



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Roles of Political Action towards Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes of Malaysian Urban Poor

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**ABSTRACT**

The first goal of the Sustainable Development Goals 2025-2050, on the issue of poverty with the slogan 'no one is left behind' is regarded as a wake-up call for the world to combat poverty. Although it has become the main agenda, many studies focused more on the issues of rural poor. Therefore, this has left little room for examining the role of political action on the sustainable livelihood outcomes of the urban poor. This article argues that most poverty eradication strategies seem to be successful with strong political action. Hence, this research attempts to examine the roles of political action as a mediating variable in strengthening the four important livelihood assets namely social network, education, training, and health towards sustainable livelihood outcomes of urban poor communities in Malaysia. A total of 265 urban poor Malay respondents living in the low-cost public housing in Klang Valley were involved in the study. The data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The result showed that political action performed as a mediator for social network and education towards sustainable livelihood of urban poor in Malaysia; proving that political action is a key driver for achieving their sustainable livelihood outcomes. This study then suggests that to address this matter, strong political action through active collaboration between urban poor community and the authority is necessary to ensure livelihood sustainability.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Efforts to minimize poverty in urban areas have been the task of government agencies for many years. Past studies have explored multiple factors to these challenges from socio-economic and environmental aspects of human development (Berlie, 2020; Begum & Moinuddin, 2018). In Malaysia, most studies of sustainable livelihood outcomes focused much on the rural community

(Ibrahim, Hassan, Kamaruddin, & Anuar, 2018; Neo, Mohamad, & Satar, 2018). Limited studies have investigated the role of political action among the urban poor community in Malaysia on sustaining their livelihood outcomes. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the roles of political action as a mediating variable in strengthening the four livelihood assets namely social network, education, training, and health towards sustainable livelihood outcomes of urban poor communities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Sustainable livelihood outcomes: significance to the urban poor community**

The livelihood outcomes are the achievement of the poor from executing their livelihood strategies. This refers to their own personal objective which is the inverse of their own conception of poverty. For example, if their view of poverty is food insecurity then, they seek food security as their livelihood outcome. This indicates the need to scrutinize their livelihood strategies in ensuring its translation into a beneficial outcome (DFID, 1999). The sustainability of the livelihood outcomes refers to the improvement of income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and sustainable use of natural resources (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Besides, the sustainability of livelihood outcomes encompasses the environment, financial and social aspects.

The sustainability of the environment ensures that consumption needs are met without undermining the environment (Satterthwaite, 2003). However, urban areas are attributed to environmental hazards such as biological pathogens, chemical pollutants, and physical hazards. This is due to the urban dwellers' consumption patterns in depleting natural resources. Large volumes of wastes reflecting the failure of governments in implementing efficient environmental policies are rampant. Thus, the urban poor should envisage the effects on the environment from permanent decline of natural resources in devising strategic decisions.

The sustainability of financial capital refers to a stable economic base to meet consumption needs. Urban centres are a cash-dependent economy thus, financial capital is the most important asset as it encompasses other assets such as paying for food and shelter (Moser, 1998). The urban poor are likely to be trapped in a poverty cycle mismanagement of their financial base. Being vulnerable, they fall into a debt trap as they resort to use their savings. Besides, they borrow through micro-credit loans, thence face difficulty in repayment (Khan, Bedi, & Sparrow 2015). Choosing livelihood strategies that ensure sustainability of their financial capital is crucial for the poor.

Furthermore, sustainable livelihood outcomes encompass the urban sociability which is the interaction in urban spaces (Bayón & Saraví, 2013). Urban fragmentation has been imminent with elements of vices like mistrust, stigmatization, crime, segregation of urban spaces and social isolation. Hence, considering social inclusion of the poor in executing poverty reduction is a governmental responsibility. The urban poor utilises their social capital in having the freedom to participate in politics (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Likewise, voting gives them a sense of empowerment. In ensuring sustainability, they then devise livelihood strategies leading to sustainable livelihood outcomes of the environment, financial and social aspects.

### **Determinant factors to sustainable livelihood outcomes of the urban poor community**

The sustainable livelihood approach looks at the evolution of the development of the poor living their daily lives based on policy and institutional needs (Serrat, 2017). It recognizes that living in poverty is not a life of security. These categorized groups are dynamic and try to sustain their lives using various methods with very limited social, financial, and human resources. Thus, improving the living standards of the poor by touching on the elements of social networking, education, and health among the urban poor are further discussed.

### **Social networks**

The social network theory has identifiable differences between strong bonds and weak bonds. The strong bond refers to one that is sealed between close family or good friends and the individual's living environment. Otherwise, weak social ties refer to relationships that exist among those who do not have family ties such as distant acquaintances or intermediaries. Strong or weak ties have their own values to help the urban poor though not the main indicator in building social networks among them. Social networks can influence an individual's thinking and behaviour (Afridi, 2011), hence challenges in job search, exchange of goods or financial loan assistance burden can be reduced significantly.

### **Education**

Formal education is not only a source of knowledge, but also how that knowledge can be shared and put into practice to sustain one's livelihood. It is very closely related to human capital and the development of social infrastructure. Such development helps to improve their lives. Previous studies have shown that education can overcome poverty and reduce the issue of marginalization of society towards development (Moser, 1998). There is a relationship between the element of household income and the level of education of the community. This means that with less-educated households, their lives can be below the poverty line (Arsani & Ramadhan, 2020). As education is closely related to societal elements, it is a crucial factor to resolve the issue of poverty. TRAINING

In building human capital, upskilling training facilitates access for the poor to participate in the local economy (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). It prevents the poor from succumbing into becoming excesses of the market and provides them the opportunity to improve. Thus, it protects micro-enterprises from the harsh conditions of the dynamic economy and allows their business to flourish. Cities provide exposure to rapid spread of information, apprenticeships, and training facilities. However, access to some of these services are costly (Hossain, 2006). In Malaysia, government and non-governmental agencies implemented initiatives in providing free training services such as baking, sewing and online business workshops (Mayan & Nor, 2020).

### **Health**

Health issues among the urban poor have been the result of dissatisfaction with the poor-quality environment. They tend to live in areas with high levels of population density and low rental rates. These areas are often polluted and exposed to hazards that are often brought in from nearby industrial areas. Hence, it results in exposure to the dangers of diseases and to deterioration of health. Poor health conditions have given room to the cycle of poverty to remain longer among them and efforts to improve their lives productively are affected (Barnidge et al., 2011).

### **Roles of political action**

In urban poverty studies, the politics variable has become an underlying tool to understand the structure, collective actions, and the outcome of a phenomenon. Moreover, political analysis assists the researchers to understand the context of the displayed experience of poverty, the social organization and informal leadership from the poor neighbourhood. According to Levine (2017), politics involves decisions and policies of governance in the fields of organizations and administrators. It operates within the legal, political, and managerial structures to meet the needs of the citizens.

In addition, it involves political action to improve specific issues and conditions. Hence, political motivation adopted should match the political action to positively impact the community (Lucci et al., 2018). A study on Africa's pathway to achieve inclusive growth, the government improves the country's human capital through technical education and provides incentives for investors (Albagoury, 2020). Meanwhile, Hossain and Rahman (2017) recognized that relationship between the government and urban poor would help the poor to adapt to changes and sustain their livelihood

as found in Bangladesh. The government has helped the urban poor to adapt their assets and increase resilience to cope with natural disasters. In Papua New Guinea, Prabowo et al., (2020) spotted that symmetrical decentralization in the whole of Indonesia is necessary as improving the system and financial management; benefit the poor. Thus, understanding the law, recognizing equal workforce distribution, instilling good governance, and upholding responsibility by the representatives need to be preserved.

Some research documented the government's incompatibility of political motives that further undermined the urban poor. Olajide et al., (2018) postulated that there are conflicting agendas between urban development planning and the livelihood of the urban poor; on the development of Lagos. From a Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF), the authors identified that the actions taken by the government are entirely against sustainable urban development and poverty eradication. In this case, informal settlers were evicted without compensation or relocated away from their workplace. Thus, it created more livelihood challenges for the poor rather than resolving the pertinent issue.

In similar ways, Lucci et al., (2018) identified that informal urban settler data were not considered while formulating the policies, hence depriving the poor of their needs and livelihood. These authors reiterated that live data of the urban poor should be rendered to reduce the impact on the poor and improve the policy implementation towards them. Therefore, aligning the political motives through employing the science of data would empower the poor to enhance their assets and other capitals.

Despite the government role, those who promote poor causes are perceived as political actors. The roles of informal leaders could be promoting empowerment and reform, lobbying and working together with the government to ensure the poor alleviation objectives could be achieved. DFID (2011) highlighted the term 'political settlement' which refers to bargains between informal and formal actors on issues to achieve a firm decision. Ensuring a successful bargain, both actors' motives should be compatible and leave a minimal risk of dispute. In this case, if the informal leader agrees to collaborate with the authority, an adjustment should be undertaken on the informal structure to allow state consolidation (DFID, 2011).

The struggles of urban poor in accessing housing and infrastructure in New Delhi revealed that local leaders emerged in the process of urban structures (Das & Walton, 2015). They extended their network with political leaders from other localities to negotiate a complex authority landscape. Meanwhile, in Thailand, two provinces (Surin and Si-Saket) that tie partnership between the local NGOs leader and the provincial head to develop agricultural produce recorded different outcomes (Moore & Donaldson, 2016). The Surin province who had highly educated NGOs leaders who negotiated with the provincial head received support for the villagers. Meanwhile, in Si-Saket province, the local provincial head frequently changed, as did the initiatives and policies. The situation hindered the community from the planning for the province, hence poor social ties were established with the changes. This study also highlighted that tripartite partnership is the key to economic development and poverty reduction (Moore & Donaldson, 2016). In Jakarta the involvement of urban poor activists in politics has allowed political participation at the village level (Savirani & Aspinall, 2017). Maintaining the livelihood of key people is essential as they are with possessions, which could bridge them to other resources to pursue their livelihood. In a study undertaken by Udoh et al. (2017), Nigerian farmers improve their household capitals through their income, savings, and efficiency of economic relations. Meanwhile, social networks have proven to expedite innovation, promote knowledge sharing, and improve these farmers' social and human capital.

Political action is vital for the livelihood of the urban poor to face life challenges, whether it is through political representation or action taken at an individual level. The networks spared by the political

action intrigue the demands to fulfil the needs of the poor needs and become the modality of sustaining the everyday lives.

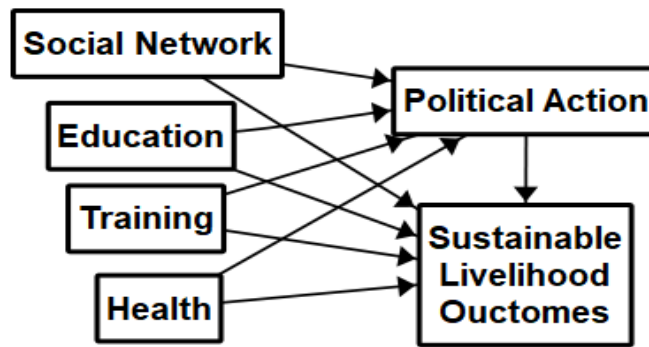
**Related theories to political action**

The Theory of Action is adapted to understand the motive of political action as action is the most basic of human existence. The theory has it in three related but autonomous categories: labour, work, and action (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2019). In sustaining life, labour defines the human conditions, work is the world built and maintained and action is to accomplish freedom (Lilja et al., 2018). Freedom happens when a group of people with the same motive has an active interaction and space of appearance to exchange ideas. Hence, action requires one to share his thoughts through speech and deeds.

The Regime Theory is employed in understanding the partnership structure undertaken by the authority and private actors. The theory views that they collaborated with resources to govern (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001). Meanwhile, the urban poverty issue as a workforce problem would steer towards the global economy that leads to become the agenda of urban governance. By fitting in the local can realise civic cooperation or coalition-building. Achieving the capacity to act allows coalition building to resolve issues through incentives such as employment, capacity building, financial aid, and others (Stone, 989).

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework of the study is shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

This study postulated the following hypotheses based on the SLF that can be tested and validated:

<b>H1</b>	Social network significantly affects political action	<b>H6</b>	The relationship between social network and sustainable livelihood outcomes is mediated by political action
<b>H2</b>	Education significantly affects political action	<b>H7</b>	The relationship between education and sustainable livelihood outcomes is mediated by political action
<b>H3</b>	Training significantly affects political action	<b>H8</b>	The relationship between training and sustainable livelihood outcomes is mediated by political action

<b>H4</b>	Health significantly affects political action	<b>H9</b>	The relationship between health and sustainable livelihood outcomes is mediated by political action.
<b>H5</b>	Political action affects sustainable livelihood outcomes		

## METHODS

### Research design

This research is grounded in the postpositivist worldview which entails the need to identify the factors that influence outcomes (Creswell, 2009). The theories governing the world are verified and tested to either refute or support them. It adopted the quantitative case study approach, in examining the roles of political action as a mediating variable in strengthening the four important livelihood assets (social network, education, training, and health).

### Sampling technique

The sample size is calculated using the statistical power software, G\*Power 3.1. The F-tests and the statistical test (linear multiple regression) were used. The input parameters are as follows: (a) The effect size as 0.15, (b)  $\alpha$  err prob as 0.05, (c) the power ( $1-\beta$  err prob) as 0.95, (d) number of tested predictors as 5 and (e) total number of predictors as 5. Thus, the calculated total sample size is 138. The data were collected from a survey using questionnaire from 265 urban poor Malays who lived in the low-cost public housing in Klang Valley (Table 1).

**Table 1: Location of data collection**

Kuala Lumpur (Parliament)	Projek Perumahan Rakyat	Number of Questionnaires
Batu	PPR Batu Muda	28
	PPR Beringin	65
Setiawangsa	PPR Desa Rejang	30
	PPR Kg Baru Air Panas	39
	PPR Seri Semarak	24
Selangor (Local Government)		
Majlis Perbandaran Petaling Jaya	PPR Lembah Subang	39
Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam	PPR Hicom	40
Total		265

### Research Instrument

The survey incorporated 36 items from the constructs of social network, education, training, health, political action and sustainable livelihood outcomes. These indicators were measured through a five-point Likert Scale with the values from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The structure of the survey includes demographic profile, social network, education, training, health, political action and sustainable livelihood outcomes.

### Respondent Profile

The demographic profile includes gender, age category, marital status, education level, working status, monthly household income, migration status, number of household members and household structure. Table 2 shows, majority of demographic profile are; female who constituted majority of respondents (72%), 25-34 made up majority age category (33.6%), married individual (76%),SPM holder (58%),full time employees(35%),RM1599-1000(31.3%), rural-urban migration(59.6%), household size of 3-7 person (64%) and nuclear family (64.2%).

**Table 2: Demographic profile**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	75	28.3
Female	190	71.7
Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25 - 34 years	89	33.6
35 - 44 years	66	25
45 - 54 years	52	19.6
55 - 64 years	39	14.6
65 years and above	19	7.2
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	5	1.9
Married	200	75.5
Divorced	17	6.4
Seperated	2	0.8
Abandoned	7	2.6
Widowed	33	12.5
Single Mother	1	0.4
Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
UPSR	29	10.9
PMR/SRP	46	17.4
SPM	154	58.1
STPM	13	4.9
Certificate	9	3.4
Diploma	8	3.0
Degree	4	1.5
No Schooling	2	0.8
Working Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Working full-time	99	35.1
Working part-time / casual	51	18.1

Not working – looking	27	9.4
Not working - not looking	86	26.4
Housewife	20	7.5
Entrepreneur	9	3.4
Monthly Household Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
RM2100 and above	41	15.5
RM2099 – RM1600	47	17.7
RM1599 - RM1000	83	31.3
RM999 – RM600	48	18.1
RM599 and below	46	17.4
Migration Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Born here	77	29.1
Rural-urban	158	59.6
Urban-urban	29	11.3
Number of Household Members	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 2 people	24	9.1
3 – 7 people	170	64.2
8 people and above	71	26.8
Household Structure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male centred family (No wife, may include relatives, children and friends)	7	2.6
Female centred family (No husband, may include children and friends)	52	19.6
Nuclear family (Husband and wife with children)	170	64.2
Extended family (Husband, wife, children and relatives)	27	10.2
Others	9	3.4

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed based on four human development factors namely (1) the social network factor, (2) demand for quality education, (3) request for developing human skills through training and (4) have favourable health facilities. Through political action as the mediator, it is regarded as the key driver for the sustainable livelihood outcomes model. This study assumes that without the process of political action it will not lead to sustainable livelihood outcomes. Thus, to test the hypotheses, the Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and SmartPLS were used. Two phases of analysis were conducted in testing the model, namely the measurement model assessment and the structural model assessment.



### Measurement model assessment

The model is assessed based on the criteria of convergent validity, discriminant validity and the consistency reliability of the model. For the convergent validity, the model is assessed based on the indicators loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). For the recommended threshold, loadings above 0.70 are considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017). In this study, two indicators have the loadings value in between 0.40 and 0.69, which are H2 and PA1 that loaded at 0.684 and 0.666 respectively. These two indicators were retained in the model. Five indicators which are EDU7, HEA2, EDU4, EDU1 and PA2 were removed from the model due to the low factor loadings (Table 2).

Next, this study examined the constructs' internal consistency reliability. In this study, the value of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are above 0.60 and below 0.95, indicating that the model had reliable internal consistency.

This study then examined the convergent validity of the construct through evaluating the AVE. In the research model, all the constructs' AVE results were above the recommended threshold, which confirmed that the model had a good convergent validity. Meanwhile, Henseler et al. (2015) suggested the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) approach as a more robust method in assessing discriminant validity. The acceptable threshold was when the HTMT value fell below 0.85 (Hair, et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015) as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Convergent Validity and Consistency Reliability**

Constructs	Indicators	Convergent Validity		Consistency Reliability	
		Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	CR
Social Network	SN1	0.806	0.571	0.626	0.799
	SN2	0.718			
	SN3	0.741			
Education	EDU1	0.752	0.606	0.837	0.885
	EDU2	0.787			
	EDU3	0.766			
	EDU5	0.769			
	EDU6	0.815			
Training	TRA1	0.888	0.744	0.888	0.920
	TRA2	0.915			
	TRA3	0.899			
	TRA4	0.738			
Health	HEA1	0.775	0.552	0.722	0.878
	HEA3	0.684			
	HEA4	0.767			
Political Action	PA1	0.666	0.556	0.611	0.789
	PA3	0.751			
	PA4	0.813			
	SLO1	0.797	0.619	0.846	0.890

Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes	SLO2	0.706			
	SLO3	0.837			
	SLO4	0.771			
	SLO5	0.817			

**Table 4: HTMT Discriminant validity**

Constructs	SN	EDU	TRA	HEA	PA	SLO
Social Network						
Education	0.497					
Training	0.536	0.688				
Health	0.741	0.633	0.621			
Political Action	0.597	0.515	0.320	0.502		
Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes	0.348	0.260	0.141	0.540	0.445	

After having confirmed that the model has good internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, it is considered to have established the measurement model. The next process is to assess the structural model.

### Structural model assessment

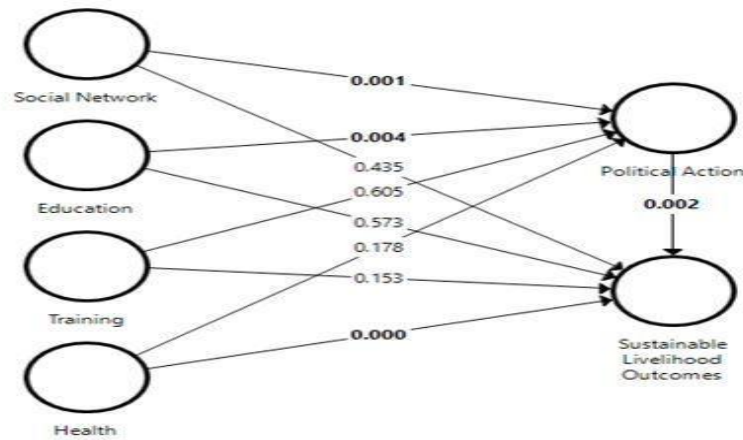
The structural model assessment tests the hypotheses and assess the significance and relevance of the structural model relationship (Hair et al., 2017). This study first assessed the collinearity issues in the model using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF); where the value below 5 shows no critical issue in the structural model. However, collinearity issues can also occur at the VIF value of 3-5, thus suggested that ideally the VIF values should be close to 3 and lower. All the predictors of VIF values are below 3, indicating that the model did not have any critical collinearity issue (Becker et al., 2015).

Next, the hypotheses were tested through assessing the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships (Table 5).

**Table 5: Structural relationship and hypotheses testing**

Hypo	Path	Coefficient	VIF	p-values	95% Confidence Intervals	Support
H1	SN → PA	0.250	1.349	0.001	[0.093, 0.395]	Yes
H2	EDU → PA	0.261	1.686	0.004	[0.079, 0.442]	Yes
H3	TRA → PA	-0.050	1.717	0.605	[-0.253, 0.133]	No
H4	HEA → PA	0.103	1.486	0.178	[-0.055, 0.246]	No
H5	PA → SLO	0.209	1.264	0.002	[0.072, 0.336]	Yes

The bootstrapping procedure was conducted to analyse the hypotheses. The result shows that three hypotheses are supported for the direct effect which showed significance relationship. Social networks are significant on political action with ( $\beta = 0.250, p < 0.05$ ) indicating that social network between people leads to their political action.



**Figure 2: Sustainable livelihood model result**

Education also shows a significant relationship with political action ( $\beta = 0.261, p < 0.05$ ), which supports the argument that demanding for quality education leads to political action. The third significance relationship is on political action towards sustainable livelihood outcomes with ( $\beta = 0.209, p < 0.05$ ). This shows that political action is a way forward for achieving sustainable livelihood outcomes. Training and health, however, do not support the hypothesis when both relationships on political action show no significant relationship. Next, this study tests the indirect relationship hypotheses (Table 6).

**Table 6: Mediating effect testing**

Hypo	Path	Coeffecient	p-values	95% Confidence Intervals	Support
H6	SN → PA → SLO	0.052	0.029	[0.016, 0.109]	Yes
H7	EDU → PA → SLO	0.055	0.037	[0.015, 0.122]	Yes
H8	TRA → PA → SLO	-0.010	0.619	[-0.060, 0.026]	No
H9	HEA → PA → SLO	0.022	0.238	[-0.007, 0.067]	No

For indirect effect, the mediation analysis method was applied based on Preacher and Hayes (2008) as well as Hayes (2018) approach. This indirect effect was tested using a bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure. From the result, two hypotheses (H6 and H7) are found to have significant results. This indicates that political action performs as a mediator for social network and sustainable livelihood outcomes with ( $\beta = 0.052, p < 0.05$ ) and for education and sustainable livelihood outcomes ( $\beta = 0.055, p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, this study found evidence for the role of political action in enhancing the sustainable livelihood outcomes of the people.

This study also measures the endogenous constructs' predictive power by calculating the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), the effect size  $f^2$  and the Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  predictive relevance using blindfolding approach. Table 7 indicates the effect size, coefficient of determination and predictive relevance of the model.

**Table 7: Mediating effect testing**

	Effect size ( $f^2$ )		Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )		Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )	
	Political Action	Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes	Political Action	Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes	Political Action	Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes
<b>Social Network</b>	0.058	0.003	0.209	0.207	0.102	0.115
<b>Educational</b>	0.051	0.002				
<b>Training</b>	0.002	0.012				
<b>Health</b>	0.009	0.094				
<b>Political Action</b>		0.043				

For the result of this study, social networks and education produce small effect sizes on political action with ( $f^2 = 0.058$ ) and ( $f^2 = 0.051$ ) respectively. Meanwhile, health and political actions produce small effect sizes on sustainable livelihood outcomes with ( $f^2 = 0.094$ ) and ( $f^2 = 0.043$ ) respectively. In terms of coefficient of determination  $R^2$ , political action was explained with 20.9 percent of variance from the exogenous constructs. For sustainable livelihood outcomes, it was explained with 20.7 percent of variances from the five exogenous constructs. Although the value of  $R^2$  is considered small, this value is determined based on the disciplines, where the  $R^2$  value of 0.20 can be considered high in some psychological fields (Hair et al., 2017). By the conduct of Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  predictive relevance, both constructs' values were above zero, wherein the political action  $Q^2$  value is of 0.102 and sustainable livelihood outcomes with 0.115. This result proves that the model had developed predictive relevance.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To examine the important assets of livelihood among the urban poor in Kuala Lumpur, this study assumes that political action would lead to achieve sustainable livelihood outcomes for them. The results further concluded that political action is a way forward for achieving sustainable livelihood outcomes. The results reveal that the significant issues addressed in the study were the importance of education and social networks.

Education is perceived as a mechanism to alleviate from poverty. Thus, the result of this study indicated education as a significant issue for the poor. Research on poor minority education found absenteeism is common, hence this contributes to the problem of achieving inclusive education (Stylianou, 2017). Students were challenged with recurring poor socio-economic conditions and parental absence. At the micro level, the absence of materials and non-material demands also demotivate students. Concurrently, at the systemic level, policies that promote 'one-fits-all' cultural integration also result in failure to make these students achieve. Besides, effective top-down policies that promote inclusive education would mitigate the issue.

Previous studies have addressed that grassroots leaders who emerged among the poor could lead to create change in their community (Olajide et al., 2018; Savirani & Aspinall, 2017; Moore & Donaldson, 2016). They build trust, effective social networks, and norms among the needy. This could link the group to the resources through negotiation with the authorities (Baron et al., 2000). They are

involved in social organizations to actively interact with the key people in understanding the issues and building coalitions (Siisiainen, 2003). Consistent with Stone's Regime Theory, the capacity to resolve economic and social problems could be achieved through building alliances (Levine, 2017).

The research has several implications. First, it highlighted that political action helps in poor livelihoods through open dialogue to discuss issues. Collaborative and collective efforts help to alleviate struggles of the poor. Secondly, regular collection of live data on the poor is required to ensure it implicates the policy formulated for them. Thirdly, education is crucial yet lacking for the poor (Reuge et al., 2021). Among the risks are dropout and distorted building of human capital in poor communities. Investments on education should not be compromised to allow the poor to follow the learning mechanism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Political action is a way forward to achieve sustainable livelihood outcomes for the urban poor. This study has proven political action was driven by the poor to create change. The significant issues addressed were the importance of social networks and education. The urban poor must work together with the authority through strong coalitions to help policy makers to decide on matters that affect their lives. Hence, future research is recommended to investigate other mediating variables including the policies, institutions and processes towards sustaining livelihood outcomes of the urban poor. Besides, future research can embark on mixed-methods design to provide comprehensive analysis of data. Finally, the study outcomes may provide insights into the role of urban poor empowerment to participate in the political action to meet their needs for life improvement.

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