

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**A LIVEABLE COMMUNITY MODEL
FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY
OF FIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD
WATCH AREAS IN MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

As Malaysia strides towards becoming a developed nation, the quality of life has become a critical focus, with liveability emerging as a key component in shaping future community aspirations. However, liveability remains subjective and socially constructed, leading to varying interpretations and standards across nations. In Malaysia, while there has been significant progress in the concept of liveability, it remains nascent, ambiguous, and evolving. The criteria of what constitutes the liveability model remain less understood, forcing this research to fill the gap. Against this backdrop, this research addresses three interrelated questions: (i) What are the key policies, strategies, and directions implemented by Malaysia for a liveable community? (ii) What are the main indicators influencing the formation of liveable communities in Malaysia?; and (iii) What solutions can be proposed to enhance the development of liveable communities in line with sustainability? Adopting a mixed-method approach, this study employed a questionnaire survey of 414 participants, complemented by seven in-depth interviews. To ensure regional representativeness and thus strengthen the reliability of the findings, multiple case studies: five of the neighborhood watch areas through purposive sampling were selected from the eastern, northern, central, southern, and Borneo (East Malaysia) regions. The findings reveal that Malaysia's liveability is underpinned by three core pillars: social prosperity, economic growth, and environmental stability, further broken down into 12 key indicators. These indicators form a standardized measurement framework, ultimately transforming into a liveability model tailored to Malaysian communities. This study offers dual contributions: (i) it refines, enhances, and expands the body of knowledge on community theory and perspectives, culminating in the development of a liveability model for Malaysia; and (ii) it deepens our understanding of liveability indexes, providing sharper insights and improving current readings of these metrics.

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Pohon rendang bunga melati,
Harum mewangi di tengah laman,
Terima kasih tak terhenti,
Buat semua penuh kebaikan.

Mawar merah di tepi titi,
Melambai-lambai di tepi laman,
Budi diberi kekal di hati,
Menjadi pedoman sepanjang zaman.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon that has witnessed a significant increase in population from rural to urban areas. Urbanisation is a transformative force shaping the world's socio-economic and environmental landscapes. As of 2020, more than 56% of the global population resided in urban areas, projected to rise to 68% by 2050 (United Nations, 2019). This unprecedented urban growth presents challenges and opportunities, necessitating sustainable strategies to ensure liveability and resilience in urban spaces.

Malaysia's urbanisation rate reached 75.1% in 2020, closely aligning with countries such as Turkey, 76.1%, Iran, 75.9%, and Germany, 77.5% (DOSM, 2024). These figures reflect the broader global trend towards urban living, driven by economic development, population growth, and rural-to-urban migration. However, such rapid urbanisation exerts immense pressure on infrastructure, housing, and public services while impacting environmental sustainability and social equity.

Thus, liveability emerges as a critical concern directly linked to the quality of life experienced by urban populations. Liveability encompasses diverse dimensions, including access to affordable housing, efficient public transportation, green spaces, and social and cultural engagement opportunities. Addressing liveability within the context of rapid urbanisation requires an integrated approach that balances development needs with the well-being of residents, making it a pivotal consideration for Malaysia's sustainable future.

Against the backdrop, creating liveable communities has become essential for sustainable development as cities grow and urban areas become more densely populated. Liveable communities are characterized by their ability to gain community satisfaction and offer a high quality of life, social cohesion, neighbourhood security, accessibility and sustainability (Amin et al., 2020).

The significance of fostering inclusive, safe, and resilient cities and communities is emphasised by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. There is an increasing acknowledgement of the crucial role that liveable communities play in achieving sustainable development objectives. Liveable communities significantly advance various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing poverty reduction,