

Assessing Rural Youth Sustainable Livelihood in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to assess rural youth sustainable livelihood in Malaysia. This is a quantitative study in which a total of 240 rural youths from four districts in Peninsular Malaysia were selected as respondents. Assessment of their sustainable livelihood was based on six capitals namely, human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital, financial capital and cultural capital. Analysis performed confirmed that human capital was the best capital possessed by the respondents, while cultural capital was the weakest. Further analysis confirmed that the factors of gender, educational achievement and occupation had significant relationships with the types of capital studied, while the factors of age, income and period of staying in the village recorded a significant relationship with the capitals studied. The discussion highlights the important findings of this study and it is hoped that they can assist concerned parties in constructing the best strategies to further improve rural youth sustainable livelihood.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable livelihood is an increasingly popular concept in the development debate. Sustainable livelihood can be defined in so many ways that an uneasy compromise arises between the different objectives included in the same definition. Although this obstacle of inconsistent, unclear and narrow definitions of sustainable livelihood

persists, Chambers and Conway (1992) have managed to come up with a definition that seems suitable for the present time, as given below:

A livelihood comprises of the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.

Sustainable livelihood is an important issue nowadays and has attracted the interest of scholars across the globe. The concept of sustainable livelihood has become an important issue within the context of rural development, poverty eradication and environmental management. Albeit efforts by the government have been consistent, nevertheless, efforts by the community themselves are also needed to ensure that sustainable rural livelihood is achieved. One of the important community groups that can assist in achieving this is the youth. Studies by Prado, Seixas and Berkes (2015), Ramchandani and Karmarkar (2014), and Maconachie (2014), for example, looked into the challenges faced by youth in achieving sustainable livelihood, while studies done by Dufur, Parcel and Troutman (2013), Martin, McNally and Kay (2013), Weaver and Habibov (2012), Markway (2013), Misfud (2012), Wray-Lake, Flanagan and Osgood (2010), Morse,

McNamara and Acholo (2009), Jaeger and Holm (2007), Crocker (2006), Norris and Inglehart (2003), and Sullivan (2001) confirmed demographic background influence on sustainable livelihood among youth. Although this issue has become an important research focus at the international level, nevertheless, albeit much emphasis placed by the government, more works need to be done at the local level as the number of related studies is still scarce. Such a scenario has signalled the need for more studies to be conducted to understand sustainable livelihood among youth in Malaysia. In response to this issue, the current study aimed to examine Malaysian rural youth sustainable livelihood from two main perspectives; the aims of this study, were, therefore: (1) to examine Malaysian youth's level of sustainable livelihood; and 2) to determine the factors that predict Malaysian rural youth sustainable livelihood.

Youth in Malaysia and Sustainable Livelihood

Youth in any country represent the future of that country. They play a vital role in developing the country; indeed, it is a duty they must perform. In Malaysia, based on the definition set by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, youth are defined as those between 15 and 40 years of age. Such an age range is vast, and includes those who are quite 'old', compared with the age range for 'youth' set by the United Nations i.e. 15-24 years old and several other countries such as Singapore (15-29 years old), China (15-28

years old), Australia (15-25 years old) and India (15-35 years old). Youth in Malaysia comprise 12.5 million individuals, which is 42% of the total population

Sustainable livelihood is an important element for youth to be aware of as a valuable asset for their future. Certainly, youth with enhanced skills and knowledge, more financial resources and better social relationships and who are surrounded by greater physical facilities and natural resources are expected to lead successful future lives. A sustainable livelihood can be constructed from many aspects; however, within the context of this study, we shall discuss youth livelihood based on the concept of the Pentagon Model. The Pentagon Model, developed by the Department for International Development (DFID) (2000), consists of five capitals namely, human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital and financial capital. In addition to these five capitals, one additional capital, cultural capital, has been included in this study.

Human Capital

The first capital included in the Pentagon Model is human capital. Human capital is the skills, knowledge, ability for labour, and health level that allow workers to fulfil their livelihood objectives. Human capital at the household level represents the amount and quality of labour available. This capital varies as it is bound by household size, skill level, leadership potential and health status. In general, youth in Malaysia are expected to have better human capital.

Within the Malaysia context, there are vast opportunities for youth to pursue education at the highest level to ensure possession of specialised knowledge and skills. Currently, Malaysia has 21 public universities, 27 polytechnic colleges, 10 matriculation colleges, 38 community colleges, 21 private universities, 38 college universities and 324 private colleges. Up to May 2014, the unemployment rate was 2.9% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014), and this indicates that a majority of youth in Malaysia possess the human capital needed by Malaysia's various sectors and industries. In addition to this, the government has also initiated industrial learning centres, the Skills Development Fund Cooperation and National Youth Skill Institute, in their effort to add more options for youth.

Social Capital

Social capital can be understood as the social resources upon which people rely to pursue their livelihood objectives. Social capital can be achieved via networks and connectedness. This network and connectedness can be developed either vertically (patron/client) or horizontally (between individuals with shared interests) and eventually can enhance people's trust and ability to cooperate and expand their access to wider institutions, such as political or civic bodies. Furthermore, social capital can be constructed based on the membership of more formalised groups; this often entails adherence to mutually-agreed or commonly accepted rules, norms and sanctions. In addition to this, it also represents trust,

reciprocity and exchanges that enable cooperation, lessening transaction costs and possibly offering the basis for informal safety nets among the poor.

In general, social capital among youth in Malaysia can be discerned from the big number of registered youth associations in Malaysia. Currently, drawing on the statistics provided by the Institute for Youth Research (IYRES) (2014), there are 7,052 registered youth associations in Malaysia. However, though it has a big number of youth associations, the involvement of youth in these associations is quite low as only 11.8% of youth aged 15-25 years old and 10.6% of youth aged 26-40 years old are directly involved.

Regarding social activities, Shaffril, Abu Samah, D'Silva and Yassin (2013), and Yassin (2013) illustrated the positive social conditions in rural communities in Malaysia where activities such as '*gotong-royong*' and '*merewang*' are able to strengthen social relationships among youth and between them and the community. Abu Samah, Shaffril, D'Silva and Uli (2011) supported the findings of Shaffril et al. (2013) that rural communities have better social activities within the family, especially with regard to recreational activities such as fishing, which is done in natural surroundings that are healthy and tranquil. Salomon (2012) concluded that the involvement of society and social relations within rural communities are high with regard to social and family activities, socialising with neighbours and leisure, recreation and entertainment.

Natural Capital

Natural capital can be understood as the natural resource and related services such as nutrient cycling and erosion protection that are useful for generating livelihood. Resources that construct natural capital are varied. They can be intangible public goods such as the atmosphere and biodiversity to divisible assets used directly for production, for instance, trees and land. In general, rural communities profit from better natural capitals derived from a less polluted environment compared with communities in urban areas. According to Yassin et al. (2014), the rural folk surveyed agreed that they were surrounded by an abundance of terrestrial and marine natural resources. However, it should be noted that the phenomenon of climate change is a threat to countries across the globe including Malaysia; thus, initiatives to preserve the environment are directly related to the future of the youth, who will inherit the impact of changing climate. Realizing this, in order to ensure a sustainable environment for the future generation, the government has developed a number of related initiatives such as the National Climate Change Policy, the National Environment Policy and the National Policy on Biological Diversity.

Physical Capital

Physical capital refers to the basic infrastructure and production of goods needed to support livelihood. It can be infrastructure consisting of changes to the physical environment that assist the

community to fulfil their basic needs and to be more productive. In addition to this, physical capital also includes the tools and equipment that people use to function more productively. According to the Department for International Development (DFID) (2000), items such as affordable transport, secure shelter and buildings, adequate water supply and sanitation and clean, affordable energy and access to information (communication technology) are vital for constructing better physical capital for the community.

Malaysians nowadays enjoy better access to physical capital resources. This can be proven based on numerous statistics. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (2012), for example, showed that a total of 77.6% of Malaysians live a distance of less than five miles from the nearest public health centre, while a total of 77.9% of Malaysians live a distance of less than five miles from the nearest private health centre. The same study also indicated that a total of 95.4% of the Malaysian population lives a distance of less than five miles from the nearest primary school, while another 84.0% were found to live a distance of less than five miles from the nearest school. Salomon et al. (2012) in their study found that in general, the societies surveyed were satisfied with the level of generality, convenience and amenities around their homes. Salomon (2012) also added that Malaysians surveyed had a moderate level of satisfaction for infrastructure such as public transportation, places of worship, recreational facilities, public toilet facilities, post offices, banks,

police stations and fire-fighting stations available to them. In a local study done by Yassin et al. (2011), the rural community surveyed was satisfied with the physical facilities provided for them, but stressed that there was room for improvement to further enhance the sustainable livelihood of rural people.

Financial Capital

Financial capital refers to the financial resources people rely on to fulfil their livelihood objectives. There are two types of financial capital. First, financial capital can be in the form of available stocks. Saving can be included under this type of financial capital. It is the preferred type of financial capital as it has no liabilities attached and commonly does not entail reliance on others. This can be held in several forms: cash, bank deposits or liquid assets such as livestock and jewellery. The second type of financial capital is regular inflow of money. Excluding earned income, the most common types of inflow are pensions or other transfers from the state and remittances. According to Yassin et al. (2011) and Abu Samah et al. (2011) most of the rural youth surveyed expressed their inability to amass enough savings and were not interested in making investments as they had other priorities to consider. Yassin et al. (2011), Shaffril et al. (2013) and Abu Samah et al. (2011) added that the monthly earnings of most of the rural community surveyed were “just enough” for their needs, and this obstructed or minimised their ability to save money or make investments.

Cultural Capital (Additional Capital)

Bynner (2007) confirmed the importance of cultural capital for constructing sustainable livelihood for the community. Bynner found that cultural capital, which is a subset of social capital highlighting certain behavioural dispositions such as motivation to learn, aspiration and attitude towards education and adaptability to change, could play a significant part in creating sustainable livelihood for the community. Increasingly, it is being suggested that these less tangible forms of capital should be a key focus of social involvement strategies for youth (Esping-Anderson, 2007).

Generally, cultural capital is found to be higher among rural communities. This is based on the findings of Salomon et al. (2012), Shaffril et al. (2013) and Abu Samah et al. (2011). Initial findings by Salomon et al. (2012) concluded that society, especially in rural areas, have had good access to subjective well-being because of the availability of cultural activities such as the production of traditional food, traditional games and traditional art. Shaffril et al. (2013) found that the rural community, particularly those who had settled in coastal areas, were still practising local cultural gatherings at '*wakaf*' gatherings every evening, playing draughts, repairing nets and engaging in face-to-face chatting. Abu Samah et al. (2011) in his study revealed that the rural community surveyed, particularly the river community, were still practising traditional cultural activities such as catching river lobsters. These activities,

according to Abu Samah et al. (2011), were passed down from generation to generation.

Factors Affecting Sustainable Livelihood

Certainly, there is an abundance of factors that can be associated with these six capitals; among the prominent ones are demographic factors. Factors such as gender, age, educational achievement, number of household members and occupation have been said to impinge on the sustainable livelihood of the community.

Gender is one of the common factors associated with sustainable livelihood. Gender analysis recognises that the realities of women and men's lives are different. The current existing literature has proven this. Studies such as by Norris and Inglehart (2003), Food and Agriculture Organisation (2014), and Masika and Joekes (1996) proved that men enjoyed better sustainable livelihood particularly in terms of social capital, financial capital and physical capital; however, a study done by Westermann, Ashby and Pretty (2005) proved the opposite, finding that females had better sustainable livelihood, particularly in terms of natural and physical capital. In addition to gender, age is another prominent factor that can impinge on sustainable livelihood. Based on the existing literature, it can be concluded that due to their vast working experience, older people enjoy better livelihood aspects such as human capital and financial capital, and according to Wray-Lake et al. (2010) and Misfud (2012), younger people do not

enjoy better natural capital and cultural capital, but they do enjoy better social capital compared with older people.

Income is another factor that can significantly influence sustainable livelihood. Having more income denotes the possibility of having more and better capitals. Martin et al. (2013), and Weaver and Habibov (2012) confirmed that people with better financial ability had better possession of financial capital, human capital and physical capital. Having better education was found to be one of the keys for having better sustainable livelihood. Crocker (2006), Dufur et al. (2013), Jaeger and Holm (2007), and Sullivan (2001) confirmed in their studies that educated people had a better chance of possessing better human, social, physical, cultural and financial capitals, but were also proven not to have better natural capital. This was also confirmed by Markway (2013). Occupation is another factor that can influence sustainable livelihood. Working in the government and private sectors enables better human capital and financial capital, whereas self-employment allows for better social capital, cultural capital and natural capital (Morse et al., 2009; Shaffril et al., 2013). Education is another factor that impinges on sustainable livelihood. People with higher education are said to have better sustainable livelihood, particularly through having better human and financial capitals (Crocker, 2006; Dufur et al., 2013; Jaeger & Holm, 2007; Sullivan, 2001).

METHODS

This study is quantitative in nature and used a developed questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire was constructed based on the Pentagon Model constructs, review of literature and questions raised in past studies. After a series of instrument development workshops, the final version of the questionnaire was generated consisting of a total of 56 questions (see Table 1).

Table 1
Number of questions in each sections of the questionnaire developed for this study

Section	Number of Questions
Demographic	6
Human capital	7
Social capital	7
Natural capital	6
Physical capital	6
Financial capital	8
Cultural capital	12
Total	52

To determine a suitable size of sample, this study relied on G-Power analysis, which uses a software that determines the suitable size of sample based on the needed analyses. Power refers to a situation where the test can detect a statistically significant difference or relationship when such a difference or relationship exists. It is generally accepted that power should be 0.8 or greater, that is, an 80% or bigger opportunity of finding a statistically significant difference or relationship where one exists. This study intends to run inferential analyses such as

ANOVA, the independent t-test and the Pearson product moment correlation. Based on the G-power analysis, the size of sample to run an independent t-test is 176, to run ANOVA is 232 and to run the Pearson product moment correlation is 191. This study had a bigger sample size; this posed no problem as Mohammad Najib (1999) has confirmed that a bigger sample size will strengthen the reliability and validity of the instruments.

The study applied multi-stage cluster sampling, where at the first stage of sampling, four out of the five regions in Malaysia, were randomly selected. They were the southern region, central region, east coast region and northern region. At the second stage of sampling, one state was randomly selected to represent the region; the selected states were Kedah (representing the northern region), Negeri Sembilan (southern), Selangor (central region) and Terengganu (east coast region). At the third stage of sampling, one district was randomly selected to represent each state; the selected districts were Gurun (Kedah), Kuala Selangor (Selangor), Jelebu (Negeri Sembilan) and Kemaman (Terengganu). At the final stage of sampling, a total of 60 youths aged between 15 and 40 years old were randomly selected to represent each district, bringing the total number of respondents to 240 (60 respondents \times 4 districts).

The final version of the questionnaire was later pre-tested among 30 youths at the district of Kuala Besut in the east coast

region. The resulting Cronbach's alpha value of 0.840 exceeded the recommended value of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally (1978), indicating that the questionnaire was reliable. The actual data collection took four months to complete, from November 2013 to February 2014. The actual data collection was assisted by a number of trained and experienced enumerators and monitored by the research team members. The survey was the main data collection technique used to obtain the data and on average, the enumerators took between 25 and 35 min to complete the survey. The respondents were given an option of five options as in a Likert scale from which to pick an answer. The scale ranged from 1 ('Strongly disagree') to 5 ('Strongly agree'). Data obtained were processed and analysed using both descriptive and inferential analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 displays the demographic data of the respondents. It can be seen that more than a three quarters of the respondents (81.3%) were male, while the average mean score recorded was 22.9. The majority of the respondents (37.9%) were in the group age of 17-20 years old. Understandably, not too many of the respondents possessed higher education; only 18.3% possessed tertiary education. In terms of job security, the data raised some concerns as only a small number of the respondents (24.2%) were employed on permanent basis while a total of 21.7% were unemployed. With regard to income, it was something of a positive

indicator that the mean score recorded was RM1167.55 (roughly equal to USD380), far exceeding the poverty level set by the Economic Planning Unit, which is RM720 (roughly equal to USD240).

Table 2
Demographic data of the respondents

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Gender			
Male	195	81.3	
Female	45	18.7	
Age (Years Old)			
15-20	91	37.9	22.9
21-25	79	32.9	
>26	70	29.2	
Education Achievement			
Never been to school	1	0.4	
Primary school	6	2.5	
Secondary school (lower)	20	8.3	
Secondary school (upper)	169	70.4	
Tertiary	44	18.3	
Occupation			
Permanent	58	24.2	
Contract-based	71	29.6	
Self-employed	59	24.6	
Unemployed	52	21.7	
Income (n=188) (RM)			
<750	43	17.9	1167.55
751-RM1000	77	32.1	
1001-1500	40	16.7	
>1501	28	11.7	

Rural Youth Sustainable Livelihood

One of the study's targets was to examine the level of rural youth sustainable livelihood. A total of six capitals were analysed and two namely, human capital and social capital, recorded high mean scores, while the remaining four, natural capital, physical capital, financial capital and cultural capital, recorded moderate mean scores (Table 3). It

can be seen that human capital emerged the best capital possessed by rural youth. Such a scenario is not surprising as it is a reflection of the government's success in providing and widening rural youth access to education and skills learning. The government has never stopped offering opportunities to further enhance youth human capital. Several programmes have been established

within the rural context by concerned parties to further improve the human capital of rural youth. Among the programmes are, as stated earlier, the establishment of a number of public universities, polytechnic colleges, matriculation colleges, community colleges, private universities, college universities and private colleges, industrial learning centres, a Skills Development Fund Cooperation and the introduction of automotive, marine maintenance, welding and wiring skill learning at national youth skill institutes. Indeed, in the 2014 national budget, the government had allocated RM54.6 billion (roughly equal to USD18 billion) to further improve education and community skills, particularly of the youth.

Social capital was another capital that recorded a high mean score. This might have been due to several reasons. First, previous studies have proven that rural communities enjoyed strong relationships within the family and among colleagues and the surrounding community in general (Shaffril et al., 2013; Yassin et al., 2011). Second, social activities that strengthen social relationships within the community such as '*gotong-royong*' and evening social gatherings at places of interest such as '*wakaf*' and coffee stalls are actively practised in rural communities (Shaffril et al., 2013). Third, it is well known that involvement in social activities is important for youth as they are at the stage of development where they want to be accepted by everyone in the community. At the same time, such activities offer them the opportunity to practise and learn

important leadership and participatory skills (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006).

The next discussion will focus on the four capitals that recorded moderate mean scores and the probable causes for this. First, with regard to natural capital, it is understood that the natural elements surrounding rural communities nowadays are deteriorating, contributed in part by changes in the climate and the human behaviour and activities such as open burning and pollution (Kwan, Tangang, & Juneng, 2011; Tangang, 2007). The moderate mean score achieved by the factor of physical capital was expected as a number of local studies such as by Yassin et al. (2011) and Idris et al. (2014) have less satisfaction of the rural community towards their physical environment. Yassin et al. (2011) further elaborated that infrastructure facilities were available in rural areas but their number was inadequate. Financial capital also recorded a moderate mean score. Though income of rural communities has far exceeded the poverty level, yet, most rural youth surveyed in studies reported not having enough savings and were not interested in making investments as their income was needed for more immediate priorities. Yassin et al. (2011), Shaffril et al. (2013) and Abu Samah et al. (2011) demonstrated that the monthly earnings of most of the rural community folk surveyed were "just enough" to procure basic needs, and this prevented them from or minimised their chances of having bank savings or making investments. The cultural capital recorded the lowest mean score among the

six capitals. Such a finding is not surprising as the studies done by Fasick (1984) have confirmed that there is a deteriorating trend among traditional cultural elements practised by rural communities, particularly the youth and this could result from the phenomenon of youth culture, which consists of beliefs, behaviours, styles and interests. The way youth choose their clothes, popular music, sports, vocabulary and dating set them apart from other age groups, providing them what many believe is a distinct culture of their own (Fasick, 1984).

Table 3
Mean score of the six capitals studied

Capital	Mean Score
Human capital	3.97
Social capital	3.86
Natural capital	3.23
Physical capital	3.53
Financial capital	3.11
Cultural capital	3.05
Cultural capital	12
Total	52

Factors Affecting Rural Youth Sustainable Livelihood

Another attempt of this study was to determine potential predictors for rural youth sustainable livelihood. Analysis confirmed that males had better social capital than females, as was also the case for physical capital. However, this contradicted with the findings of Salomon (2012). Several previous studies offer an explanation for this contradiction. Norris and Inglehart (2003) for example, explained that possession of

more time and interest motivated males to become involved in social capital compared with females. Norris and Inglehart (2003) further elaborated that another considerable reason for the high strong social capital among males is the informal mobilising mechanisms generated by family, friends and colleagues. Masika and Joeke (1996) noted that although females, especially those married, had a great relationship with their family, nevertheless, family commitment reduced their opportunity to actively socialise with their colleagues and the community surrounding them. Regarding the factor of physical capital, the findings of the study were in line with those of Perks (2012), who concluded that gender was one of the impinging factors. Table 4 shows the comparison between capitals and gender.

Table 4
Comparisons between the capitals and gender

Capitals	t	p
Human capital	0.024	0.981
Social capital	2.882	0.004*
Natural capital	0.971	0.333
Physical capital	1.973	0.050*
Financial capital	0.603	0.547
Cultural capital	1.022	0.308

* Significant

With regard to human capital, the analysis confirmed a significant difference between those who had permanent jobs, those who worked on contract basis and those who were self-employed with those who were unemployed. This was expected. In addition,

those who were self-employed recorded the highest mean score, while further analysis confirmed that there was a significant difference between the self-employed and those who worked on permanent basis (Table 5).

This can be explained by the nature of the respondents' jobs. Self-employed respondents had greater flexibility compared with those who worked on permanent basis and those who worked on contract basis as the latter were tied to the work schedules, rules and regulations determined by their employers. Having more flexibility offered more time to the self-employed group to engage in more meaningful relationships with their family, colleagues and community (Shaffril et al., 2013). The highest mean score for natural capital was recorded by the unemployed among the respondents and further analysis confirmed that there was a significant difference between the unemployed and those who work on permanent basis and those who worked on contract basis. In terms of financial capital, those who worked on permanent basis recorded the highest mean score and there was a significant difference between those who worked on permanent basis and those who worked on contract basis and the unemployed. Such a significant difference was expected as the monthly earnings of the employed group offered them greater financial power to set aside money for savings or investments compared with the unemployed.

Table 5
Comparisons between the capitals and occupation

Capitals	f	p
Human capital	21.809	0.0001*
Social capital	4.194	0.002*
Natural capital	3.668	0.013*
Physical capital	0.400	0.753
Financial capital	6.722	0.0001*
Cultural capital	0.421	0.738

* Significant

In terms of comparisons between the capitals and educational achievement, it can be seen from the table that educational achievement did not have an influence on five capitals (Table 6). Surprisingly, the findings of the study contradicted with those of Crocker (2006), Dufur et al. (2013), Jaeger and Holm (2007), and Sullivan (2001), who confirmed that higher education assisted people in having better human, social, physical, cultural and financial capitals. Furthermore, the comparison analysis confirmed that those who had at least a lower secondary school certificate scored the highest mean score for natural capital and there was a significant difference recorded between those with at least a lower secondary school certificate and upper secondary school certificate and those who had a tertiary education. Markway (2013) elaborated on the causes for this as including having too much to worry about, being focussed on immediate problems, being disconnected from the environment and having a knowledge deficit resulted in many educated people not having the inclination to appreciate nature.

Table 6
Comparison between the capitals and educational achievement

Capitals	f	p
Human capital	1.058	0.349
Social capital	2.731	0.067
Natural capital	4.294	0.015*
Physical capital	1.836	0.162
Financial capital	0.938	0.393
Cultural capital	1.152	0.318

* Significant

In terms of the respondents' age, three capitals namely, human capital, natural capital and financial capital recorded a significant relationship with age (Table 7). Analysis confirmed that the older the respondents were, the greater the human capital they possessed. Older people are always believed to possess greater skills and wider experience, both of which further enhance their human capital as these factors qualify them for better salaries, resulting in greater ability to make savings and investments. Natural capital recorded a negative and significant relationship with age, denoting that the younger the respondents were, the less the natural capital they possessed. Wray-Lake et al. (2010) and Misfud (2012) explained this as being due to the fact that youth are less appreciative of the natural environment and cultural activities.

Table 7
Relationship between the capitals and age

Capitals	r	p
Human capital	0.323	0.0001*
Social capital	0.078	0.230
Natural capital	-0.162	0.012*
Physical capital	-0.097	0.135
Financial capital	0.309	0.0001*
Cultural capital	-0.071	0.240

* Significant

The relationship between the capitals and income was also examined (Table 8). Human capital was found to have a significant relationship with income; this was not surprising as it was in line with studies done by Martin et al. (2013), and Weaver and Habibov (2012). Indeed, such a situation was expected, as having better skills, expertise and knowledge of certain jobs would definitely create more opportunities for generating more money. Natural capital and cultural capital recorded a negative and significant relationship with income, meaning that the higher the income, the lower the natural and cultural capitals possessed by the respondents. Income was also seen to influence the financial capital of the respondents. Having more money provided the respondents with the opportunity to create their own savings or investments (Martin et al., 2013; Weaver & Habibov, 2012).

Table 8
Relationship between the capitals and income

Capitals	r	p
Human capital	0.153	0.036*
Social capital	-0.062	0.395
Natural capital	-0.253	0.0001*
Physical capital	-0.110	0.134
Financial capital	0.215	0.003*
Cultural capital	-0.167	0.022*

* Significant

CONCLUSION

As found by several others, this study found that sustainable livelihood is a complex phenomenon reflecting the conditions and capability for youth to establish the means to live in an ever changing environment. Youth are also an increasingly important population group to study as they are valuable assets of the present and the future. This study found that despite the national employment statistics, only about 24% of the rural youth surveyed had permanent jobs as most were temporarily employed. They had mid-level education and were considered young and yet to establish their careers.

The factor of human capital scored highly, mainly due to the good spread of educational facilities and infrastructure. Social capital did well too as the youth lived in closed communities. On the other hand, natural, physical and financial capitals had moderate scores, in this order, mostly due to the degradation of the environment, the scarcity of facilities and the respondents' low capacity to save money. At the same

time, cultural capital among them was fast deteriorating mainly due to the onslaught of materialism, the popularity of hip-hop culture and the attraction of contemporary lifestyle.

Males tended to have a higher social capital score. Human capital was associated with job permanency while financial capital was linked with job stability and the power to save money. Educational achievement did not influence most of the capitals and inversely affected natural capital. However, age did influence human and financial capitals and like educational achievement, did affect natural capital in a negative way. Income did positively affect the human and financial capital scores while it negatively affected the natural and cultural capital scores.

This study recorded several important conclusions. Firstly, among the youth, human, financial and social capitals featured as the strongest pillars for constructing sustainable livelihood. Secondly, natural, physical and cultural capitals had been given little attention and they remain as the additional capitals to be exploited. Thirdly, being male and having higher income as well as increasing age and job permanency greatly influenced the most important tangible capitals. Fourthly, educational attainment had no influence on the capitals and in fact, negatively affected natural capital. Fifthly, income did negatively influence the natural and cultural scores. Sixthly, from this study it can be discerned that cultural capital was the most important

capital that needs to be studied in addition to the five other capitals listed in the Pentagon Model.

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