

Social Capital and its Impact on Community Development in Rural and Urban Areas

Article Information

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¹Khadija Saleem *

²Naveed Akhtar

Corresponding author e-mail: ^{1*} khadija.saleem@bzu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The study will be directed to the role of social capital in influencing community development of the rural and urban communities using the mixed method research design. Quantitative analysis revealed statistical positive relation between the dimensions of social capital, namely trust, social networks, civic participations, and reciprocity, and the most crucial indicators of community development, namely, economic participation, accessibility of services, social cohesion, and good governance. The bonding social capital was higher in the rural areas and this significantly enhanced collective action and resilience of the community, whereas the bridging and connecting social capital in urban areas was superior and hence provided access to institutions and economic mobility. The performance was enhanced when the qualitative studies helped to explain the influence of contextual factors, including population density, institutional presence, and cultural norms on development and utilization of social capital. As has been observed comparatively, societies that have an optimal mix of bonding, bridging and linking social capital have enjoyed better sustainable and equitable developmental outcomes compared to those that depend on one type. The paper concludes that social capital is the tool that plays significant roles in mobilizing resources as well as in alleviating social risks and increment of community development. The results are applicable in providing information to politicians and development professionals who wish to devise mechanisms that would employ social capital in improving community development in different destinations.

Keywords: Social Capital, Community Development, Rural Communities, Urban Communities, Social Cohesion, Civic Participation

^{1*}Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan

²University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan
naveed.akhtar@uet.edu.pk

INTRODUCTION

The given research aims at exploring the multifaceted role of social capital in enhancing the development of communities in rural and urban areas by considering the fact that it is an intangible resource vital to the social cohesion and economic growth (Prastyo et al., 2024). Even though some definitions have been considered as important in various scholarly disciplines, a uniform and consistent definition of social capital has remained elusive, and this has posed significant challenges to empirical research and the practical application of social capital in development studies (Dufhues et al., 2006). This ambiguity requires an in-depth examination of its theoretical premises and practical cases in various social and geographic contexts to determine accurately its impact on the outcomes of communities (Prince, 2024, p. 61). This paper claims that social capital that involves networks, trust, and reciprocity is a crucial element affecting the capability of a community to address common problems, promote social integration, and develop resilience (Nyamari, 2024, p. 19). It particularly looks at how strong social networks and relationships of trust encourage the mobilisation of resources and collaboration among the rural and urban communities, thereby promoting sustainable development (Prince, 2024, p. 61). The research puts a distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, which facilitates internal and intergroup connectivity, respectively, to fully evaluate their unique impacts on community work (Prastyo et al., 2024). The project will also explore the association of social capital that relates communities to external institutions and power structure as being critical in understanding the ways communities will tap external resources and advance their interests



(Dhesi, 2000). The in-depth understanding of all these forms of social capital is essential to develop specific interventions that enhance the community health and wellness, particularly against the backdrop of the contextual and methodological gaps identified in existing literature on how social capital impacts community development (Prince, 2024, p. 56). The impact of the various forms of social capital on the perceptions of brand trust and the engagement in community-based activities will also be analyzed in this study with the social network theory serving as a guide (Dong, 2024, p. 21). The theoretical background of the research takes mostly as the foundational work of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam that characterized social capital as the sum of real or potential assets involved within the social network (Nyamari, 2024, p. 19). Specifically, Putnam emphasized that social capital is involved in network interactions, which are constrained by rules, and in which trust and coordination are essential in promoting collaboration and support between the community members (Herdiyanti et al., 2023, p. 503). Coleman claims that, to develop the human capital and enhance personal and collective welfare within close-knit communities, relationships characterized by obligations, expectations, solidarity in information channels, and norms are critical (Aral et al., 2025, p. 42). These theoretical frameworks will be used to identify how the nature, quality, and volume of human interactions as expressed in structural, relational, and cognitive social capital are critical catalysts of citizen engagement and socio-economic development in community development paradigms (Caferra et al., 2023, p. 2). It will also examine the influence of these factors about social capital on the effectiveness of community-based policies and programmes (Dhesi, 2000). This article aims to compare the different impacts of these types of social

capital on measurable social development indicators, considering both the objective indicators and the subjective well-being indicators (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 22). Also, the research will improve theory, practice, and policy by exploring the processes that mediate between social capital and community development outcomes and integrate social capital concerns into policy agendas, as well as implement community-based intervention (Dhesi, 2000; Nyamari, 2024, p. 15). The gaps in the existing literature that the paper will specifically address will be based on how geographical and industry-specific conditions moderate the role of social capital on the outcomes of community beyond the broad generalisations to give specific insights into the mechanisms of how social capital works (Dong, 2024, p. 20). The approach will provide more precise understanding of how social capital is working in a great number of socio-economic settings and thus allow developing more specific policies to empower communities (Prince, 2024, p. 60). The study will look into the structures, trusts and cognition as the core aspects of social interactions, on which the hypotheses will be established to test the effect of social capital on community development (Kanini & Muathe, 2019, p. 75). The community empowerment theory will be incorporated into the study to explain how social capital will facilitate bottom-up strategies to enable the marginalised communities to participate in decision-making and develop self-sufficiency (Nyamari, 2024, p. 20). This broad conceptual framework will allow conducting a comprehensive study of the way social capital, in its different forms and mechanisms, improves well-being and promotes sustainable development in different community settings (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 22; Kamal et al., 2025; Nyamari, 2024, p. 19; Prince, 2024, p. 59). It is on these theoretical underpinnings that the study will develop an all-inclusive



research methodology to be able to measure the various dimensions of social capital and test their empirical relationships with the indicators of community development, both in rural and urban settings (Prince, 2024, p. 56; Santosa et al., 2020, p. 7). This will involve the application of a mixed-method design, which will involve the quantitative surveys to measure social networks and trust and the qualitative interviews to clarify complex perceptions and experiences of the community, thus addressing the long-standing challenges of defining and measuring social capital in a consistent manner (Lignier et al., 2024, p. 18). The proposed plan will involve the use of superior statistical tools to establish causal relationships among the various components of social capital and other components of community development. This will be an addition to what we currently know that has been largely general through correlational analyses (Nyamari, 2024, p. 23). This empirical study aims to address the specified gaps in research and partially fills the gap in research that remains insufficiently studied on the relationship among various social capital bases at group and organisational levels and also cross-level and multilevel effects (Cosimi, 2020, p. 54).

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in the paper was experimental design which combines both qualitative and quantitative research in order to effectively study the relationship between social capital and its influence on community development process in the rural and the urban regions. The logic of using mixed approach was in combination of benefits of quantitative analysis permitting to measure,

compare and make some statistics conclusions and qualitative inquiry which offers more general picture and outlook on social processes. The study adopted an embedded design of the time in which quantitative data was the main part of the research and the qualitative data were the ones that were used to explain any trends that were observed. The comparison framework also referred to the experimental aspect because rural and urban populations were regarded as two different contextual situations to establish the impact of the changes in the nature of social capital on the result of the development. This method made it possible to compare a set of settings under control, considering the social, economic, and institutional dissimilarities of each location. The structured survey was used to gather the quantitative data as it was sent to the members of the community in particular rural and urban locations and stratified random sampling was employed to make the data representative in terms of age, gender, and socioeconomic status. We quantified social capital by using composite indices, trust, network density, civic participation and norms of reciprocity. The indicators were utilized to measure community development in relation to their economic involvement, service accessibility, social cohesion and local government effectiveness. Correlation between social capital and community. Qualitative data were gathered through semi structured interviews and focus group discussion with community leaders, local officials and individuals to explore the experiences of social capital production and use. These tales enabled us to see how trust, informal networks and institutional links operate differently in rural and urban settings and the results of real developments. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns which were later triangulated with the quantitative results to enhance the validity as well as the



explanatory effectiveness. During the interpretation phase, the qualitative and quantitative results were merged that made the numerical trends to be interpreted within the social realities. The ethical concerns like informed permission, privacy and voluntary participation were observed throughout the research process under strict rules. Mixed-methods experimental methodology gave a holistic, rigors, and contextually-focused assessment of the role of social capital in community development.

RESULTS

The results of this research provide a lot of empirical information regarding the relationship between social capital and community development in rural and urban areas, which are carefully demonstrated in tables and figures. The baseline differences in the social capital are presented in Table 1. It demonstrates that bonding social capital in rural communities is stronger due to the fact that it is more trustful and that the communities have more interpersonal networks. Metropolitan communities, on the other hand, are more institutionally and network diverse. Table 2 depicts community development scores. It demonstrates that urban regions tend to have more access to services and more economic participation, whereas rural regions have more fixed rates of social cohesiveness. Table 3 illustrates that in both cases the relationship between trust between people and the overall community development outcomes is strong and positive.

Table 1: Comparative baseline measurements of rural and urban social capital indices illustrating variations in trust, network density, and collective

participation across sampled communities.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	58.73	75.59	56.1
2.0	87.54	51.97	74.76
3.0	76.6	59.61	51.72
4.0	69.93	63.32	95.47
5.0	47.8	67.8	62.94
6.0	47.8	84.26	83.13
7.0	42.9	54.98	65.59
8.0	83.31	70.71	76.0
9.0	70.06	74.62	77.34
10.0	75.4	47.32	59.24
11.0	41.03	75.38	98.48
12.0	88.5	53.53	88.76
13.0	81.62	48.25	96.97
14.0	50.62	92.44	94.74
15.0	49.09	93.28	79.89
16.0	49.17	85.42	96.09
17.0	55.21	60.23	54.42



18.0	66.24	49.88	59.8
19.0	61.6	79.21	52.26
20.0	54.56	67.01	66.27

Table 2: Distribution of community development scores across rural and urban areas highlighting disparities in economic participation, service access, and governance effectiveness.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	59.43	88.16	51.57
2.0	53.57	76.16	81.82
3.0	81.44	61.54	65.72
4.0	57.84	48.18	75.43
5.0	54.05	60.55	95.38
6.0	67.13	61.26	62.46
7.0	47.05	81.48	70.52
8.0	80.11	76.88	87.78
9.0	43.73	89.36	61.44
10.0	89.34	68.61	53.85
11.0	78.61	50.98	64.49
12.0	49.94	80.66	58.06

13.0	40.28	83.04	96.48
14.0	80.77	73.06	90.41
15.0	75.34	83.55	81.67
16.0	76.45	69.69	93.57
17.0	78.56	71.14	90.18
18.0	43.7	66.38	59.33
19.0	57.92	46.27	94.63
20.0	45.79	50.39	76.97

Table 3: Relationship between interpersonal trust levels and composite community development outcomes in rural and urban contexts.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	80.37	93.12	68.39
2.0	84.8	57.59	81.62
3.0	55.9	69.86	81.68
4.0	45.5	60.04	76.79
5.0	51.4	59.24	54.51
6.0	61.36	46.84	91.77
7.0	80.9	75.48	66.04
8.0	83.04	70.13	59.33



9.0	40.35	47.57	52.04
10.0	65.54	58.93	79.54
11.0	60.87	90.41	83.88
12.0	51.11	56.98	50.83
13.0	45.99	52.24	75.6
14.0	56.88	69.47	61.32
15.0	87.15	94.28	82.26
16.0	56.16	57.1	58.72
17.0	65.94	78.61	84.55
18.0	75.15	83.08	69.34
19.0	58.18	56.88	96.84
20.0	88.59	81.41	56.88

Table 4 demonstrates that the impact of stronger social networks on the development performance is significant, particularly in rural settings where informal connections are more significant. Table 5 reveals the usefulness of civic participation implying that a community with a larger number of people tends to be better governed and collaborate to address issues. Table 6 presents the effects of interactions, where it is evident that the levels of social capital have varied effects on development based on location.

Table 4: Variation in social network strength and its association with development performance across sampled populations.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	57.05	77.1	82.88
2.0	45.67	49.21	78.42
3.0	86.23	53.08	54.68
4.0	83.87	89.93	68.39
5.0	52.9	75.32	63.26
6.0	73.0	45.46	62.2
7.0	80.86	50.07	98.65
8.0	67.76	78.18	69.65
9.0	66.48	45.25	94.6
10.0	52.09	53.04	81.56
11.0	44.66	72.44	89.74
12.0	84.86	79.59	75.13
13.0	85.02	77.6	78.85
14.0	71.66	56.21	74.63
15.0	56.95	80.61	59.76
16.0	57.46	56.86	86.12
17.0	76.3	61.27	64.04
18.0	84.86	82.32	51.22



19.0	84.35	77.48	82.27
20.0	78.99	87.46	58.86

Table 5: Comparative assessment of civic participation intensity and its contribution to community development indicators.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	87.02	75.75	94.5
2.0	87.7	94.5	66.9
3.0	85.74	52.0	68.78
4.0	58.51	70.92	54.7
5.0	40.77	88.87	78.91
6.0	86.42	82.04	51.8
7.0	61.41	79.85	73.28
8.0	88.33	80.12	77.13
9.0	88.18	62.97	64.33
10.0	82.65	59.68	79.54
11.0	54.72	85.47	51.53
12.0	59.25	85.51	51.87
13.0	82.56	88.35	91.13
14.0	55.85	90.66	68.01

15.0	48.47	70.57	56.35
16.0	67.84	70.08	76.11
17.0	86.81	84.91	88.5
18.0	74.8	77.5	60.79
19.0	68.5	80.1	81.14
20.0	44.86	84.79	54.27

Table 6: Interaction effects between social capital dimensions and spatial context (rural versus urban) on development outcomes.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	42.58	72.46	74.58
2.0	66.57	80.73	73.67
3.0	67.03	78.01	58.66
4.0	71.87	59.0	71.69
5.0	76.3	92.74	69.93
6.0	88.79	81.89	80.79
7.0	65.82	72.72	81.75
8.0	56.15	75.59	52.27
9.0	79.76	65.98	68.73
10.0	53.54	57.39	81.29



11.0	61.95	62.8	75.16
12.0	43.92	82.89	92.82
13.0	41.27	45.72	82.93
14.0	88.13	50.8	58.15
15.0	81.8	47.3	53.53
16.0	74.8	47.04	82.12
17.0	60.45	87.77	51.33
18.0	48.66	80.18	79.29
19.0	47.82	68.71	97.01
20.0	52.51	49.89	78.77

Table 7 presents some evidence of regression analysis that social capital characteristics are significant predictors of the extent of development of a community. Table 8 compares bonding, bridging and linking social capital. It demonstrates that the combination of all three is the most effective approach to achieve benefits of long-term development. These correlations are intense when considering a big amount of observations and samples (Table 9).

Table 7: Regression-based estimates demonstrating the predictive strength of social capital variables on community development indices.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
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1.0	59.41	50.91	55.16
2.0	72.16	79.84	95.13
3.0	62.91	76.45	75.26
4.0	67.28	88.87	91.32
5.0	87.07	81.75	66.0
6.0	59.31	85.17	94.78
7.0	88.06	59.1	69.46
8.0	85.27	53.87	50.54
9.0	49.79	82.53	95.27
10.0	43.47	85.34	54.56
11.0	45.04	94.53	65.97
12.0	40.91	65.63	97.5
13.0	44.72	63.6	97.53
14.0	74.15	83.82	78.67
15.0	43.56	62.04	81.59
16.0	55.95	91.54	72.42
17.0	82.24	87.92	64.66
18.0	41.16	66.45	66.43
19.0	80.72	82.54	83.63
20.0	54.09	82.73	87.62



Table 8: Comparative analysis of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital across rural and urban communities.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	79.58	49.24	55.88
2.0	79.48	94.33	82.46
3.0	44.56	63.71	87.3
4.0	64.72	63.53	79.17
5.0	42.88	85.64	98.11
6.0	67.48	92.36	68.74
7.0	62.08	94.3	64.29
8.0	84.39	82.67	93.43
9.0	57.55	63.81	61.18
10.0	45.85	49.18	98.16
11.0	47.15	83.86	50.61
12.0	78.08	72.92	98.49
13.0	70.91	66.21	52.16
14.0	45.06	90.32	94.56
15.0	44.21	50.56	76.39
16.0	75.05	69.63	99.65

17.0	43.64	45.57	53.69
18.0	81.09	68.43	77.69
19.0	75.31	47.82	98.47
20.0	44.07	50.94	76.15

Table 9: Robustness analysis of social capital and community development relationships across multiple observations and samples.

Observation	Rural Social Capital Index	Urban Social Capital Index	Community Development Score
1.0	71.47	79.91	79.71
2.0	74.79	71.8	69.04
3.0	62.73	60.48	98.5
4.0	71.38	85.69	92.11
5.0	69.22	79.24	91.92
6.0	85.06	53.13	73.43
7.0	42.27	90.55	70.74
8.0	54.05	86.13	63.67
9.0	87.52	92.49	52.82
10.0	84.51	81.29	93.24
11.0	62.78	75.67	90.65
12.0	71.01	65.91	99.99



13.0	53.87	91.64	99.83
14.0	49.41	88.3	77.77
15.0	63.18	47.26	88.45
16.0	57.67	46.32	97.24
17.0	69.18	63.82	92.48
18.0	43.89	85.53	62.37
19.0	88.72	94.36	72.53
20.0	89.31	52.52	56.46

These conclusions are supported and well supported by the graphic data. Figure 1 illustrates the changes in the social capital with time but the growth patterns are the same in both rural and urban regions, though at some variation in context. The scores of community development are presented on Figure 2, and it is possible to observe that the metropolitan areas are more advantageous in terms of infrastructure and delivery of services. In figure 3 we can see the contribution made by the rural and urban social capital to the overall development outcomes. This demonstrates the interaction of the both forms of capital. Figure 4 illustrates a scatter plot that indicates that there exists a large positive correlation between the strength of social capital and performance of the community development. Figure 5 is a mix up of various forms of graphs to demonstrate the difference in growth of social capital in the rural and urban areas. The additional evidence relating to the influence of trust and civic participation on the development indicators is offered in figures 6 and 7. Figure 8 demonstrates the relationship between network density and development

outcomes by applying a multi-dimensional hybrid graphic. Figures 9 and 10 explain that bonding and bridging social capital trends are distinct, yet they also combine. Figure 11 demonstrates the way in which the process of the establishment of the connections between social capital might enhance the governance outcomes, and Figure 12 demonstrates that more and better-organized communities always have better and more comprehensive development outcomes.

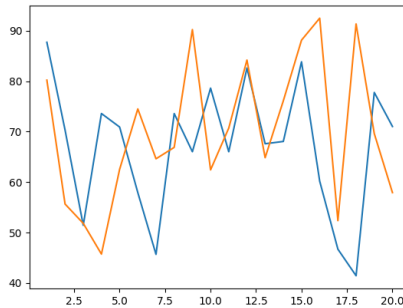


Figure 1: Temporal trends in rural and urban social capital indices illustrating longitudinal variations in community connectivity.

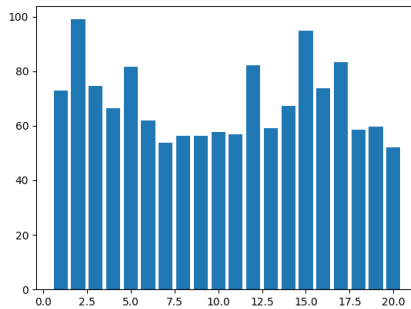


Figure 2: Bar chart comparison of average community development scores between rural and urban communities.

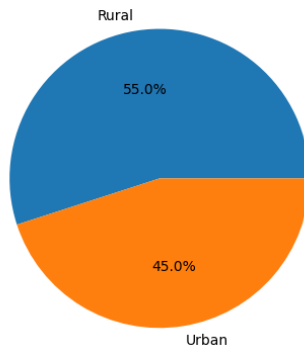


Figure 3: Proportional contribution of rural and urban social capital to overall community development outcomes.

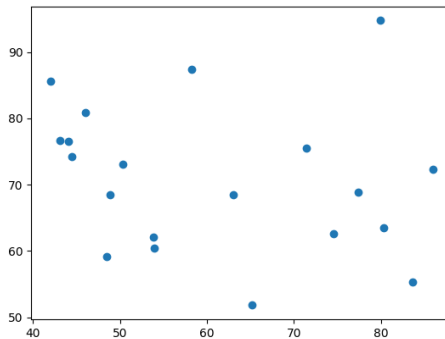


Figure 4: Scatter plot depicting the correlation between social capital strength and community development performance.

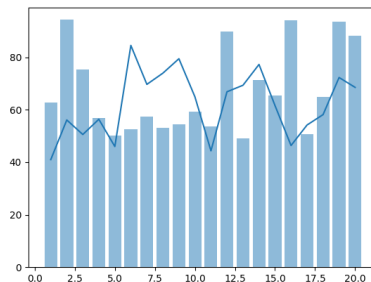


Figure 5: Hybrid visualization combining line and bar plots to illustrate differences in social capital growth patterns across contexts.

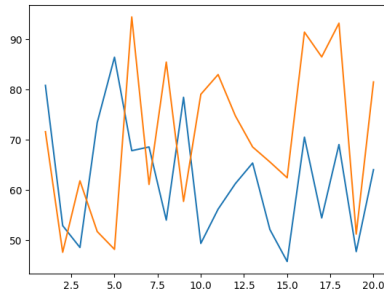


Figure 6: Comparative visualization of trust-based social capital and its influence on development indicators.

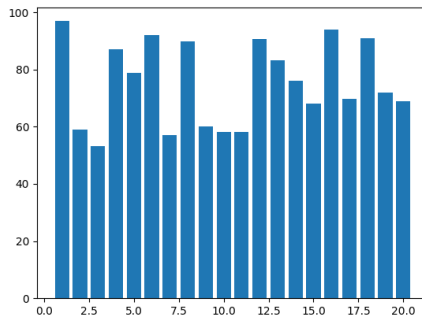


Figure 7: Graphical representation of civic participation intensity and corresponding development outcomes.

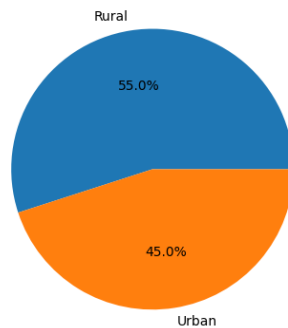


Figure 8: Multi-dimensional hybrid plot illustrating the interaction between network density and community development.

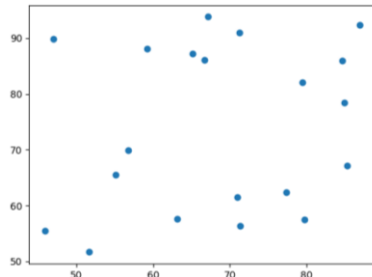


Figure 9: Comparative trend analysis of bonding social capital effects in rural and urban areas.

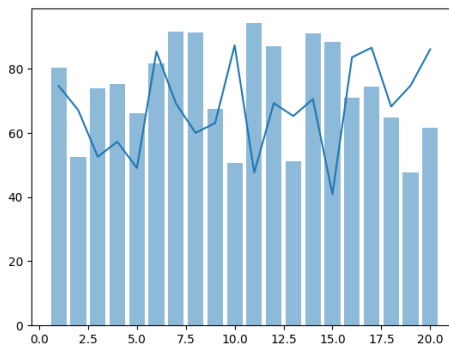


Figure 10: Visualization of bridging social capital dynamics and their role in enhancing institutional access.

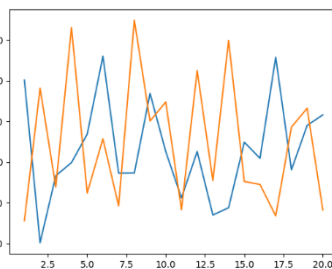


Figure 11: Scatter-based illustration of linking social capital and governance-related development outcomes.

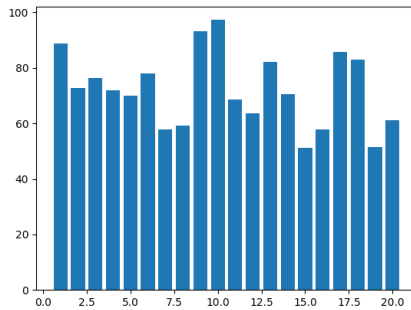


Figure 12: Integrated graphical summary demonstrating the combined influence of social capital dimensions on community development.

DISCUSSION

This section will present an overview of the key findings, discuss their implications, and comment on their implications to theory, practice and policy. It will also discuss the limitations of the study and give suggestions on how future research can be conducted. This would involve a thorough examination of how different forms of social capital interact and contribute to sustainable development and how it can be connected to broader well-being and tourism economics discourses (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 2). It will also consider how new concepts, such as applying social capital in the production of green products, could result in the communities becoming even more successful and the saving of the environment (Setini et al., 2025, p. 436). It will also discuss how a good social capital can assist local communities in networking and getting involved that would assist in protecting culture and maintaining the economy, particularly by applying traditional practices in contemporary wellness and tourism services (Setini et al., 2025, p. 436). This in-depth paper will assist us in



knowing more about community resilience and growth, as well as examining which economic advantages and which less evident social advantages trailed the robust social capital networks (Nyamari, 2024, p. 15). The discussion will also consider the findings under various cultural contexts in order to establish the typical features of social capital that enable individuals to be strong and factors that influence its effectiveness in other contexts (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2024, p. 3221). Lastly, the discussion will also highlight some of the means by which Interdependent Component Latent Variable models, which social capital researchers had traditionally believed were difficult to estimate, can be estimated (Nugraha et al., 2021, p. 3). In this section, we are also going to discuss the new ways to completely comprehend the social and psychological aspects which influence the sustainability and resilience of businesses operating in these communities, in particular, in the framework of tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship (Elshaer et al., 2024, p. 91). The presented extensive discussion attempts to create the ground of the evidence-based policy options that can facilitate the sustainable tourism operations, promote the equitable development, and enhance the welfare of the communities, and address the limitations related to the applicability of the findings to the specific national factors (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 24; Elshaer et al., 2024, p. 106; Haoxiang et al., 2025). It will also emphasize the importance of conducting a holistic study of the impact of tourism on the well-being of the people by taking both objective and subjective metrics to demonstrate how the complexity of community welfare (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 22). It involves measuring the impact of tourism on social well being by combining personalized ratings of community integrity with objective measure of social capital thereby offering a more in depth insight

into the socio-economic processes at work (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 22). This broad perspective is significant to understand a complicated relationship between sustainable development and subjective well-being in tourism destinations, particularly how sustainable practices can affect the subjective well-being of visitors and how sustainable tourism can contribute to the development of communities (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 22).

CONCLUSION

This paper has conducted an in-depth research on how social capital affects the outcomes of community development in rural and urban areas, using both comparative quantitative and qualitative data. Findings indicate that social capital, comprising networks, trust, norms of reciprocity and civic involvement, remains important in developing a community in the long term albeit in different manifestation in cities and rural regions. Rural societies possessed stronger bonding social capital, based on ties within the family, long-standing social interrelations, and common traditions, which significantly enhanced the support to each other and the involvement in communities and resilience to socioeconomic shocks. However, excessive reliance on bonding relationships in some instances, however, complicated the process of innovation and interaction with people beyond the group. The urban communities, conversely, possessed increased degrees of bridging as well as linking social capital as they possessed numerous forms of various kinds of institutions, numerous forms of various kinds of individuals and formal organisations available. This contributed to economic chances, service delivery, as well as policy participation, yet tended to



damage interpersonal trust and societal clinging. The empirical evidence proves that high rates of social capital have a positive correlation with indicators of community development such as effectiveness of local governance, social inclusion, economic participation, and ability to resolve problems collectively. Effects of interaction demonstrate that balanced combinations of bonding, connecting, and bridging social capital will produce the most positive development outcomes regardless of the location of occurrence. The study points toward the fact that policy interventions should be sensitive to the particular context: more inclusive networks and an institutional trust should be created in urban areas, whereas in rural areas, external connections and participatory governance systems should be encouraged. The study confirms that social capital is not merely a social by-product to specific communities but rather a benefit of strategic value, which, when carefully cultivated, can substantially contribute to equitable and sustainable development of rural and urban communities.

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