be cohesive, its members must put their best foot forward in terms of attitude and behaviour, working together to achieve a shared goal. Building and maintaining trusting relationships among members of a community is essential to its cohesive functioning (Lalot et. al., 2021).

An earlier study by Calo-Blanco et al. (2017) also confirmed this notion. In times of crisis, social cohesion may be critical if local communities are to implement effective actions, promote community resilience, and help overcome future challenges. Although social cohesion invariably tends to increase when a community is confronted with a crisis, this initial sense of unity can also fade quickly. The policy and practical challenge is thus to develop and sustain social cohesion over time, particularly if the crisis persists. Thus, if the crisis continues, the maintenance of social cohesion will be fostered by the policy and practical tasks. Social activism, confidence in others, personal relationships, and the view that governmental limits are appropriate were all areas where the good impacts of cohesion and integration activities were most obvious. The authors put forward the assumption that the social cohesion programmes worked best at the themes and micro levels, that is, in relationships with secondary groups, primary groups, and close friends and family. The results of their study are in line with the idea that social cohesion investments can be a substantial means of creating communities that are more linked, resilient, and capable of coping with crises while also being more hospitable and accepting of others.

A study by Burns et. al., (2018) proposed a number of positive potential benefits for highly cohesive societies. These include more stable democracies and greater civic participation, greater productivity and growth, and resistance to economic shocks, better social quality for citizens, in that cohesive societies are simply more liveable and sustainable for people, greater inclusivity and tolerance of diversity and multiculturalism, and stronger conflict management. A prominent tenet of social cohesion literature is that societies that display social cohesion are more likely to be peaceful and wealthy societies (Burns et. al., 2018).

2.3.3 Social Inclusion

Making sure that everyone in society has access to the same opportunities is known as social inclusion (Martin and Cobigo, 2011). By removing the obstacles that impede people from meaningfully engaging in society on a full and equal basis, social inclusion policies and institutions encourage full engagement by all members of society (Marston and Dee, 2015). Pieper, Karvonen, and Vaarama (2019) define social inclusion as

ensuring human and social rights, equity, and the rule of law while honouring cultural diversity and fostering responsible pursuit of one's own and society's goals: a focus on values, rights, and tolerance; social identity; and responsive institutions. It is used to refer to concepts like equity, social, economic, and civic involvement, as well as the proactive defence of human rights.

A broad social goal of social inclusion is to uphold human rights and foster a more just society. Social inclusion is increasingly understood as not only an outcome, but also a process (Krishna & Kummitha, 2017). Bulger et. al., meanwhile described social inclusion as the process and outcome of enabling everyone to realise their place as a constituent of the whole. It encompasses the level of access that people have to institutions and interpersonal relationships. It has to do with structural reasons why equality and equity exist as well as their guiding ideas. The job market, social networks, public and commercial services, and citizenship rights have all been cited as areas for social inclusion (Wang, 2009).

A recent definition of social inclusion has been put forward by Ye and Yang (2020), which defined it as *"the extent that individuals, families, communities are able to fully participate in society and control their own destinies"*. The authors listed three aspects of social inclusion - political inclusion, social participation inclusion, and economic inclusion. The elaborations are as below:

- The right of an organisation or an individual citizen to participate in political processes, such as expressing their thoughts and taking part in democratic political decisions. This is known as political inclusion.
- The degree to which a group or an individual engages in social contact and interpersonal networks within society is referred to as social participation inclusion.
- People who are economically included have access to a wide range of employment opportunities and are able to work and learn in ways that contribute to economic development and the alleviation of poverty.

Different definitions of social inclusion, a lack of funding to support the growth of social enterprises, a lack of community entrepreneurship, and a weak social inclusion model in some countries are some of the obstacles or variables affecting the rate of social inclusion (Littlewood et al., 2017; Biancone and Radwan, 2018). Although there is no universally accepted definition of social inclusion, Cordier et al. (2017) highlighted three domains that have emerged from the literature: (a) participation; (b) social connectedness and sense of belonging; and (c) citizenship and rights, including ideas of agency and responsibility. Additionally, some academics have claimed that while gauging social inclusion, both objective and subjective factors should be taken into account (Coombs, Nicholas, and Pirkis, 2013). Pieper, Karvonen, and Vaarama (2019) additionally classified four factors under social inclusion, including respect for the law, inclusion in the labour force and retirement, recognition of the human rights of all individuals, and satisfaction with cultural services. Other notable scholars have proposed indicators of social inclusion, which include things like gender equality, equitable use of public resources, development of human resources, social protection, the absence of prejudice, environmental sustainability, and social technology (Ozili, 2020).

During the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, social inclusion became a fundamental aim of economic policy in various countries. Social inclusion was thought to ensure full employment and alleviate poverty. The European Commission emphasised in its policy "Europe 2020" that the EU must evolve into a secure and inclusive economy in the face of volatility. Thus, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the value of the concept of social inclusion has expanded enormously, even in the context of inequality and economic progress. As a result, it is critical to recognise the scientific and practical significance of the social inclusion phenomena as a tool for reducing socioeconomic disparity (Krasota & Melnyk, 2020). Preliminary conclusions from the developing literature on social inclusion point to the significance of encouraging civic engagement, education, and employment, as well as building links between individuals and between people and resources, and fighting for the rights of marginalised groups. To properly address the issues of social exclusion, following along with the idea of social inclusion is insufficient (Amath, 2015).

Schaillée et al. (2019) posit that governments, policy makers, and community leaders may strive for social inclusion, which is promoted in most public policies of sport, in order to prevent and lessen the marginalisation of specific social groups. The authors noted that there is a substantial amount of scholarly investigation into the relationship between (community) sports and social inclusion. Past researchers have examined this complex link from a variety of angles, such as racial equality and human rights, and by concentrating on one or more aspects of social inclusion. However, the idea of social inclusion is frequently vague and subject to various interpretations.

Hodkinson (2012) opined that social inclusion is not a straightforward, clear-cut idea, and as a concept, it has frequently been applied to emphasise ideas of assimilation rather than signifying a fight for equality and social justice. According to DeLuca's (2013) definition of inclusion, it is important for society to acknowledge

the many various ways that people can identify as human and diverse while also disrupting a dominating cultural group. It aims to respect individual differences and give people control.

Having friends and being accepted by their peers are developmental necessities rather than extras that aid students in performing well in school. Juvonen et al. (2019) argued that although social inclusion does not ensure academic success, experiences of exclusion can quickly undermine students' engagement and performance. Inclusion, according to the writers, denotes being accepted by peers and having kind friends. In light of this, places with harmonious intergroup connections and positive peer relationships are referred to as having an inclusive atmosphere.

Social inclusion and financial inclusion, according to a study by Ozili (2020), are two development objectives to enhance the socioeconomic well-being of all members of society. In industrialised economies, policymakers have committed to promoting social and financial inclusion. According to the study's findings, there is a substantial and positive association between social and financial inclusion, particularly for Asian, Middle Eastern, and African nations, but not for European nations.

According to Leemann et al. (2022), agency beliefs, which are influenced by interpersonal and environmental circumstances, play a significant role in determining experiences of social inclusion. Social inclusion has drawn attention as a result that affects one's health and wellbeing on a personal level. An earlier study by Cordier et al. (2017) found that the desire to create social inclusion measures at the individual level has evolved as the promotion of social inclusion has become more explicitly stated as a goal of social policy as well as a targeted consequence of certain initiatives and programmes aimed at enhancing health and wellbeing.

Leemann et al. (2022) opined that meaningfulness is essential to enjoying social inclusion and is heavily influenced by social circumstances. Qualitative study on the effects of poverty lends evidence to the significance of meaningfulness in experiencing social inclusion. The authors quoted Martela and Steger's 2016 study which suggested that finding meaning in life is a fundamental human desire that is largely social in character. Coherence, purpose, and significance are the components of meaning in life.

Achieving social inclusion, which entails allowing people to fully engage in political, social, and economic life, is seen as a desirable national aim (Ye & Yang, 2020). The authors noted that people's attachment to society is dependent on their level of engagement in social, political, and economic activities. To enhance social inclusion, meanwhile, simply giving the digital infrastructure or tools is insufficient. Access to Information and Communication Technologies is only the starting point for achieving social inclusion results. The emphasis lies on the consumption process, and ICTs should empower personal consumers.

Digital technologies are essential for meeting older individuals' requirements for information, services, and social inclusion during COVID-19, as reported in a study by Xie et al. (2020). According to the authors, hybrid approaches that combine offline and online techniques are crucial for assuring the inclusion of disadvantaged populations. A similar study by Ye and Yang (2020) also shows a ground-breaking scenario in which a mobile platform bridges the digital gap and allows communities to participate in social activities. With its ability to facilitate the sharing of information, the expression of emotions, and the exchange of resources, the mobile platform brings together different levels of government, village committees, farmers, migratory villagers, and city dwellers. It includes three sorts of aspects related to structural, psychological, and resource empowerment: village management, emotional involvement, and e-commerce. There are three attainable levels of social inclusion: political inclusion, social participation inclusion, and economic inclusion.

According to Krasota and Melnyk (2020), social inclusion is an effective tool for reducing inequality. It entails granting all members of society equitable access to all resources and goods, as well as incorporating people in economic, social, and political developments. Some notion representations for social inclusion and exclusion focused on the relationship between inequality and economic growth. They acknowledged that inequality increased even during periods of economic development. It was necessary to determine whether inclusion/exclusion in the form of unequal income and wealth distribution hampered economic progress. Subsequently, the concept of social inclusion was regarded as a desired development aim in an increasingly unequal society, where the wealth gap, conflicts, and social polarisation were all growing.

The phrases "social exclusion" and "social inclusion" are becoming more significant as a result of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda of the United Nations, which places a strong emphasis on social inclusion (Social Inclusion Report, 2012). Contrary to social inclusion, the phrase "social exclusion" refers to the entire or partial exclusion of a person or a group of individuals from full participation in the life of society as a result of physical or mental disorders or social restrictions. As a result, despite the country's strong economic development rates, the exclusion of such a segment of society from economic, social, civic, and political life leads to increased social difference and socioeconomic inequality. Exclusion can be due to life stage (very young or elderly folks), health (those with disabilities, drug or alcohol addicts), or the economy (unemployed, multi-problem households).

The primary focus is on citizens' and communities' unequal access to economic resources and benefit distribution. A mentality of non-participation and indifference has arisen in contemporary high-tech society. As a result, excluded people have a bad food, poor health, poor education, and poor living situations. It causes low productivity, crippling the economy and further polarising society (Krasota and Melnyk, 2020). Social inclusion requires academics and practitioners to think holistically about how to create a more inclusive organisation or society in order to concurrently solve a variety of problems related to social exclusion, as opposed to treating each obstacle of social exclusion as a separate issue (Bulger et. al., 2021) Beyond economic factors, social inclusion is thought to be the answer to the problem of social exclusion because it promotes participation in civic and political life, a sense of cultural identity, meaningful social interaction, and extensive personal and professional networks. Social inclusion methods entail proactive opportunity creation while taking good steps to counteract social exclusion and mitigate disadvantage (Saunders, 2016).

Although it is sometimes used to express the opposite effects of social exclusion, the word "social inclusion" is not the same as "social exclusion" (Ratcliffe, 2000). Krasota and Melnyk (2020) went further to make comparisons by suggesting that social inclusion is the polar opposite of exclusion, appearing to overcome social heterogeneity, polarisation, and marginalisation. Social inclusion, on the other hand, is not restricted to addressing the issues of exclusive people and groups of people with disabilities. After broadening theoretical approaches to the idea of social inclusion, the authors defined it as a means of reducing economic disparity and poverty, which impede participation and access to resources, as part of society's fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Their concept of social inclusion is that it is a desirable state in which all members of society have abundant opportunities and access to consumption of products, ownership of resources, and management processes for full involvement in all aspects of public life. Therefore, social inclusion is a comprehensive concept that includes access, participation, empowerment, and the creation of possibilities in addition to focusing on resource redistribution, social exclusion, and social inclusion. It entails enhancing desired capacities that may be related to capital in the form of money, assets, people, or other resources (Saunders, 2016).

An earlier work by Gidley et. al. (2010) however posited that the word "social inclusion" is multifaceted and nuanced, and it is used in many different contexts. It and social exclusion are closely related, with the two concepts being seen as the two extremes of the same dimension. Bulger et. al. (2021) reported that in order to understand social inclusion, academics have focused increasingly on social exclusion and its various characteristics in search of answers to dealing with or reversing these complicated difficulties of exclusion. The authors suggested that in order to engage in the usual connections and activities that are available to most individuals in society, whether in the economic, social, cultural, or political spheres, one must have access to resources, rights, products, and services, which are often denied to them. Thus, the term "social exclusion" refers to a wide range of disadvantages that relate to economic, social, cultural, and political aspects.

Social exclusion is sometimes portrayed as a substitute for poverty, however, the two ideas are best understood as separate but connected. Poverty is a significant factor in exclusion, but it is not the primary factor because social exclusion can occur even when a person is not impoverished (Saunders, 2016). So expanding access to financial resources is just one aspect of social inclusion procedures. On the other side, social inclusion entails a number of positive steps to end the social exclusion of people or groups in our society (Bulger et. al., 2021).

There must be a vehicle or initiative through which the process of social inclusion can be operationalized if it is to become a reality. Various social inclusion projects have been developed by governments and groups around the world, ranging from those aimed at improving the educational system to those aimed at providing jobs. Mixed-income development is one prospective social inclusion project in the United States (Goodwin-Smith & Hutchinson, 2015; Bulger et. al., 2021). Therefore, the process of ensuring that people from all walks of life have equal access to the tools they need to succeed in the workplace, in school, in community organisations, and in political and civic life. Moreover, ensuring minorities have a level playing field in all facets of society and the economy (Social Inclusion Report, 2012).

All members of society should have equal access to resources, which includes the ability to possess all forms of resources, both tangible and modern information resources. Adequate possibilities and access to governance mechanisms demonstrate people's participation in civil society at both the national and local levels via referendums, elections, and control over local councils. All members of society should have equal access to these possibilities, regardless of their social standing, age, gender, ethnicity, or other differences.

Access to resources, the division of income and property, employment and commercial activity, and involvement in public administration are the three primary types of social inclusion put forth by Krasota and Melnyk (2020). The authors posit that these several types of social inclusion are interconnected, meaning that none of them can exist independently of the others. Social inclusion is a phenomena that permeates all aspects of public life and cannot be selective. Official employment and commercial endeavours are examples of how

social inclusion manifests. For many social and economic challenges, including inequality, to be resolved, all citizens must have equal access to jobs, especially disadvantaged social groups that are uninterested in traditional industry. People who are socially excluded, in particular, need inclusive employment practises. For instance, additional financing is required to accommodate their unique needs in the workplace. It is unlikely that traditional business will invest in it. As a result, many pressing social problems are still unresolved. This in turn stimulates the quest for new employment opportunities because it shows that conventional approaches to tackling inequality, poverty, and unemployment are ineffective.

Employment is the primary and essential requirement for income; it helps make economic commodities available, ensures a certain level of life, and helps people achieve their career goals. However, more is needed for social inclusion. Successful integration into society requires that people feel safe and that their contributions are appreciated. The so-called "poverty trap" and "unemployment trap," which worsen socioeconomic disparity, can be avoided with the aid of social inclusion. The phrase "poverty trap" refers to the way low-income individuals behave in response to receiving social assistance from the government in order to maintain a certain level of living. These society members continue to act passively and in a dependent manner as a result. They are not allowed to participate in social activities.

The "unemployment trap" occurs when an unemployed person who receives a certain monetary income as a result of state redistribution refuses to find work. This condition is explained by the fact that unemployment benefits may exceed or be insignificantly different from earned income. The unemployed's net income may exceed the employed's net income. This occurs when employers deduct taxes and social contributions from wages. Social inclusion in the form of equitable opportunities and access to resources, labour, and economic activity assists in overcoming these traps and motivating individuals to increase their labour efforts in order to achieve higher wages and living standards, as well as to eliminate inequality (Krasota and Melnyk, 2020).

According to the Australia's Social Inclusion Report, the country's Social Inclusion Board has given the government guidance since 2008 on a variety of social issues connected to advancing the social inclusion agenda in Australia. Findings indicate that while Australia has achieved progress in many areas, there is still more to be done to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, as well as other complicated and ongoing concerns (Social Inclusion Report, 2012).

2.3.4 Government Support

The degree to which individuals believe their government and affiliated institutions are dependable, credible, fair, and competent is referred to as institutional trust or political trust (Levi & Stoker, 2000). Through improved local community engagement, local governments are contributing significantly to the development of the local area. In order to maintain strong state power and justify the continuation of local government, policymakers are promoting a high level of citizen involvement in local development. Recently, there has been pressure to undermine the local government's useful role in promoting community development and social welfare redistribution (Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo, 2013). According to Stoker (2011), local governments throughout the majority of the world maintain close ties with their constituents in order to provide better services. By encouraging strong cooperation between local government and the population, this relationship would endure in the future.

Local governments are expected to offer more services, be creative, and meet the increasingly sophisticated demands of a knowledgeable and vocal citizenry. The country's expanding population poses challenges to most local governments' efforts to improve community development performance. A growing population would necessitate greater spending on housing, food, and health care. In order to help the government achieve sustainable economic growth, local government, which is closest to the people, must determine ways to meet their needs. However, it is noteworthy that participation in community development would be challenging if the local government could not afford to meet all the expectations.

This was evident in a study by Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo (2013). In the context of the current global economic restructuring, the authors found that local administrations in Malaysia could not avoid experiencing issues with their goals and plans. Despite the fact that local governments frequently support community development for their constituents, more effective community development planning still needs clear and executable plans. Widespread participation in community development is thought to be crucial to the development progress given the shifting emphasis in development aims and strategies towards encouraging more inclusive and socially fair economic growth and addressing the fundamental requirements in developing nations. The need to address regional socioeconomic issues and coordinate participatory development has led to an increased understanding of local government's role in the development process. Decentralization and participation failed to address the myriad issues that the rural populace faced in the majority of developing nations, including Malaysia, since local governments encounter several difficulties in executing community development plans and initiatives (Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo, 2013).

Additionally, there are other obstacles that local governments must overcome, including a lack of legal authority, skill, and enough financial resources. Their financial resources are constrained, and the local tax system is severely taxed. Financial restraints also place limitations on local government's ability to execute at a higher level. As a result of unmet wants, citizens become more and more dissatisfied. Overall, community development is a challenge for local governments (Kuppusamy, 2008).

According to Stokker (2011), local government systems in the majority of countries maintain a tight contact with their inhabitants in order to provide better services and performance. By encouraging strong cooperation between local government and the residents, this relationship would be maintained in the future development.

The role of rural government has evolved into one of conflict resolution, counselling, and communication. Zuhriyati & Andrean (2019) study into the rural village in Indonesia showed that the village government's function in achieving village development is given to the village government. The village government will develop a perception based on the idea that the government is designed to serve the community, so the views and preferences of the community are valuable input in order to realise responsive and responsive decisions, strengthening the meaning of the government as a communication tool. The government communication's function in this instance, the village chief should be able to provide various details on village development policies. The purpose and role of communication as a two-way message exchange activity between all parties involved in village hall development initiatives, particularly between the community and the government, from the planning stage through to village development implementation and evaluation.

The process of resolving disagreements begins with the identification of issues, after which the village government offers a solution through exchanging ideas. The function is utilised as a technique to lessen conflict by making an effort to reach agreement among the divergent ideas that already exist. Disagreements can be settled by the village authority. This viewpoint is predicated on the notion that conversing different points of view can promote tolerance and understanding while lowering bias. Zuhriyati & Andrean (2019 study's findings indicated that the government's efforts to prevent the community from feeling threatened by offering legal certainty and encouraging it with actualization and respect for the community are realised by the government as therapy.

A programme helps to address issues that are hurdles or weaknesses in the community. Starting a programme for therapy can gain the community's support, draw attention, and foster initiative and motivation, which can then be used to channel actualization. Village government takes on a therapeutic role for the community, giving it the self-assurance to keep advancing all facets of life, including the economy, health, and education. In order to accomplish its goals, the community undertakes non-physical growth with the help of the village administration. Using village government as a therapeutic tool to encourage the neighbourhood to improve its economic, health, and educational systems.

In Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo (2013) research, the authors also conducted a comparison of various countries. They found that the government of the United Kingdom places a great emphasis on fostering and enhancing local communities as tools for enhancing both efficiency and effectiveness. Deliberative democracy structures have been developed in Ireland to encourage substantial levels of public participation in community development for improved local democracy. Countries like Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) struggle to enlist public participation for community development due to their hierarchical institutions and robust bureaucracy. Australia and the United Kingdom both have policies and procedures in place to increase community involvement. Local governments impose and internalise a performance culture that necessitates a strong collaboration in order to regulate people's engagement in community development.

According to Eversole (2011), collaborating with local people is an important policy for the development of foreign nations. This is seen, for instance, in recent work on public engagement by the OECD and the UK government's strong emphasis on creating and fostering local partnerships as tools for both improved managerial effectiveness and local democratic regeneration. Moving from shared service provision to encompass service co-design and from consultation to deliberative methods that enable more extensive community input in decision-making are both topics of significant attention.

Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo (2013) noted that people in Malaysia have strong bonds with one another, which encourages willing engagement in local government-instituted systems for community development. In order to foster better local democracy through fostering a strong community development, communities have a strong feeling of commitment to all the efforts carried out by local government. Working well with the community can help the local government develop better policies and gain more support. Local governments are public organisations that offer urban services to communities to improve efficiency. In the majority of developing nations, including Malaysia, it is the main source of services for community development. Local government in Malaysia has been given a significant role to play in community development since it is close to the people and at the centre of participatory development.

With resources and a mission to handle long-term development goals, the local government frequently serves as the primary development agent as evident in small Norwegian villages. Vasstrøm & Normann (2019) investigated the implementation of culture-based development initiatives by local governments in small communities. The role of local government in rural development processes can be understood and implemented in a variety of ways, with various processes and outcomes as a result. It is of academic and practical relevance to address the local government's role in rural development because it advances our knowledge of how such functions connect to the creation of a larger rural development capacity and to promoting socioeconomic growth.

In Norway, municipalities are charged with a variety of legal duties, chief among them serving as the main agency in charge of planning and social services. While local governments have more autonomy and flexibility in their roles as planning authorities and development players, welfare and educational systems are subject to rather tight national regulations (Vasstrøm & Normann, 2019).

The local government can delegate authority and duty to individuals and community organisations through the use of governance. This might be seen as a way to combine representative democracy with more democratic policies that are community-driven. (Gertz and Van de Wijdeven, 2010). As a result, the role of local government in the system of local governance increases. The local administration can, however, decide to emphasise again the authority and legitimacy of representative institutions within the larger governance structure. In such a situation, local government might mobilise to get more direct access to community resources and spread accountability using governance processes. In the local governance system, local government might thus assume a leadership position (Sotarauta, Beer, and Gibney, 2017).

A group's or actor's ability to inspire community people to implement the strategy's different components, such as infrastructure, investment, resources, and the like, and to create clear methods to drive local development are all hallmarks of effective leadership in rural areas. Therefore, Bosworth et al (2015) suggested that some municipalities may cooperate in order to increase their control over local resources and more widely implement systems of accountability.

Activating dormant local assets and securing the voluntary participation of individuals, businesses, and other groups requires local government to participate via a network mechanism that recognises and articulates interdependency. This is a chance to affect change when talking about the responsibility of regional government in community improvement initiatives for which little need is for state control and high demand for human and social resources. The local government also loses part of its institutional autonomy and direct steering authority when local administration moves toward a more communitarian form of operation. According to participatory democracy theories, these tactics may have specific socioeconomic effects on inclusion, civic virtues and skills, discussion, and credibility (Michels and De Graaf, 2010).

Vasstrøm & Normann (2019) proposed that community participation can be restricted to certain or privileged groups or theoretically broadened to include any local actor or group that can participate. Additionally, engagement can be expanded to encompass mobilising actors and resources outside of the local community or concentrated on doing both. The authors put forth the following conclusions:

- Significant differences exist across very comparable rural communities' local governance practises.
- The governance strategies may entail trade-offs in terms of the outcomes for society and the economy.
- Strategic local administration in rural areas is possible through the creation and utilisation of local governance networks, which allow for the pursuit of both citywide and neighbourhood objectives.
- In our circumstances, it is essential to understand local governance as an inherent quality of the local context, history, institutions, and culture.
- Implementing a governance approach in a rural setting should be grounded in careful consideration of prospective roles and desired outcomes. As a result, this research could help towns establish solutions that are appropriate for their particular environment.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is derived from the comprehensive review of literature. Social economic security, Social Cohesion and Social Inclusion are the independent variables. Government Support is the mediator variable.

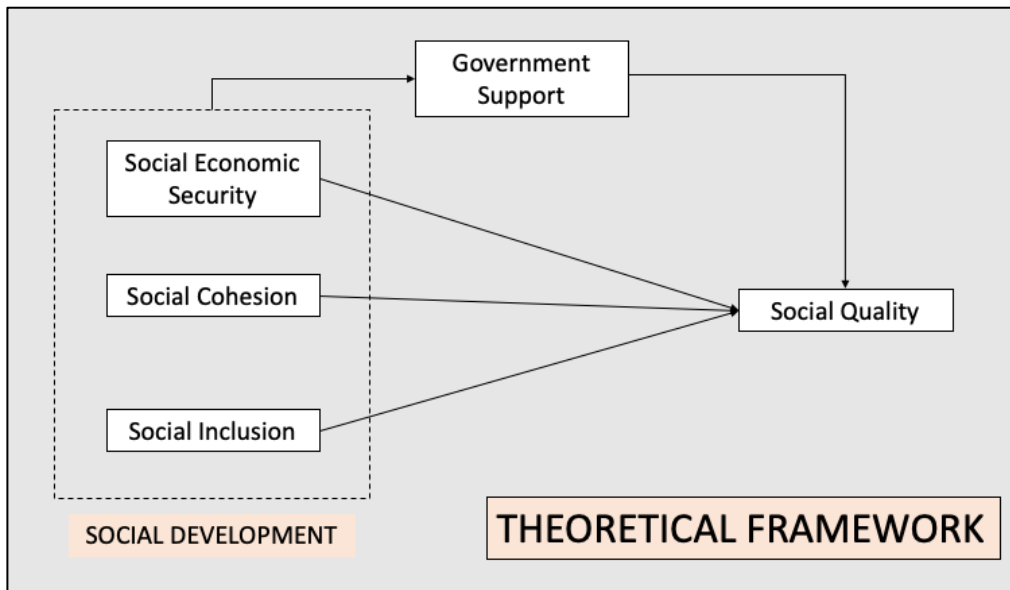


Figure 2.1 Proposed Theoretical Framework

2.5 Research Hypothesis

The current study hypothesised direct and indirect effect analysis on exogenous and endogenous variables based on the causal effect link tabulated on the hypothesised model of social quality of rural community in Malaysia. There are four research hypotheses given, each with a positive direction of predictors of rural community social quality as well as a mediating effect of government support on the suggested hypothesised model. A thorough review of supported and current literature, including pandemic issue C-19 recovery strategy for rural community through social development indicators, was used to establish all hypothesis statements (Figure 2.1).

Based on a detailed mapping of theoretical, empirical, and statistical gaps in the social quality of rural communities as well as social development indicators, this study developed four research hypotheses that represented structural models as hypothesised on the causal effect relationship approach. The first three research hypotheses established a linear or direct relationship between social development measures as exogenous variables and rural community social quality as an endogenous variable.

- H1** *The social economic security is significantly and positively enhancing social quality.*
- H2** *The social cohesion is significantly and positively enhancing social quality.*
- H3** *The social inclusion is significantly and positively enhancing social quality.*
- H4** *There is a mediating influence of government support on the relationship between social development indicator and social quality.*

Furthermore, the fourth study hypothesis statement added to the indirect effect relationship, which mediates the relationship between social development indicators and rural community social quality. The detailed research hypothesis in Chapter 4 has been synchronised with research questions, research goals, supported literature review, and findings.

2.6 Summary

Chapter 2 laid out the theoretical foundations upon which the proposed model of rural Malaysian social quality as measured by social development indicators were constructed. Based on the suggested framework, a thorough analysis of the variables was done, tabulating the causal relationship between the variables as well as potential developments within exogenous and endogenous factors. The current study offers an insightful analysis and review to support the development of the suggested research model. This study significantly improved a body of academic research on public sector management. Furthermore, Chapter 3 outlined the methodological research process in depth.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this portion of thesis is to describe the method pertaining to how the researcher proceeded to achieve the desired objectives of the study. According to (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), after identification of

variables and development of theoretical framework, the next phase is to devise research in such a manner that requisite and appropriate data can be collected and analysed in order to reach a solution using quantitative direction. The prerequisites for the analysis of results are highlighted in this section. This section's main goal is to sum up:

1. The research methods preceding the analysis and results
2. Criterion for opting the research tools and techniques
3. The technique of data collection and its alignment with analysis and results.

After variable identification and conceptual framework building, the next step in any study is to design it so that the necessary data can be gathered and reviewed in a logical manner. As such, the next chapter is divided into sections that describe the research design, including the type of investigation, the sampling strategy used, the instruments and measurements used, as well as the data collection methods. The current research's focus is on the social quality of rural communities as endogenous variable, predicted by social economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and mediated by government support.

According to Sekaran & Bougie (2016), research methodology focuses on the methods used by the researcher to achieve the specified study objectives. The research philosophy, research strategy, time horizon, and research approach are highlighted in this chapter. The research next focuses on the information and procedures of the participants (population, sample, and sampling technique, strategy of data collecting and execution), and last it highlights specifics of the measurements used to tap the research study's structures. The findings of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the structural model analysis, as well as information regarding the methods and tools used for data analysis, round up this stage of the research.

3.2 Research Design

There are many paradigms, often known as research philosophies, in the social sciences. These perspectives are advantageous and supportive of advancing scientific research. A paradigm outlines how to investigate the nature of relationships between the studied variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The positivist research paradigm is the research philosophy utilized in the current research investigation.

Since it uses a quantitative research methodology, it is appropriate for testing theories and hypotheses. The positivist paradigm is the most suitable and popular research philosophy method in the behavioural and social sciences. Quantitative data was gathered for this study, and hypotheses were developed using prior literature to examine the relationship between social quality and demographic variables to explain a standard by which to measure the extent to which the quality of the daily lives of citizens have attained an acceptable Malaysian level and for the most appropriate research philosophy is **positivism paradigm**.

In academic research, two strategies known as inductive and deductive research methodologies were proposed by Saunders et al. (2019). The deductive research strategy focuses on examining the existing theories in a certain research topic, whereas the inductive research approach is utilised when researchers build hypotheses. A deductive research strategy has been used in the current study since the researcher wishes to evaluate the theories that are already in place (Figure 3.1).

The way the researcher plans to carry out the research study is the most crucial component in academic research. Various approaches are available to conduct the research, which include:

- i. Experiment,
- ii. Case study method,
- iii. Survey,
- iv. Interview (structured or unstructured),
- v. Observation

It has been indicated to researchers that the survey method is appropriate for quantitative research. The ability to collect data from a large sample while including the responder in the process is a significant advantage of the survey approach over other approaches. Moreover, it is more appropriate to use exogenous and endogenous variables to analyse the data than a survey strategy-based data gathering procedure.

Investigating and understanding the respondent's thoughts, experiences, and views is the primary goal of qualitative research. Consequently, qualitative research approach investigates reality and reason. The objectives of quantitative research methodology include improving objectivity, replicating findings, and generalising findings. It also places a strong emphasis on forecasts. To ensure objectivity and impartiality in the performance of research studies, researchers set aside perceptions, expectations, thoughts, and prejudices using the quantitative research methodological approach (Figure 3.1).

The current research study concentrated on a quantitative strategy that promises to address a specific research issue. The strategy that is most appealing in the field of social and management sciences is the quantitative research design. This strategy's effectiveness is becoming better every day. The definition of quantitative research technique is "the process through which researchers gather data and analyse data to make

any certain choice." Additionally, it is believed that quantitative research is a crucial paradigm for social science research.

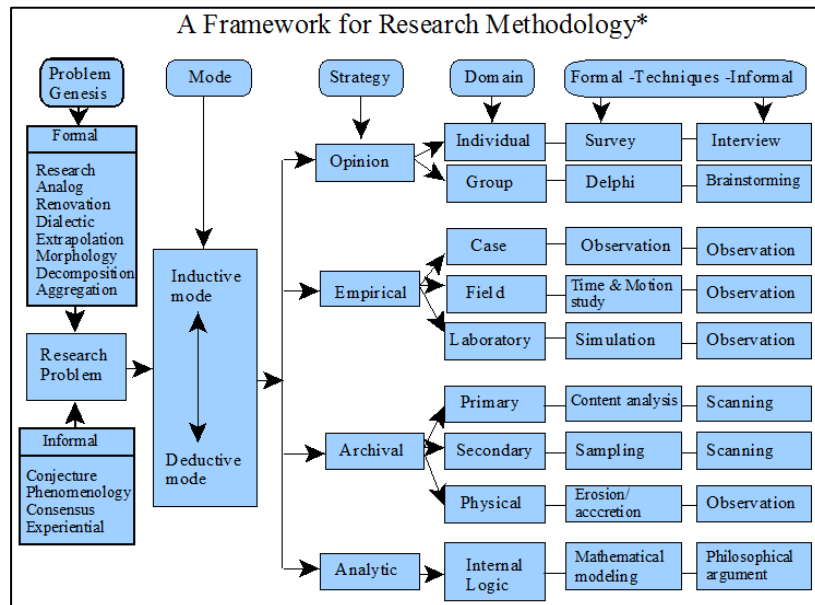


Figure 3.1: Research Methodology Framework

The data collecting and analysis steps used in quantitative research lead to reliable and accurate judgements and findings. In several disciplines, like psychology and business administration research studies, quantitative research is highly valued and productive (Figure 3.1). The current study is successful in assessing societal well-being as a social progress indicator that goes beyond economic indicators and is mediated by government support as contingency variables on the structural model analysis.

3.3 Research Framework

The current study made a causal-effect hypothesis regarding Malaysia's rural communities' social quality. In particular, the public policy and decision-making analysis on the government support for the well-being of rural communities in Malaysia structured and substantially added to the body of knowledge of public sector management as a primary guideline (Figure 3.2).

Based on listed research questions and research objectives in Chapter 1, this research clearly has configured detail investigation on the comparable information on household and family composition, working conditions, social position, income and standard of living, time use and work-life balance, housing conditions, political participation, social support and social networks, health and subjective well-being. Direct and indirect effect relationship between exogenous variables (social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion) were tested to the rural community's social quality as endogenous variable.

The social quality of the rural community is fundamentally influenced by government support as mediating factors. On the determination of the mediating variables, government support was a key endogenous variable. To establish how they interact during the remarkable journey, there are four possible paths (Figure 3.2).

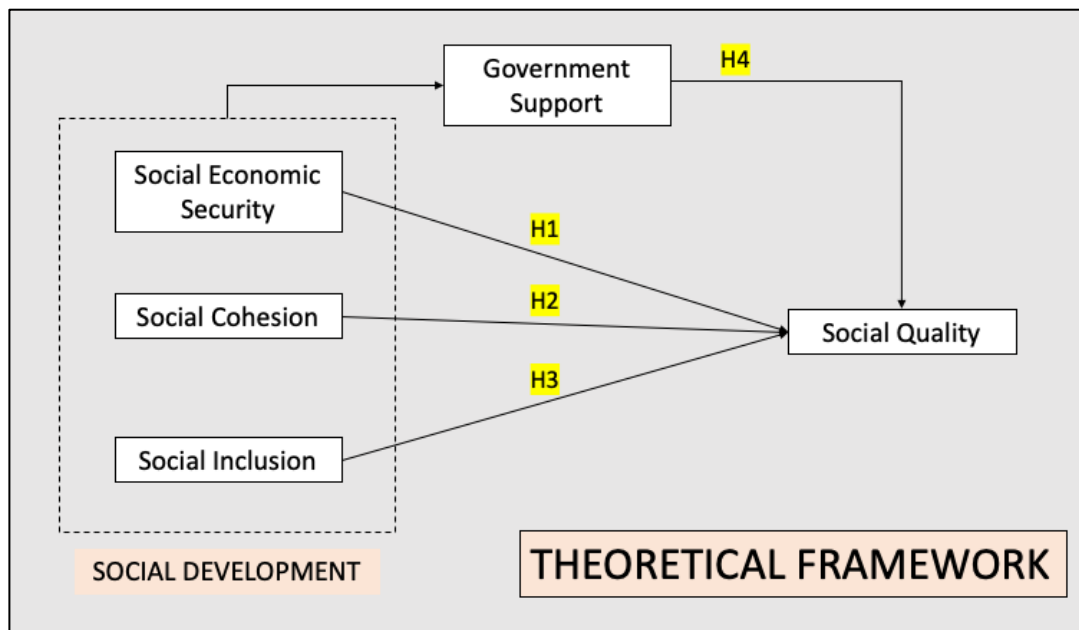


Figure 3.2: Hypothesized Model of Social Quality of Rural Community

3.4 Variables and Measurement

3.4.1 Demographic Profiles

The descriptive frequency analysis and crosstabulation analysis yielded eight profiles of interviewees. Section A of the questionnaire used categorical data to create demographic profiles of interviewees, and the details are as follows (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics for Respondents

Variable	Indicator		
Gender	Male Female	Income	Less than RM1000 RM1001 – RM2000 RM2001 – RM3840 RM3841 and above
Age (Years)	20 and below 21 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51 – 60 Over 60	Profession	Government Private Self-Employed Others
Race	Malay Chinese Indian Others	Family Member	Less Than 3 3 – 5 More Than 5
Education	Primary 6 SRP/PMR SPM/STPM Undergraduate Postgraduate Others		

3.4.2 Measurements of Variables on the Hypothesized Model

The following statements are linked to assessing the level of satisfaction and well-being of rural communities in Baling, Kedah, following the implementation of rural development programmes specifically on social economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social quality as endogenous variable (Table 3.1a

and Table 3.1b). Respondents were involved in a succession of tables using 5 likert scale categories, as shown below:

Table 3.2a Measurement of Endogenous Variables

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT (4 ITEMS)	
1	The government is concerned about the future of the community in the country
2	Community programs supported by the government are relevant to the needs of the local community
3	The government is serious about assisting the community to overcome unemployment
4	The government is driving the development of the local community

SOCIAL QUALITY (8 ITEMS)	
1	Good trust, relationships and social networks can help citizen to be competitive and generate more income.
2	Knowledge, innovation and creativity will be able to enhance the expertise and skills of the citizen in generating their economic activities.
3	The preservation and conservation of a managed environment can result in a healthier life.
4	The construction of the built infrastructure must be fully functional to generate the economy and well-being of the citizen.
5	A stable political system will lead to the well-managed management of the citizen and the development of the economy as a whole.
6	Good financial management at the individual and community levels will reduce the burden of life.
7	Inter-racial understanding will improve the quality of social activities and more participation in community work
8	Citizens' self-confidence is boosted by their perception of their ability to perform things.

Table 3.2b Measurement of Exogenous Variables

SOCIAL ECONOMIC SECURITY (6 ITEMS)	
1	The household income, saving, and spending critically identify my living arrangement
2	I am satisfied with my current financial situation
3	In the past year, I save money
4	I enjoy a degree of privacy in the vicinity
5	I enable personal success of achievement
6	I improve my household's current livelihood or access to services

Table 3.2b Measurement of Exogenous Variables (continue)

SOCIAL COHESION (6 ITEMS)	
1	A good education, job and standard of living are important in my social quality
2	I am happy with my current job, standard of living, accommodation, family life, health, and social life
3	In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of air pollution
4	In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the access to recreational or green areas
5	In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of crime

6	In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the amount of rubbish in the streets
SOCIAL INCLUSION (5 ITEMS)	
1	I have experienced costly medical expenses (such as hospitalisation, operation, nursing home etc.)
2	I am actively involved in community-based organization (e.g. religious, sport, educational)
3	I have experienced discrimination against me due to any of the following reasons: physical/mental disability, age, sexual harassment, gender, nationality, physical appearance, ethnic background, religion)
4	I have, and experienced struggle to access doctor's office/hospital/medical center
5	As a resident of the neighborhood, I feel I have a sense of belonging as a member of the following: my neighborhood, my town

3.5 Population and Sample

The research population is defined as a collection of objects, people, things, or occurrences that serve as the primary centre of scientific investigation. Any research is carried out in the larger benefit of the population. All elements in a particular population share characteristics or are linked together. Because populations are typically very large, it is impossible to test every element of the community.

Baling's rural community was identified as a segmented and targeted group in this study. The sample size table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to configure the amount of sample sizes. The sample size was 363 when respondents were chosen using the stratified random sampling method. An online and offline survey was performed, yielding a sample size of 363 people. Data screening and bias detection are also carried out to reduce the number of outliers in a set of big data for multivariate data analysis.

Sampling is the scientific process of choosing a portion of a target population that should have characteristics of the entire population and can be used as an acceptable representative of the entire population. As a result, sample properties are generalised to the total population. A sample is a subset of the intended population. It is critical to the effective completion of the study. For a variety of reasons, sample size is increasingly important; a small sample is unlikely to produce significant results, while an oversize sample consumes excessive resources. Only sample size is not essential in generating value in studies; rather, overall design is more important.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The research study may be done with a single data collection or with multiple data collections. When data is collected only once, the time horizon is referred to as the cross-sectional time horizon. In this research, data from study participants is collected at a single point in time and then analysed. As a result, in terms of time horizon, a cross sectional study serves to collect data across several variables at once. Data was collected between June and August 2022 in Baling of Malaysia.

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

All relevant findings are presented rationally and objectively. To show precise and explicit findings, tables and figures were used. Subjective interpretation of findings is avoided in this chapter, as it is done in the discussion chapter. Chapter 4 contains detailed results and a discussion of advanced quantitative data analysis settings.

This investigation used a descriptive study in nature with a multivariate data analysis approach. Demographic profiles of the Baling rural village were tabulated using descriptive frequency analysis. A descriptive study in nature was used in this investigation, along with a multivariate data analysis method. Using descriptive frequency analysis, demographic profiles of the Baling rural village were tabulated.

Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analyse the data, with the aid of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) version 28. First, demographic factors have shaped respondents' detailed profiles. Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation analysis will identify the detail multicollinearity issues in order to evaluate the strength and directions of the relationships. Multiple regression analysis will be used to evaluate hypothesised relationships between variables. Cronbach alpha values were calculated for all variables to assess measure reliability.

3.8 Pilot Test of Measurement

The pilot study method is used to assess the assessment scales' reliability and validity. During the pilot, the study researcher investigates, refines, and revises the measurement scales in accordance with the research study's requirements. The goal of the pilot testing is to ensure that the scales that were created for other contexts are also valid and reliable in the context of a new research study.

Despite the fact that the pilot testing procedure requires a significant amount of resources and time, it is a very effective tool for researchers in avoiding big problems and saving the researcher from the loss of large-scale efforts and time. As a result, by conducting a pilot study, researchers may escape incurring unfathomable

losses in terms of time and resources. Another reason for the pilot study was that the majority of the research would use the adopted questionnaire, and some of them would also revise the scale items, so pilot testing was needed.

Prior to conducting the main research, the researcher conducted a pilot test of the study. The researcher attempted to learn about the potential issues with measuring and analysing the preliminary reliability and validity of the survey scale items through the pilot study. The measurement pilot test included 60 samples and confirmed a good level of measurement reliability. In addition, Chapter 4 will demonstrate the detailed method of pilot test analysis.

3.9 Summary

Chapter 3 has determined the research journey based on the methodological perspective. The hypothesised model of the social quality of rural communities in Malaysia has been developed using an advanced quantitative design and multivariate data analysis. Additionally, the current study used a straightforward random sampling technique to gather data, which was then collated into a series of model assumption designs and analyses. Furthermore, it was anticipated that this study will contribute to the body of knowledge by establishing, testing, examining, and validating the social quality of rural communities in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In order to demonstrate a causal effect relationship between exogenous, endogenous, mediating, and moderating variables on the structural model analysis, the current study used a quantitative technique and multivariate data analysis. There are 363 (60.5%) gathered sample size based on the 600 (100%) distributed and 400 (66.6%) collected questionnaire (Table 4.1). Data was collected both online and offline between June 2022 and August 2022 from residents of Baling, a rural town in Malaysia.

Table 4.1 Response Rate of Data

Category	N	Percentage, %
Distributed	600	100.00%
Collected	400	66.60%
Usable	363	60.50%

Chapter 4 detailed out in detail the data collection process, including data screening, hypothesis testing, and model validation for the social quality of rural communities. This research hypothesised social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion as exogenous variables (independent variables), government support as mediating variable and social quality as endogenous variable (dependent variable). The current study focused primarily on the mediation effect on the social quality model, which added to the body of empirical information and served as a major source of guidance for practitioners, policymakers, and public administrators.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

There are 363 (60.50%) gathered sample size based on the 600 (100%) distributed and 400 (66.60%) collected questionnaire (Table 4.1). A data collection approach using both online and offline methods was carried out in June 2022 in the rural Malaysian community of Baling (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Profiles of Respondents (N = 363)

Variable	Categories	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	309	85.1
	Female	54	14.9
Age	20 and below	0	0.0
	21-30	30	8.3
	31-40	104	28.7
	41-50	160	44.1
	51-60	50	13.8
	Over 60	19	5.2
Race	Malay	273	75.2
	Chinese	30	8.3
	Indian	40	11.0
	Others	20	5.5
Education	Primary 6	13	3.6
	SRP/PMR	56	15.4
	SPM/STPM	261	71.9
	Undergraduate	30	8.3
	Postgraduate	3	0.8
	Others	0	0.0
Profession	Government	70	19.3
	Private	45	12.4
	Self-Employed	205	56.5
	Others	43	11.8
Income	Less than RM1000	204	56.2
	RM1001 – RM2000	101	27.8
	RM2001 – RM3840	38	10.5
	RM3841 and above	20	5.5
Family Member	Less Than 3	56	15.4
	3 – 5	250	68.9
	More Than 5	57	15.7

4.3 Data Screening

4.3.1 Pilot Test Results

For this study's measurement pilot test, 60 samples were used in the SPSS application version 28.00. (Table 4.3a). On the data gathering journey, measurement reliability on the small number of sample size is a requirement. The reliability of items for each variable is successfully identified using Cronbach's Alpha with a cut-off value of 0.7. The measurements of exogenous and endogenous variables as configured on the hypothesised model of social quality were confirmed in Tables 4.3a and 4.3b.

Based on pilot test results there are six items of Social Economic Security: (SE1) The household income, saving, and spending critically identify my living arrangement; (SE2) I am satisfied with my current financial situation; (SE3) In the past year, I save money; (SE4) I enjoy a degree of privacy in the vicinity; (SE5) I enable personal success of achievement and (SE6) I improve my household's current livelihood or access to services. Furthermore, Social Cohesion as second predictors confirm measured with six items: (SC1) A good education, job and standard of living are important in my quality of life; (SC2) I am happy with my current job, standard of living, accommodation, family life, health, and social life; (SC3) In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of air pollution; (SC4) In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the access to recreational or green areas; (SC5) In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am

satisfied with the level of crime and (SC6) In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the amount of rubbish in the streets.

Social Inclusion also hypothesized as predictor for social quality and there are five items found as reliable measurement: (SC1) I have experienced costly medical expenses (such as hospitalisation, operation, nursing home etc.); (SC2) I am actively involved in community-based organization (e.g. religious, sport, educational); (SC3) I have experienced discrimination against me due to any of the following reasons: physical/mental disability, age, sexual harassment, gender, nationality, physical appearance, ethnic background, religion); (SC4) I have, and experienced struggle to access doctor's office/hospital/medical center; and (SC5) As a resident of the neighborhood, I feel I have a sense of belonging as a member of the following: my neighborhood, my town.

Additionally, government support and social quality were used in the current study as endogenous variables on the proposed model. Based on the pilot test results, there are four items as measurement of mediating variable on the hypothesised model government support: (GS1) The government is concerned about the future of the community in the country; (GS2) Community programs supported by the government are relevant to the needs of the local community; (GS3) The government is serious about assisting the community to overcome unemployment; and (GS4) The government is driving the development of the local community.

This study verifies social quality as a dependent variable, and eight validated items are used to measure it: (SQ1) Good trust, relationships and social networks can help citizen to be competitive and generate more income.; (SQ2) Knowledge, innovation and creativity will be able to enhance the expertise and skills of the citizen in generating their economic activities.; (SQ3) The preservation and conservation of a managed environment can result in a healthier life.; (SQ4) The construction of the built infrastructure must be fully functional to generate the economy and well-being of the citizen.; (SQ5) A stable political system will lead to the well-managed management of the citizen and the development of the economy as a whole ; (SQ6) Good financial management at the individual and community levels will reduce the burden of life ; (SQ7) Inter-racial understanding will improve the quality of social activities and more participation in community work ; and (SQ8) Citizens' self-confidence is boosted by their perception of their ability to perform things.

The details of the pilot test findings for social development indicators, government support as a mediating variable, and social quality of rural community as an endogenous variable are provided in Tables 4.3a and 4.3b (dependent variable). SPSS version 28.00 was employed to examine 60 respondents of B40 on their perceived social quality, social development indicators as well as government support. Based on the findings, Tables 4.3a and 4.3b verified a high degree of measurement reliability (Cronbach's Alpha-1 more than 0.7). This part grants permission to continue with the detailed causal effect relationship method to multivariate data analysis (Cronbach's Alpha-1) in light of that. In light of this, this part gives the go-ahead to continue with the causal effect relationship approach to multivariate data analysis in detail (Cronbach's Alpha-1).

Table 4.3a Pilot Test of Exogenous Variables

Variable	Code	Items	Cronbach's Alpha (1)	Cronbach's Alpha (2)
Social Economic Security C1:[0.769] C2:[0.811]	SE1	<i>The household income, saving, and spending critically identify my living arrangement</i>	0.767	0.822
	SE2	<i>I am satisfied with my current financial situation</i>	0.727	0.778
	SE3	<i>In the past year, I save money</i>	0.737	0.794
	SE4	<i>I enjoy a degree of privacy in the vicinity</i>	0.734	0.770
	SE5	<i>I enable personal success of achievement</i>	0.740	0.785
	SE6	<i>I improve my household's current livelihood or access to services</i>	0.728	0.731
Social Cohesion C1:[0.825] C2:[0.861]	SC1	<i>A good education, job and standard of living are important in my quality of life</i>	0.812	0.795
	SC2	<i>I am happy with my current job, standard of living, accommodation, family life, health, and social life</i>	0.821	0.798
	SC3	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of air pollution</i>	0.798	0.789

	SC4	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the access to recreational or green areas</i>	0.814	0.799
	SC5	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of crime</i>	0.795	0.803
	SC6	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the amount of rubbish in the streets</i>	0.873	0.843
Social Inclusion	SI1	<i>I have experienced costly medical expenses (such as hospitalisation, operation, nursing home etc.)</i>	0.773	0.743
C1:[0.726]	SI2	<i>I am actively involved in community-based organization (e.g. religious, sport, educational)</i>	0.893	0.847
C2:[0.860]	SI3	<i>I have experienced discrimination against me due to any of the following reasons: physical/mental disability, age, sexual harassment, gender, nationality, physical appearance, ethnic background, religion)</i>	0.798	0.765
	SI4	<i>I have, and experienced struggle to access doctor's office/hospital/medical center</i>	0.872	0.767
	SI5	<i>As a resident of the neighborhood, I feel I have a sense of belonging as a member of the following: my neighborhood, my town</i>	0.797	0.766

Table 4.3b Pilot Test of Endogenous Variables

Variable	Code	Items	Cronbach's Alpha (1)	Cronbach's Alpha (2)
Government Support	GS1	<i>The government is concerned about the future of the community in the country</i>	0.728	0.746
C1:[0.727]	GS2	<i>Community programs supported by the government are relevant to the needs of the local community</i>	0.756	0.734
C2:[0.785]	GS3	<i>The government is serious about assisting the community to overcome unemployment</i>	0.792	0.723
	GS4	<i>The government is driving the development of the local community</i>	0.710	0.732
Social Quality	SQ1	<i>Good trust, relationships and social networks can help citizen to be competitive and generate more income.</i>	0.836	0.870
C1: [0.878]	SQ2	<i>Knowledge, innovation and creativity will be able to enhance the expertise and skills of the citizen in generating their economic activities.</i>	0.778	0.752
C2: [0.823]	SQ3	<i>The preservation and conservation of a managed environment can result in a healthier life.</i>	0.841	0.767
	SQ4	<i>The construction of the built infrastructure must be fully functional to generate the economy and well-being of</i>	0.814	0.757

	SQ5	<i>the citizen. A stable political system will lead to the well -managed management of the citizen and the development of the economy as a whole</i>	0.782	0.764
	SQ6	<i>Good financial management at the individual and community levels will reduce the burden of life.</i>	0.765	0.743
	SQ7	<i>Inter-racial understanding will improve the quality of social activities and more participation in community work</i>	0.729	0.732
	SQ8	<i>Citizens' self-confidence is boosted by their perception of their ability to perform things.</i>	0.835	0.811

4.3.2 Multivariate Outliers

Utilizing the SPSS programme, a multivariate outliers analysis using the Mahalanobis distance was conducted. There were 400 gathered respondents, and total items of 29 on the exogenous and endogenous variables found 85.757 of Chi-Square value (Table 4.4). Additionally, the Mahalanobis Distance values reveal a broad range of values from 7.118 until 135.485 and 37 samples were eliminated to satisfy the non-outliers' criteria on the group of obtained data (Table 4.4). Data that had been cleansed and filtered for a final sample size of 363 were discovered for a series of multivariate data analyses (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Outliers Detection using Mahalanobis Distance

No.	Indicators	Findings	Remark
1	Total items on the Variable	29	
2	Chi-Square Table for 41 Items, P < 0.001	85.757	
3	Mahalanobis Distance	7.118 – 135.485	
4	Number of Outliers	37	37 / 400
5	Identification of Outliers	7, 26, 32, 41, 100, 106, 107, 109, 120, 121, 125, 136, 137, 138, 163, 165, 166, 174, 185, 200, 202, 211, 217, 237, 279, 280, 281, 283, 284, 292, 323, 337, 352, 353, 357, 367, 389	37 Samples
6	Cleaned data for hypothesis testing.	363	

4.3.3 Reliability of Measurements

A second layer of reliability testing was also done on the 363 respondents in the large, cleaned sample set. Table 4.5 configured the model's measurements' reliability for each variable. Cronbach's Alpha for each variable based on cleaned data demonstrated a high level of measurement reliability (Cronbach's Alpha more than 0.7).

Table 4.5 Reliability of Variables (N = 363)

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Exogenous Variables		
Social Economic Security	6	0.820
Social Cohesion	6	0.861
Social Inclusion	5	0.860

Endogenous Variables		
Government Support	4	0.787
Social quality	8	0.832

4.3.4 Normality of Measurements

With the help of the SPSS application, the data screening process was additionally enhanced for measurement normalcy utilising skewness and kurtosis. Items were confirmed to be normal and close to normal by cut-off point skewness (less than 2) and kurtosis (less than 7) as measures of the variable. Tables 4.5a and 4.5b confirmed the normality of the measurement findings and determined the specific consistency of the items on the series of the hypothesised model's multivariate data analysis - social quality, social economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and government support.

Table 4.6a Normality of Exogenous Variables

Variable	Code	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Economic Security	SE1	0.14	5.18
	SE2	1.13	2.39
	SE3	0.29	4.41
	SE4	1.85	5.40
	SE5	1.53	3.87
	SE6	1.22	4.80
Social Cohesion	SC1	1.11	6.42
	SC2	0.60	3.00
	SC3	1.28	3.89
	SC4	1.27	4.64
	SC5	0.56	3.66
	SC6	0.59	3.84
Social Inclusion	SI1	0.08	2.19
	SI2	1.97	5.64
	SI3	1.99	0.63
	SI4	1.11	2.38
	SI5	1.31	5.42

Table 4.6b Normality of Endogenous Variables

Variable	Code	Skewness	Kurtosis
Government Support	GS1	1.05	5.81
	GS2	1.68	6.69
	GS3	1.53	6.12
	GS4	1.86	4.94
Social Quality	SQ1	0.000	4.12
	SQ2	0.000	4.01
	SQ3	0.000	4.85
	SQ4	0.000	5.47

	SQ5	0.000	4.33
	SQ6	0.000	4.48
	SQ7	0.000	2.46
	SQ8	0.000	4.36

4.4 Hierarchical Regressions Analysis

4.4.1 Correlation among Variables

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the variables. In order to verify the multicollinearity problem between exogenous and endogenous factors, which was hypothesised in the research framework, this study conducted relationship tests among the variables. Table 4.6 displays the degree of relationship (positive and negative) and the degree of connection (significant level) between them. A condition for a series of multivariate data analyses would be satisfied if Table 4.6 additionally revealed a non-multicollinearity (Personless than 0.9) influence of factors

Table 4.7 Correlation Test

Var.	SQ	SE	SC	SI	GS
SQ (Social Quality)	1	0.254 (< .001)	0.437 (< .001)	0.270 (< .001)	0.522 (< .001)
SE (Social Economic Security)	0.254 (.000)	1	0.585 (.000)	0.346 (.000)	0.452 (.000)
SC (Social Cohesion)	0.437 (.000)	0.585 (.000)	1	0.344 (.000)	0.481 (.000)
SI (Social Inclusion)	0.270 (.000)	0.346 (.000)	0.344 (.000)	1	0.334 (.000)
GS (Government Support)	0.522 (.000)	0.452 (.000)	0.489 (.000)	0.334 (.000)	1

4.4.2 Hierarchical Regressions Analysis

Table 4.8 summarises the detail H1 to H3 based on hierarchical regression analysis of hypothetical direct and indirect relationships among variables on the hypothesised model, with a direct effect between social quality as the dependent variable and social economic security, social cohesion, and social inclusion as the independent variables. H4 confirmed detail achievement of indirect effect which configured mediating effect of government support to the social quality.

Table 4.8 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	β	Adjusted R-Square	P-Value	Remarks
H1	The social economic security is significantly and positively enhancing social quality	0.631	0.303	0.000	<i>Hypothesis Asserted</i>
H2	The social cohesion is significantly and positively enhancing social quality	0.528	0.221	0.000	<i>Hypothesis Asserted</i>
H3	The social inclusion is significantly and positively enhancing social	0.851	0.630	0.000	<i>Hypothesis Asserted</i>

	quality			
H4	There is mediating influence of government support on the relationship between social development indicator and social quality	0.605	0.001	<i>Hypothesis Asserted</i>

4.5 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Based on the Table 4.8, results of hypothesis testing, confirmed a direct hypothesised Social Economic Security influence on the social quality of rural community ($\beta = 0.631$; $P = 0.000$), hypothesized Social Cohesion effect on the social quality of rural community ($\beta = 0.528$; $P = 0.000$) and hypothesized Social Inclusion impact on the social quality of rural community ($\beta = 0.851$; $P = 0.000$). Indirect effect relationship which hypothesized Government Support mediation the relationship between social development indicators and social quality of rural community significantly contributed ($\beta = 0.605$; $P = 0.001$).

The SPSS programme was used to investigate the direct and indirect relationships between social development indicators and social quality. Using quantitative direction of hierarchical regressions analysis of hypothetical direct and indirect relationship among variables on the hypothesised model, data analysis was carried out on the quantitative platform, Table 4.7 summarise the detail H1 to H3 which focused with direct effect between social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion on the social quality as dependent variable. Hypothesis 4 confirmed detail achievement of indirect effect which configured mediating effect of government support to the social quality.

4.6 Summary

The data analysis process, conclusions, and discussion on the social quality employing social development indicators; specifically, social economic security, social cohesion, and social inclusion as key predictors, have been identified in detail in Chapter 4. This research also fundamentally found a mediating effect of government support on the relationship between social economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social quality. On the structural model analysis platform, a causal effect link between an exogenous and an endogenous variable was examined and validated using hierarchical mediation analysis. Additionally, a substantial interaction between government funding and the pathway between social development indicators and social quality was discovered in this study. In addition, Chapter 5 will conclude the research by presenting conclusions, recommendations, the study's contribution, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 defined the specific accomplishment of research objectives, including direct and indirect effect pathways of social development indicators and the mediation effect of government support on the social quality of rural communities. The study's limitations and suggestions for further investigation are also included in the study's contributions to the body of knowledge and practitioners. This research successfully highlighted a crucial finding of government support for the interplay of social development indicators on social quality in rural communities. The hypothesised and validated social quality model used quantitative direction employing multivariate data analysis to support the causal relationship between variables. This study completes the journey with an empirical model of social quality that serves as a primary directive for practitioners on social development, rural community improvement, and social quality enhancement.

5.2 Achievement of Research Objectives

The research objectives were confirmed in chapter five. Utilizing the SPSS tool, multivariate data analysis was used to explore the direct and indirect relationships between social development indicators and social quality. Utilizing quantitative direction of hierarchical regressions study of hypothesised direct and indirect relationship among variables on the hypothesised model, data analysis was done on a quantitative platform, Table 4.8 summarise the detail H1 to H3 which focused with direct effect between social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion on the social quality as dependent variable. The details of Hypothesis 4's indirect effect, which configured a mediating influence of government assistance on social quality, were confirmed.

Based on results of hypothesis testing, it confirmed a direct hypothesised Social Economic Security on the rural community's social quality improvement ($\beta = 0.631$; $P = 0.000$), hypothesized Social Cohesion effect on the rural community's social quality ($\beta = 0.528$; $P = 0.000$), and hypothesized Social Inclusion impact on the rural community's social quality ($\beta = 0.851$; $P = 0.000$).

Indirect effect relationship which hypothesized Government Support Mediation the relationship between social development indicators and rural community's social quality significantly contributed ($\beta = 0.605$; $P = 0.001$). Overall, the present study has succeeded to test the direct and indirect effect relationship between social development indicators, mediated by government support on the achievement of rural community's social quality.

5.2.1 Government Support Mediation the Relationship between social development indicators and rural community's social quality

This study is successful in highlighting a key finding of government support on the impact of social development indicators on the social quality of rural communities. The hypothesised and validated social quality model used quantitative direction employing multivariate data analysis to support the causal relationship between variables.

5.3 Conclusions

The present study's main addition was the use of SPSS to examine the relationship between social development factors and government support on social quality in rural areas through social development projects, as well as to elucidate the causal relationship. The hypotheses proposed in this research appear to have been confirmed by both significant path coefficients; that is, the SPSS model was established.

Including the essential ideas required to concentrate on the improvement of rural society and the credibility of community development initiatives, the study's findings can help the government initiative to improve community development in rural regions by incorporating these concepts. The model can combine various parts of the government's administrative systems into a unique management system for enhancing and finishing the accomplishment of projects for rural community development. It would be better and more sustainable to invest in the residents' economic circumstances if the area's economic growth were to improve. For the benefit of present and future generations, the model will be capable of addressing potential growth and needs in rural areas.

Most rural communities tend to concur that the social development initiatives have a beneficial impact on both the expansion of facilities and community development in the area. Baling, Kedah's rural communities are struggling with socioeconomic issues, necessitating urgently required innovative actions to keep resident needs and essential services (Zulkifli, 2022). In this study, the researcher looked at important social development elements that improve the social climate in rural areas. In a nutshell, as demonstrated by the findings presented in Chapter 4;

1. There is a direct positive significant influence of social economic security on the rural community's social quality.
2. Social cohesion significantly affected rural community's social quality.
3. There is a positive direct significant impact of social inclusion on the rural community's social quality.
4. There is a mediating influence of government support on the relationship between social development indicators and rural community's social quality.

5.4 Recommendations

This study found an interesting findings of government support as mediating variable on the relationship between social development indicators (social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion) and social quality. 363 respondents participated in the survey, as confirmed by a hierarchical regression analysis, and a substantial model of social quality has been developed. The model's key finding adds to the body of knowledge and includes the following advice for practitioners:

1. Items that serve as assessments for each variable on the social quality model for rural communities have been validated by the current study. Detail items play a significant role as main guidance for policy making analyst or public management stakeholders on the practice of social development indicators, government support and also social quality improvement.
2. Social economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion found as significant predictors of rural community's social quality in Malaysia. Government support also functions as one of the structural model's mediating variables. The researched, tested, and validated variable is strongly advised as an integrated approach to improving the social quality of rural communities.
3. The technique has been dominated by quantitative analysis as the employed approach, and this study is successful in configuring the specifics from a scientific perspective to meet all research objectives. Additionally, this study urges researchers, community developers, and scientific associations to use methodological direction as a guide when observing social development indicators, government assistance, and social quality improvement.

5.5 Contribution of the Study

5.5.1 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The study has contributed to the body of knowledge, particularly in the literature of social quality studies that look at social development and government support, which was supposedly given less attention in the literature, as discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

The research is a thorough examination of the impact of social advancement and governmental assistance on the social standing of rural communities in Baling, Kedah. Additionally, it gave some insight into how the government views rural development and expressed satisfaction with the institutional setup that was created to implement development programmes in rural areas. This will undoubtedly assist the planners for rural development in developing appropriate development strategies and efficient institutional setup to address some of the issues rural communities in Malaysia experience.

Therefore, it is evident from the study that there is a frequently wide gap between the rhetoric of national policy and planning and what occurs "on the ground," necessitating a close examination of different types of interactions, power relations, resource negotiation, and legitimising norms and values of the village population and government officials. A deeper grasp of the nature and importance of a specific institutional arrangement is directly facilitated by this study's concrete revelation of the effectiveness of government departments operating at the state or federal level.

5.5.2 Contribution to the Practitioners

The results of this study's SPSS development will help the government and individuals identify the critical areas where improving social quality is required and will assist community development experts in realising the key enhancing factors that can be used as standards for social development to improve community development. The model can be used to select the sustainable alternatives in rural areas that are most suitable for a situation before a rural project is implemented for the benefit of its community growth.

The findings of this study can thus serve as a roadmap for related rural community development studies. It allows for the creation of practical rural social quality policies and plans for improving accessibility, growth, productivity, and development. Additionally, this research offers a thorough and valuable method for assessing social development and for assisting in fostering community development in rural areas. Additionally, the research showed that improved social and economic circumstances improve the sustainability of life in rural communities. For those who make decisions about policies, this research has significant ramifications. The social development in rural areas may receive more attention from lawmakers as a result of the social quality factors that continue to emerge as critical factors. Additional interaction might bridge the gap between governmental authorities and community-based groups. According to the findings and literature reviewed in the current study, government officials and practitioners should develop and implement appropriate social development strategies that increase the widespread use of rural community projects and promote better opportunities for rural residents while taking into account the needs of rural residents.

5.6 Limitation of the Study

There are several limitations to the research that should be mentioned. First, the Malay community in the villages was the exclusive focus of the selection of respondents from the target groups or the local population. Even though other ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Indians, and Thais, also inhabit rural areas. Because they are the majority in this area, while the study results may represent the experiences of the Malays in rural areas, they cannot reflect the experiences of other ethnic groups.

In terms of research methodology, the study used a quantitative approach in the opinion that it is best suited for understanding complex social quality phenomena or relatively unknown process characteristics. This study would have been much better served if qualitative methods such as focus groups had been used. This will help to strengthen the arguments made, particularly regarding the problems faced by rural communities, their perspectives on the specific approaches taken by the government to address those problems, and their perspectives on the arrangements designed to deliver development programmes for their betterment.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Research

Empirical data on the social quality of the rural community can be improved by conducting further research in the qualitative direction. This research could include direct and indirect observation, focus group discussion, and interviews. The use of a triangulation technique along the journey is also proposed, along with a combination of quantitative and qualitative direction. From a quantitative point of view, structural equation modelling in conjunction with time series analysis has also offered ways to improve the validated model of quality of life. A set of measurements and variables might be utilised for potential future study on the social quality of rural communities.

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APPENDIX 1
QUESTIONNAIRES



Assalamualaikum wbt. Tuan/Puan,

I would be very grateful if you could help me out by answering this questionnaire for my doctoral business administration thesis that I am working on at Asia E-University. The study is to evaluate the degree of satisfaction and well-being of the rural communities from Baling, Kedah, following the implementation of the rural development programs. The research was conducted on the basis of primary data obtained from citizens of Baling, a commune from the state of Kedah which represents a particular case, as its position allows the direct connection to the national rural development program. The rural development program aims to improve the way of life of the inhabitants by achieving the objectives proposed in the strategy. Many projects have been completed, being positively assessed by the citizens. The answers that you will give will provide valuable information to determine the impact of rural development projects on local communities in Baling, Kedah. The information that you will provide will be confidential and used only for academic purposes. Please accept my appreciation for your contribution to the survey.

Thank you.

Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim

Mobile No. +60145181818

QUESTIONNAIRES

SECTION A: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Please tick (✓) your answer for the items below

- 1) Gender
- a) Male
- b) Female
- 2) Age (years)
- a) 20 and below
- b) 21 – 30
- c) 31 – 40
- d) 41 – 50
- e) 51 – 60
- f) Over 60
- 3) Race
- a) Malay
- b) Chinese
- c) Indian
- d) Others (please specify) _____
- 4) Education Level
- a) Primary 6
- b) SRP/PMR
- c) SPM/STPM
- d) Undergraduate
- e) Post-graduate
- f) Others (please specify) _____

- 5) Profession
- a) Government Sector
 - b) Private Sector
 - c) Self-Employed
 - d) Others (please specify) _____
- 6) Income
- a) below RM1000.00
 - b) RM1001.00-RM2000.00
 - c) RM2001.00-RM3840.00
 - d) RM3841.00 and above
- 7) Family Member
- a) Less than 3
 - b) 3 to 5
 - c) More than 5

Please circle the answers based on the scale provided below.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree/	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree/

SOCIAL ECONOMIC SECURITY

SECTION B: This section includes questions regarding socio-economic security and relate to the respondent’s living situation, number of children, and level of satisfaction with their financial situation.

1	<i>The household income, saving, and spending critically identify my living arrangement</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2	<i>I am satisfied with my current financial situation</i>	1	2	3	4	5
3	<i>In the past year, I save money</i>	1	2	3	4	5
4	<i>I enjoy a degree of privacy in the vicinity</i>	1	2	3	4	5
5	<i>I enable personal success of achievement</i>	1	2	3	4	5
6	<i>I improve my household’s current livelihood or access to services</i>	1	2	3	4	5

SOCIAL COHESION

SECTION C: This section includes questions related to satisfaction and social quality with regards to education, job, standard of living, accommodation, family life, health and social life. Please circle the answers based on the scale provided below.

1	<i>A good education, job and standard of living are important in my social quality</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2	<i>I am happy with my current job, standard of living, accommodation, family life, health, and social life</i>	1	2	3	4	5
3	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of air pollution</i>	1	2	3	4	5
4	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied</i>					

	<i>with the access to recreational or green areas</i>	1	2	3	4	5
5	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the level of crime</i>	1	2	3	4	5
6	<i>In relation to immediate neighbourhood, I am satisfied with the amount of rubbish in the streets</i>	1	2	3	4	5

SOCIAL INCLUSION

SECTION D: This section includes questions to the extent to which individual people and groups have access to and are integrated into the different institutions and social relations of everyday life.

1	<i>I have experienced costly medical expenses (such as hospitalisation, operation, nursing home etc.)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2	<i>I am actively involved in community-based organization (e.g., religious, sport, educational)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
3	<i>I have experienced discrimination against me due to any of the following reasons: physical/mental disability, age, sexual harassment, gender, nationality, physical appearance, ethnic background, religion)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
4	<i>I have, and experienced struggle to access doctor's office/hospital/medical center</i>	1	2	3	4	5
5	<i>As a resident of the neighborhood, I feel I have a sense of belonging as a member of the following: my neighborhood, my town</i>	1	2	3	4	5

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

SECTION E: The following set of statements relate to explore the role that government plays in community development and the circumstances that prompt its involvement. Please circle the answers based on the scale provided below.

1	<i>The government is concerned about the future of the community in the country</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2	<i>Community programs supported by the government are relevant to the needs of the local community</i>	1	2	3	4	5
3	<i>The government is serious about assisting the community to overcome unemployment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
4	<i>The government is driving the development of the local community</i>	1	2	3	4	5

SOCIAL QUALITY

SECTION F: The following set of statements relate to the extent to which processes in society have the capacity of mediating between its members and its institutions. Please circle the answers based on the scale provided below.

1	<i>Good trust, relationships and social networks can help citizen to be competitive and generate more income.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2	<i>Knowledge, innovation and creativity will be able to enhance the expertise and skills of the citizen in generating their economic activities.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
3	<i>The preservation and conservation of a managed environment can result in a healthier life.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
4	<i>The construction of the built infrastructure must be fully functional to generate the economy and well-being of the citizen.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
5	<i>A stable political system will lead to the well -managed management of the citizen and the development of the economy.</i>	1	2	3	4	5

6	<i>Good financial management at the individual and community levels will reduce the burden of life.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
7	<i>Inter-racial understanding will improve the quality of social activities and more participation in community work</i>	1	2	3	4	5
8	<i>Citizens' self-confidence is boosted by their perception of their ability to perform things.</i>	1	2	3	4	5

CURRENT COMMUNITY PROJECT INITIATIVE

SECTION G: The following set of statements relate to to evaluate the degree of satisfaction and wellbeing of the communities from Baling district, following the implementation of the community development programs.

1) Did you aware that this community development program by the government?

Yes No

2) What is your opinion towards the community development program that initiated by the government?

Thank You for Your Cooperation!