

Social Capital and Slum Communities: How to Fulfill Their Basic Needs in Palembang City during The Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT The problem of slum settlements is still a major problem faced in Indonesia and other developing countries. One of the triggers for the emergence of slum settlements is due to the high rate of population growth, both through the birth process and the urbanization process. This study discusses the social capital of the people of the slum area of Palembang City in fulfilling basic needs, precisely in the 12 Ulu Village Area, Palembang City during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Sampling used a purposive sampling method with data collection using observation techniques and in-depth interviews. The study's findings indicate that (1) a high level of social capital as measured by networks, norms, and beliefs enables slum communities to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) the slum area communities' strategy for survival is to utilize yard land, home industries, social gathering, recitation, and mutual cooperation. There are several policy implications from this research: (1) Strengthen social capital, (2) Enhance community engagement, (3) Targeted support for vulnerable groups, (4) Ensure food security and (5) Strengthen social safety nets.

KEYWORDS Basic need; Covid-19 pandemic; Palembang; Slum communities; Social capital.

INTRODUCTION

Over one billion people live in informal housing worldwide (Gilbert, 2016; Ren, 2018), and while some progress toward improving their lives, slum reforms have lagged behind the expanding numbers of urban poor (Mayne, 2017; Dovey et al., 2021).

Poverty is concentrated in urban areas throughout the Global South (Broto et al., 2017; Rigolon et al., 2018), and this is due to a combination of economic and demographic factors (Brady et al., 2016; Cruz & Ahmed, 2018). Several macro-economic models in emerging nations imply that public spending

on public infrastructure and services are reducing, which has had a negative impact on the urban poor in these countries (Edriss & Chiunda, 2017; Omar & Inaba, 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic in Indonesia had unparalleled in its scope and severity (Olivia et al., 2020; Im et al., 2021; Roziqin et al., 2021). Not only has the pandemic triggered a public health crisis, but the essential steps to restrict the virus's spread have resulted in significant economic, social, and educational issues as a result of the virus's spreading (Tabish, 2020; Barlow et al., 2021). The impacts of the epidemic have been unevenly distributed

across economies and communities (Bambra et al., 2020; Blundell et al., 2020).

The fast spread of the new coronavirus illness (COVID-19) around the world is a significant challenge for development practitioners owing to the negative impact it has on socio-economic development (Karunathilake, 2021; Rasul et al., 2021) It has finally led in the creation of global uncertainty (Naeem, 2020; Ciravegna & Michailova, 2022), which has prompted the need for practical and inventive strategies to aid in the management of the disease's spreading (Abdullahi et al., 2020) and the mitigation of its negative consequences (Douglas et al., 2020).

Palembang demonstrates its potential in terms of comparatively favorable urban development prospects (Colenbrander et al., 2015; Papargyropoulou et al., 2015), the potential for urban resources including public infrastructure and human capital (Trotier, 2022), as well as more sophisticated technology breakthroughs (Hairi, 2020; Saputra et al., 2020).

But, in other side, economic constraints and the scarcity of housing in cities compelled urbanites to occupy suburban regions (Florida, 2017; Karsten, 2020);, resulting in the formation of a slum area (Izzudin, 2013; Cavalcanti et al., 2019). Slum settlements are defined socially by rapid population expansion (Abunyewah et al., 2018; Nassar & Elsayed, 2018); low income levels (Bardhan et al., 2018; Sarkar & Bardhan, 2020), and poor health (Ezeh et al., 2017; Corburn & Sverdlik, 2019).

Previous research related to slums only discussed slum settlement patterns (Barros Filho & Sobreira, 2005; Beguy et al., 2010; Friesen et al., 2018), basic infrastructure of slums (Butala et al., 2010; Parikh et al., 2015), health problems in slums (Ezeh et al., 2017), but not much has been linked to social capital in the community, especially when Covid-19 hit Indonesia.

The city of Palembang is divided into two areas by the Musi River (Fitri, 2018), namely the *Seberang Ulu* (northern side) area and the *Seberang Ilir* (southern side) area. In comparison to the *Seberang Ulu* area, which is synonymous with slums and impoverished areas, the *Seberang Ilir* area is recognized as the core of advancement for the city of Palembang's growth. Because employment opportunities are concentrated in Palembang's central business district (Sedyastuti et al., 2021), slums and illegal colonies eventually congregate around the downtown region (Sukmaniar, Pitoyo & Kurniawan, 2020), specifically on the periphery of the Musi River (Pramantha et al., 2021).

Palembang City has 42 slum areas in 2002 and 47 in 2007. There are 59 points/zones in Palembang where slum areas are concentrated. They are found in a variety of sub-districts. *Seberang Ulu 1*, *Seberang Ulu 2*, *Kertapati*, *Plaju*, *Gandus*, *Ilir Barat 2*, and *Ilir Timur 2* all have clusters of severe slums, which are typically located around the banks of the river or the Musi river (Sukmaniar, Pitoyo & Kurniawan, 2020; Pramantha et al., 2021).

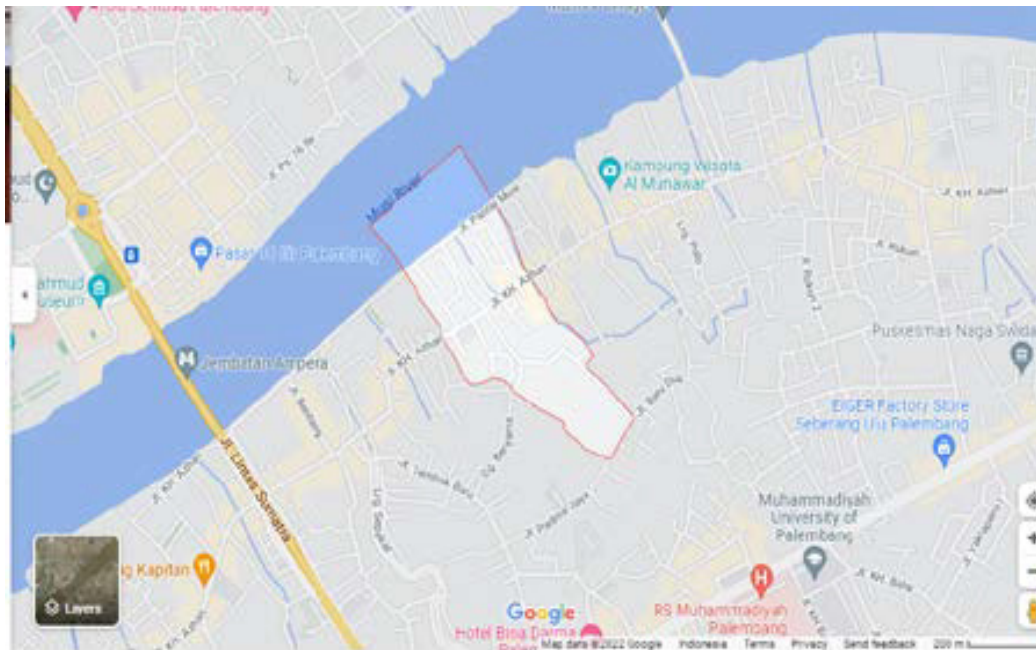


Figure 1. 12 Ulu Village (research area)

Source: Capturing from Google Maps, 2022

Several of Palembang City's slum areas, one of which is in 12 Ulu Village, Seberang Ulu 2 District, Palembang City, South Sumatra Province. The neighborhood is one of the worst slum districts in the country, having a high concentration of slums (Based on the NUSP Palembang Program) (Puspitasari et al., 2018).

An effect on slum area due to covid-19 pandemic made suffering people in 12 Ulu Village so the social capital in this area would be interesting to knowing deeper. Since the late 1980s, social capital has gained significant importance among scholars, claiming a prominent position in the social sciences (Vilar & Cartes, 2016; Burt, 2017; Wiltshire & Stevinson, 2018). It refers to a collection of characteristics that are inherent in trusting and cooperating social interactions (Mpanje et al., 2018; Obaitor et al., 2021). The breadth of this definition enables us to use the phrase in place of "civic virtue, social cohesiveness, social solidarity, capacity for collective action, or any other characteristic of a

morally valued society" (Vilar & Cartes, 2016; Mitra et al., 2017).

The empirical data for this research were gathered through the use of qualitative methodologies (Gerring, 2017; Collins & Stockton, 2018). The recruitment of informants is done using purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016; Lenaini, 2021) along 3 criteria there are: (1) people where live in slum area, (2) poor people proving by Indonesian Poor Card to get direct cash assistance (DCA) from Indonesia Social Ministry, (3) inadequate housing proving by the wooden wall or semi-permanent house.

The sampling method was carried out using the snowball sampling method (Naderifar et al., 2017) with the key informant as well as the first informant, namely informant Y, who worked as Head of Community Empowerment in the local village office, then conducted interviews with AF as the local village head and found

12 informants who were the most severely affected by COVID-19 in the village of 12 Ulu.

In-depth interviews (Showkat & Parveen, 2017) were conducted with a number of informants who were experiencing difficulties at work as a result of the effect of the COVID-19

epidemic on Slum area. Face-to-face in-depth interviews with informants were carried out with the use of an interview guide that had been established in advance in relation to the means of subsistence utilized by the population living in the slum area as a result of Covid-19.

Table 1. Informant Information

No	Name	Sex	Age (year)	Job
1	Y	F	49	Head of Community Empowerment in local village office
2	AF	M	40	local village head
3	J	F	37	random job
4	A	F	46	Merchant (Stall)
5	M.R	M	33	Post Office Security
6	M.I	M	25	Sales
7	M.Z	M	52	Fish seller
8	I	M	55	<i>Pempek</i> traders
9	Z.A	M	65	School guard
10	S	M	32	Furniture Store Workers
11	M.A	M	38	Islamic teacher
12	Z	F	34	Merchant (Stall)
13	Z.I	F	36	Merchant (Stall)
14	M	F	33	Trader

Source: Author primary data, 2021

This study examines the social capital of Palembang City's slum area community in terms of meeting basic needs, specifically in the 12 Ulu Village area during the covid-19 pandemic, because researchers believe that this has developed into a fairly serious social problem, particularly during the covid-19 pandemic. As a result, it is required to discover a solution to the problem.

This study discusses how people who live in slum areas in the city of Palembang can fulfill their daily needs by strengthening the role of their social capital.

This research also would be contributed for advancing knowledge related to urban sociology and geography affecting in the social community phenomena in slum area context especially in South Sumatera.

DISCUSSION

Slum Settlement Condition

From our rapid observation, slum settlement conditions can be described as homes that are frequently overcrowded, with dirt floors, leaking roofs, and no windows or doors, leaving their residents susceptible to inclement weather, insects, and rats. Inadequate ventilation for cooking fires inside is a frequent source of respiratory issues.

Taher & Ibrahim (2014), in their article Transformation of slum and squatter settlements: a way of sustainable living in context of 21st century cities, say that the living conditions inside these communities are characterized by issues such as overpopulation and insufficient accommodation. Homes frequently exhibit

confined spaces, dirt floors, leaking roofs, and a lack of windows or doors.

Another study related to our finding is also similar, like in Kathmandu, Nepal, (Elsey et al., 2016) where poor ventilation and cooking on open fires in the kitchen cause respiratory problems. Likewise, Nampula, Mozambique, which has been studied by (Momade & Hainin, 2018), shows the same health problems.



Figure 2. Narrow street in slum Area

Job Condition in Slum Community

Our observations reveal that during the COVID-19 epidemic, the people of 12 Ulu Village saw a sea change in their lifestyle. Beginning with job loss and lower income. A low income does not preclude many local people from complaining about the epidemic, particularly the expenditures on everyday necessities and living expenses such as school children and other family expenses.

Research by Izzudin & Risyanto (2013) in Surabaya also shows that there is a link between low income and slum dwellers. Related to our observation in the field, research by Sunikka-Blank et al., (2019) in Mumbai, India, also shows that they spend their money on schoolchildren. In addition, Uddin & Firoj (2013) research also explains that slum residents, who are generally migrants from villages, are very vulnerable to losing their jobs.

Table 2. Job Shifting During Covid-19

No	Name	Sex	Age (year)	Job	
1	Y	F	49	Head of Community Empowerment in local village office	
2	AF	M	40	local village head	
3	J	F	37	random job	Peeling Onions
4	A	F	46	Merchant (Stall)	Peeling Onions
5	M.R	M	33	Post Office Security	Trader
6	M.I	M	25	Sales	Merchant (Stall)
7	M.Z	M	52	Fish seller	Fish seller
8	I	M	55	Pempek traders	Pempek traders
9	Z.A	M	65	School guard	School guard
10	S	M	32	Furniture Store Workers	Street vendor
11	M.A	M	38	Islamic teacher	Islamic teacher
12	Z	F	34	Merchant (Stall)	Merchant (Stall)
13	Z.I	F	36	Merchant (Stall)	Peeling Onions
14	M	F	33	Trader	Trader

Source: Author research, 2021

Social Capital: Bonding

Our research revealed that relationships and social networks (nuclear family, regional, and neighboring communities) that developed into bonding social capital both during and before the epidemic were established. Sabatini's research (2009) also argue that the bonding social capital of the family may act as a tool to strengthen solidarity.

This link may be strengthened by carrying onions to warehouses at the Jakabaring market and other warehouses and peeling them together, so that Ms. Z and other local residents looking to supplement their income can take and peel onions together. Ensuring an abundance of results, they split the jobs, with men collecting and bringing onions to their individual residences and women peeling the onions at home. These activities bring them closer together, beginning with dads, mothers, and children who have a propensity of socializing with neighborhood neighbors. Aldrich (2017) has some results, including the importance of social capital in building community resilience in his research.

Additionally, if there are neighbors in need of assistance, other neighbors assist. Thus, network linkages and trust among local inhabitants are flourishing. Auerbach (2016) research in India's urban slums shows the same result, network and trust become important keys for people who live in slum settlements.

The surrounding environment, both as a result of family links and as a result of neighboring residences, contributes to the

development of social relations, networks, and trust within the nuclear family, regional families, and neighbors. Existing relationships can help sustain life in an environment, increase one's quality of life, and develop internal relationships that make carrying out activities simpler.

Establishing a network and trust with the nuclear family (bonded social capital) via reciprocal aid in times of need. Families have the ability to collaborate in a variety of ways, including exchanging ideas and lightening work, and in general, someone trusts the family to take care of things, such as business. The nuclear family, which consists of a father, a wife, and children, is critical in establishing a family structure conducive to economic advancement. During the Covid-19 epidemic, the nuclear family provided the initial input of ideas and energy, enabling the people of 12 Ulu Village to live under the present conditions while maintaining interaction and trust. This strengthens and consolidates their bond in the midst of the Covid-19 epidemic.

The relationship created was further strengthened by the 12 Ulu Village activities, which included Yard Land Utilization, Home Industry, Environmental Activities, Mutual Cooperation, Social Gatherings, PKK, Recitation, and National Holiday Celebrations. Research by Dadashpoor et al. (2019), shows that land utilization fosters strong relationships among people. Moreover, Chiang et al., (2017) explain that social gatherings like festivals build strong relationships.

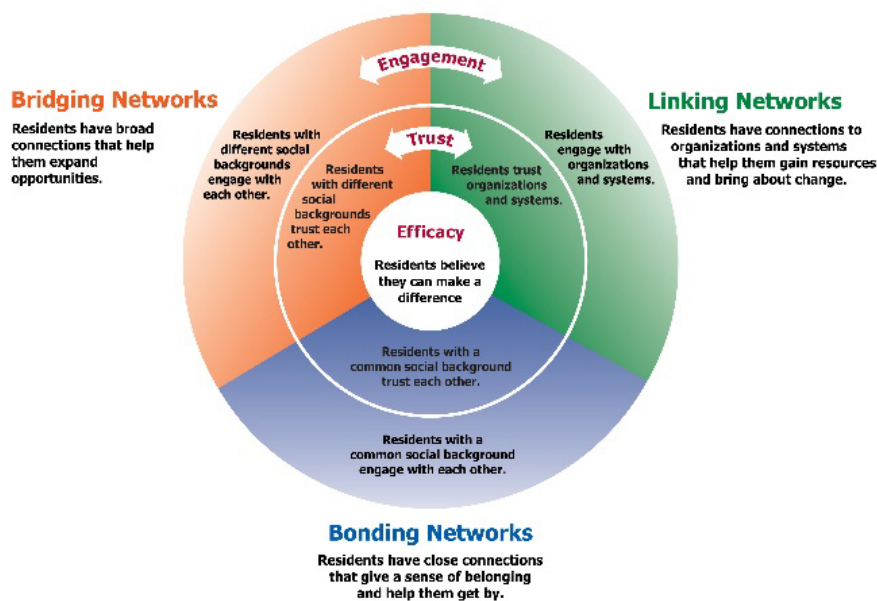


Figure 3. Extension's Community Social Capital Model Adopted from University of Minnesota Extension

Table 3. Social Capital Value due to Job Change before and during Covid-19

No	Name	Job (before pandemic)	Job (during pandemic)	Job change	Bonding Networks	Linking Networks	Bridging Networks	Social Capital Value	Classification
1	Y	Head of Community Empowerment in local village office	Head of Community Empowerment in local village office	Not change	++	++	++	6	Low
2	AF	local village head	local village head	Not change	++	++	++	6	Low
3	J	random job	Peeling Onions	change	+++++	+++++	++++	11	High
4	A	Merchant (Stall)	Peeling Onions	change	++++	++++	++	10	High
5	M.R	Post Office Security	Trader	change	+	++++	+++++	9	High
6	M.I	Sales	Merchant (Stall)	change	++	+++	+++	8	High
7	M.Z	Fish seller	Fish seller	Not change	++++	++	++	8	High
8	I	Pempek traders	Pempek traders	Not change	++	++	++	6	Low
9	Z.A	School guard	School guard	Not change	++	++	++	6	Low
10	S	Furniture Store Workers	Street vendor	change	++	++++	++++	10	High
11	M.A	Islamic teacher	Islamic teacher	Not change	++	++	++	6	Low
12	Z	Merchant (Stall)	Merchant (Stall)	Not change	++	++	++	6	Low
13	.I	Merchant (Stall)	Peeling Onions	change	+++	++++	++++	11	High
14	M	Trader	Trader	Not change	+++	++	++	7	Low
					36	40	38	98	

Source: Author Analysis, 2022

Social capital is made up of several components, one of which is *norms*. The norms that govern the context in which new occupants have been expelled are not readily apparent. Although they are intangible, the existence of standards is critical in public relations. There is a letter sent to all inhabitants informing them of this, even if it is simply an appeal. Such as an appeal to maintain cleanliness, comfort, order, and security in their environment, despite the fact that it is extremely difficult to carry out activities such as throwing garbage in its proper place, as researchers entering the field continue to see piles of garbage in rivers, small roads, and to the side of the house.

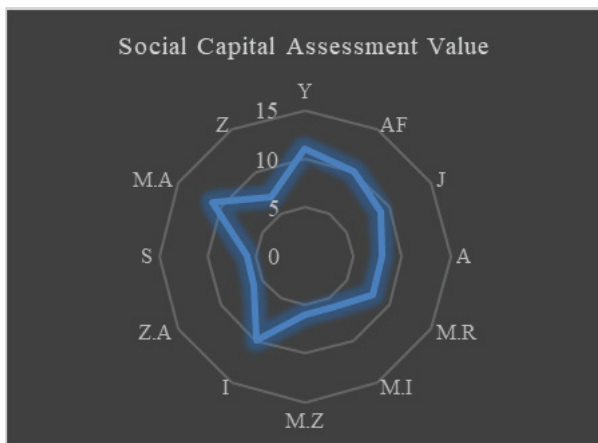


Figure 4. Spider web diagram of the Social Capital Assessment Values on respondents

Social Capital as a Strategy for Fulfilling Basic Needs

Post-pandemic conditions become a difficult problem for the people of 12 Ulu Village, therefore to maintain survival with all resources, they also take advantage of elements of social capital which consist of networks, beliefs and norms, to be able to restore life and build businesses to fulfill their daily needs.

This condition brings up the strategy for survival in slum areas, and this research focused on social capital strategy to fulfill the basic needs since a lot of people in slum areas had a lot of problems with their basic needs.

According to Redclift (1993), survival techniques are addressed on two levels: the individual level of survival and the household level of survival. All companies, activities, and work carried out by households in order to fulfill the necessities of the home are considered survival strategies. Redclift's categorization of the many types of survival strategies, including (a) Multiple livelihood strategies, (b) Migration, (c) Subsistence strategies, and (d) Relationship and social network use.

This study revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has lasted for approximately 1 year, the assistance provided by the government to residents is only 2 times at most. Not only that, the aid was spread unequally and unfairly where people who should have received assistance but did not receive assistance. On the other hand, residents who should be able to fulfill their basic needs receive basic necessities from the government.

According to empirical studies on the 12 Ulu community's survival strategy is based on subsistence strategy that use connections and social networks. Additionally, network use occurs through interactions and social networks with neighbors, relatives, and local families, which serve as their bonding social capital. Meanwhile, their bridging social capital consists of contacts and social networks with local government agencies (RT).

Additionally, trust is a component of this social interaction. The purpose of trust-based social interactions is to solicit assistance from others in the form of debt, mutual trust, cooperative efforts to find housing and job, as well as voluntary contributions. This has also developed into a means of sustenance for local inhabitants. This relationship and social network is marked by the relationship between the head of local government (RT) and the market warehouse in Jakabaring as a trader and peeler of onions.

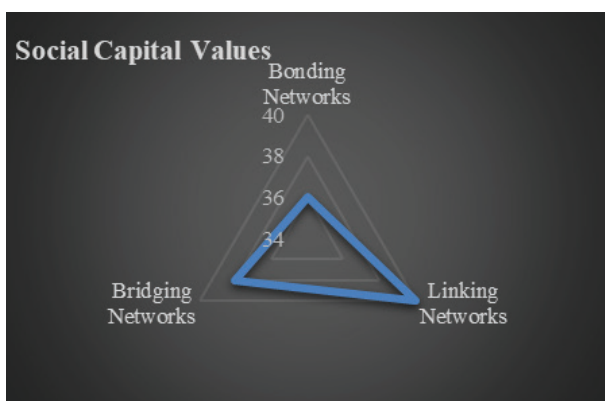


Figure 5. Spider web diagram of the Social Capital Assessment Values

Figure 5 shows the value of social capital conducting from three aspects: bridging, bonding, and linking networks. People in slum areas rely on social support for survival, the basic needs of their linked network.

Research Policy Implication

Several policy implications can be derived to resolve the difficulties that shanty communities faced during the pandemic. The following are some suggestions for policymakers: *Firstly*, Strengthen social capital: Recognize the significance of social capital in shanty communities and encourage initiatives that nurture social cohesion and mutual support. Encourage the formation of community-based organizations and

networks capable of coordinating aid and resources during times of crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Secondly, Enhance community engagement: Develop policies that actively involve residents of slums in resource allocation and aid distribution decision-making processes. Members of the community should be consulted and involved in the design of programs that address their specific needs and priorities. *Thirdly*, Targeted support for vulnerable groups: implement targeted support measures for vulnerable groups within the ghetto communities, including the elderly, the disabled, single-parent families, and low-income families. Adapt assistance programs to their specific needs during the pandemic.

Fourthly, Ensure food security: Establish food distribution centers, provide food vouchers or financial transfers, and support local food production initiatives in order to combat food insecurity in slum communities. *Fifthly*, Strengthen social safety nets: enhance existing social safety net programs and develop new ones to assist those who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the pandemic. This may consist of unemployment benefits, financial transfers, and microcredit programs.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 epidemic has made it challenging for the citizens of Indonesia, particularly the poor in slum communities, to fulfill their daily requirements. However, the results of the study indicate that the population's social capital makes it possible to overcome economic difficulties.

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to investigate the role of social capital in meeting the fundamental requirements of Palembang's slum communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Several critical findings have emerged from a comprehensive examination of the challenges encountered by these communities and the effectiveness of social capital networks in addressing their requirements.

Prior to anything else, the study emphasized the importance of social capital in enabling slum communities to endure the negative effects of the pandemic. During the crisis, the exchange of resources, information, and support among community members was facilitated by robust social networks, which played a crucial role in meeting essential requirements such as food, healthcare, and financial assistance.

In addition, the research revealed the significance of community participation and collaborative governance in addressing the unique challenges confronted by shanty residents. To ensure that interventions are responsive to the particular needs and priorities of ghetto communities, policymakers and local authorities must actively involve community members in decision-making processes and resource allocation.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to influence our society, the lessons learned from this research can contribute to the development of more effective and sustainable urban policies that address the requirements of vulnerable populations. We can build more inclusive and resilient cities where disadvantaged communities receive the support and opportunities they deserve

by implementing a holistic and community-driven strategy.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the increasing body of knowledge regarding the role of social capital in slum communities and highlights its significance in meeting fundamental requirements during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic. It is my intention that this research will inspire additional investigation and action to bring about positive change and enhance the well-being of slum residents in Palembang City and beyond.

This study has limitations due to its small sample size; in the future, it will be important to undertake research with a large sample size in order to thoroughly discover how to eradicate poverty, particularly as it relates to the fundamental requirements of slum people.

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