

The Role of Economic Activities in Enhancing the Acceptance of Lebanese Towards Malaysian Peacekeepers Through Good Governance as Mediator Variable

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the mediating influence of good governance on the relations between economic activity and Lebanese acceptance of Malaysian peacekeepers. While prior research has studied the relationship between economic activities and local acceptance, relatively few study has been conducted on the mediating impacts of good governance on this relationship, particularly in the Malaysian setting. The data came from 532 Lebanese people in Tebnine and Maarakeh districts. SmartPLS was used to analyse the proposed framework. The findings indicate that good governance mediated the relationship between economic activity and Lebanese acceptance of Malaysian peacekeepers. These findings will help the peacekeepers to assist the local people in increasing the economic output in their country and help reduce the pressure of food resources that are depleted.

Keywords: economic activities, good governance, Malaysian peacekeepers, Lebanese

1. Introduction

The focus of this research is to analyse how economic activities influence Lebanese acceptance of Malaysian peacekeepers. As a mediator of acceptance, good governance is scrutinised rigorously. The acceptance of local towards foreign pacekeepers has been shown in numerous studies to be impacted by their grasp of local economic activities. Although economic activities and local population acceptance have already been researched in the past (Carnahan et al., 2007; Bove & Smith, 2011; Bove & Elia, 2017; Sheehan, 2011; Jennings, 2019; Gledhill et al., 2021; Peacock, 2021; IPI, 2019), few research has been done to determine the role of good governance as a mediator. Since they are under the supervision of Malaysian peacekeepers, therefore Tebnine and Maarakeh were selected as the research's location. The purpose of this research is to add to the existing body of knowledge about Malaysian peacekeeping and good governance.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The interconnections between the three variables, which are economic activities, good governance, and local population acceptance, were outlined and elaborated on through a review of the literature.

2.1 Economic Activities

While war and conflict clearly have an effect on the physical setting, destroying roadways, housing, and infrastructure, another equally destructive effect of war is the economic harm done to the domestic economy (Bove & Elia, 2018). Identifying and enhancing local economic structures is a typical problem for troops participating in peacekeeping and stability missions. By adhering to the principle of good governance, peacekeepers can be more effective at enhancing local economic growth. Peacekeepers might not have been ready for the totally distinct nature of financial contact in several war-torn nations since most Western nations have technologically advanced economy driven by a complex world monetary system. In today's age of modern

Internet and iPhones, for instance, the majority of the people manage their affairs online, sending money and paying bills digitally. Most financial activity can still be performed with cash in many nations in which the local populace is untrained and computers are rare. In certain rural areas, financial institutions may not even present. Moreover, in some locations, such as very religious Muslim communities, usury is prohibited, necessitating a completely new approach to financial activity such as business and building loans. Peacekeeping and stabilization activities can be greatly hampered by the lack of a functional local banking and financial system.

2.2 Good Governance

The judgement calls and procedure whereby a policy is executed or not adopted is referred to as "governance" (UNESCAP, 2009). It is characterised by capable, responsive, participative, and open governance structures, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Good governance could assist in reducing corruption and guarantee that the viewpoints of the minority and the opinions of society's most underprivileged are taken into account during the decision-making stage. It is also attentive to the present and future demands of a community (UNESCAP, 2009). In a peacekeeping operation, the government is one of the governing actors, but other actors in remote areas may include powerful landowners, peasant agricultural organisations, unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), educational establishments, religious organizations, banking institutions, political organizations, an international force, and the military. Active militaries from other nations, like those currently involved in Afghanistan and Iraq, or troops representing the world body, such as United Nations (UN) peacekeepers, are examples of international forces (Peacebuilding Initiatives, 2013). Few researchers have focused on United Nations (UN)-led peacekeeping missions in studies on good governance. According to the research, the UN is a governance institution whose inefficiencies and unfairness come from exclusions and injustices, which reflect the true inequities in the international order (Philip, 2009). While peacekeeping is essential for world peace and security, strong governance affects the efficiency and performance of peacekeeping operations. The United Nations is now speeding up its initiatives to enhance good governance, which includes defending human rights and the rule of law, supporting democracies, and improving transparency and competency in government service (Kofi-Annan, 2011). Good governance, whether supplied by the UN or by countries providing soldiers, is critical to the restoration and maintenance of peace. Otherwise, peacekeeping missions may prove inadequate in protecting indigenous peoples, resulting in their disapproval of future peacekeeping efforts. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (2009) uses several sub-concepts to analyse good governance in peacekeeping operations, including participation, consensus-oriented, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity and inclusiveness, and the rule of law.

2.3 The Acceptance of the Lebanese

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was selected by the researchers since it is Malaysia's main peacekeeping mission, with 854 troops on the ground at a certain specified moment. The Lebanese community's acceptance of foreign peacekeeping troops differs depending on the troop contributing countries (TCCs). The acceptance of French forces in Lebanon, for example, has been poor from the beginning. Locals made it apparent that their disagreement was with the French force solely, and that relationships with other detachments were friendly (Karouny, 2010). The Civil Military Coordination (CIMIC) initiative of the Indonesian UNIFIL contingent gained the force a favourable image among the South Lebanese populace. A range of community-based activities were included in this initiative, including computer lessons for local inhabitants, medical support, and technical support for the rehabilitation of social amenities (Sanra, 2010). Small-scale development initiatives, medical and dental clinics, veterinary treatment for local animals, children's camps, and yoga courses have all been conducted by India's UNIFIL presence (Andrew, 2007; Jansen, 2010). Cooking classes were offered by the Italian contingent, Taekwondo instruction was provided by the South Korean component, and Tai Chi tuition was provided by the Chinese contingent (Daragahi, 2008; UNIFIL, 2015). Due to their courteous demeanour while patrolling the dangerous area, Malaysian peacekeepers are well-liked by Lebanese inhabitants. The pleasant and friendly demeanour of Malaysian peacekeepers has distinguished them apart from troops from other nations, and this has inadvertently drawn people to interact with them. Aside from their politeness, the local community appreciates them for their understanding and tolerance of a wide range of religions and beliefs.

3. Hypothesized Relationship

Households suffer from costly habit changes as a result of uncertain and violent settings, such as lower labour supply and fewer commercial transactions, which degrade their economic well-being. When security improves, households are more likely to resume economic practises that have been disrupted by violence, such as engaging

in the employment market (for example, going back to employment) and participating in cash activities (for instance, going to local markets). Dealing with the structure of the local society's economic system, as well as strategies to improve their economic position, are among the most difficult challenges for peacekeepers to overcome (Holmes-Eber, 2016). As a result of a lack of relief funds available for distribution to damaged areas, the complexity of the situation rises, making the peacekeeping mission less effective (Carnahan et al., 2007). It is also the responsibility of peacekeepers to build both formal and informal economies in the areas they are assigned (Lynch, 2008). It is the phrase used to describe to a sector of the economy in which the government taxes and controls it, and the economic pattern is not as problematic as it is in the informal sector. This economy differs from the informal economy in that it is not controlled by a central authority such as the government. It is primarily concerned with the underground economy, which includes the selling of guns and drugs, transnational crimes, uncontrolled immigration, and corruption, among other things. Loss, incompetence, bribery, and perhaps corruption was found to have cost the Sudanese government tens of millions of dollars, according to an audit system there.

As a result, as labour demand develops, a rise in economic transactions and career opportunities is projected. The participation of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) results in measurable gains in community economic well-being as assessed by foodstuffs and industrial production expenditure. The deployment of peacekeepers revitalises economic relations by increasing labour market participation and facilitating access to local marketplaces. Moreover, the presence of peacekeepers enhances subjective well-being, particularly assessments of future financial conditions and social fulfillment, both of which are projected to boost consumption. People's engagement in trading activities and, more broadly, participating in transactions involving commerce with people who are not members of their family groups might be harmed by conflict (Cassar et al., 2013). Domestic commerce and market operations are, in fact, a significant conduit via which war-induced mistrust has an effect on the market (Costalli et al., 2017; Rohner et al., 2013). When a sense of security is reestablished, however, households may return to their previous habits.

In each peacekeeping operation, there is evidence of local procurement contracts that have been hampered by crimes, corruption, or fraud. These claims range from simple gasoline theft by UN employees to more significant charges of backhanders and bribes. The top DPKO administrative employees surveyed by the project, on the other hand, agreed that the UN is no more vulnerable to these issues than any other large organisation functioning in these economies. Additionally, procurement officers for the DPKO say that regular execution of existing UN procurement rules reduces considerable corruption and fraud. It was said that the chances of bribery in contracts that were given to multinational or regional firms were usually the same as for local businesses.

Since peacekeeping operations generally operate in places with weak monitoring and accountability structures, bribes are a prominent source of corruption. Embezzlement is more likely to happen when international bodies receive a large inflow of funds. When assigning contracts, mission members were put in an unpleasant position because of the potential of major public supply chain management in conflict-affected zones. Bribes could be offered or requested as compensation for special treatment in the procurement procedure or the hiring of local labour. In the UN environment, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has confirmed several charges of personnel collecting and soliciting bribery. The UNMIK mission in Kosovo was one of the most widely criticised (UN General Assembly, 2003).

The single most significant economic impact is that of restoring peace, but peacekeeping has a smaller economic impact. The spending of missions in their host countries can help to resurrect a war-torn economy. It is possible that the entire operation will be jeopardised if there is no transparency in the economic recovery process. While missions can result in certain shortages and inflation, there is seldom inflationary spillover onto the broader economy as a result of these events. In order to improve the local impact, increasing field procurement is the ideal strategy. Local procurement necessitates greater vigilance against fraud than international procurement, although not by much. The significance and impact of national staff elicited a flurry of replies. National employees can save money while also giving the mission legitimacy, and the money saved is reinvested directly into the economy of the host country. In contrast, mission personnel and pay practises were cited as having the most detrimental impact, attracting limited competent personnel from the local public and private sectors while simultaneously increasing upward pressure on local wages. The long-term repercussions of these measures are detrimental to the rehabilitation of the economy. They foster an environment in which long-term employment with development organisations grows into a significant part of the economy. It is possible to mitigate negative effects by increasing outsourcing; nevertheless, to address the systemic difficulty, it is necessary to revise the pay setting principles (Carnahan et al., 2006).

The employment of qualified, well-trained soldiers and police is directly tied to the peacekeeping operation's

performance and image of integrity. Troops with dishonest personnel quickly degrade their own credibility and, by extension, the operation's authenticity, especially if the detachment is tasked with reconstruction. Corruption that hinders a contingent's physical capability is also harmful, as it regularly causes troops to be unable to complete their missions. This puts both the personnel and the operation in jeopardy. Individual Member States' selection procedures are frequently obscure. Only Canada, one of the major UN force contributors, has made their peacekeeper training and recruitment programmes public (RCMP, 2008).

The mandate or goal of most UN peacekeeping deployments is to bring peace and stability to conflicting factions or tribes. Malaysia implemented three measures to improve the level of development in UN peacekeeping missions. The concept of winning hearts and minds was first introduced as part of economic development. Essentially, they are small-scale projects that help the general public and can take a variety of forms, such as infrastructural support or short-term employment. This type of project was later dubbed "quick impact projects" (QIP), which is a quick process of establishing the conditions for long-term peace. Second, the UN partners, such as the UN Development Programme, the World Bank, and others, are responsible for obtaining donor funds and attention in the mission regions in order to achieve the long-term goal of encouraging socio-economic recovery and development. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the World Bank supported the construction of a road in the small town of Ituri, which was built by engineers from China's People's Liberation Army, which was part of the peacekeeping force. Third, Malaysia emphasised the importance of adequate economic development funding, arguing that without it, DDR operations would fail, as inadequate reintegration of ex-combatants leaves the prospect of war resumption. In short, funding remained a barrier to DDR programme implementation. In the long run, the goal of DDR is to make sure that ex-fighters stay socially and economically integrated into a peaceful society in a safe environment, so that the country can grow in a balanced way. Malaysia's efforts to boost economic activity show how important it is to be responsive in order to get the local people to accept you.

The overall efficacy of UN peacekeeping spending would improve if more of the assessed mission budgets (about \$5 billion in fiscal years 2005–2006) could be allocated to encouraging local economic development while still ensuring effective peace and security. Stronger economic development will increase the possibility that a mission will be able to retire sooner and will be less likely to have to return, lowering the overall cost of UN peacekeeping operations. The only previous study of the economic impact of a peacekeeping mission was conducted for UNTAC in Cambodia (Carnahan et al., 2007). Given the mission's low level of local expenditure, the impact of UNTAC on inflation was limited, according to the report, but it acknowledged UNTAC's importance in raising local pay and salary levels. The report's critics contended that the negative effects were higher than indicated, citing an unsustainable pattern of development caused by Cambodians' investments in firms that later closed, as well as increases in rental and land prices.

Conduct and Discipline Teams (CDTs), which report to the Head of Mission, are responsible for combating corruption inside missions, in addition to a significant focus on the hazards related with sexual exploitation (Deschamps, 2015). In a number of publicly available publications, the United Nations admits corruption; yet, the organisation continues to treat corruption as a tactical issue rather than a mission-level or even strategic concern in peacekeeping operations (United Nations Secretariat, 2016). While corruption threats are covered in pre-deployment training, these threats are not taken into consideration during mandate planning or as part of the Strategic Assessment. Several peacekeepers have stated that corruption risks are not properly handled at the appropriate level (i.e. strategic, operational, or mission-level) at the outset of an operation. Instead, corruption-related issues are generally addressed at the tactical level as part of Core Pre-Deployment Training, which is the responsibility of the troop contributing country (TCC). The Secretariat relies on self-certification rather than monitoring to ensure that corruption-related issues are addressed. The sheer amount and range of training modules available, of which corruption-related training constitutes only a small portion, raises concerns about the effectiveness of this training (Transparency International, 2019). This shown that increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of pre-deployment activities can help to increase the economic activities of local communities.

During the deployment in Somalia, the Malaysian peacekeeping force was visited by Abdurrahman Ali Osman, the protocol officer for the interim President of Somalia. According to him, he is an economics graduate trained in the US and has visited Malaysia. During the informal visit, he requested to establish relations and communication with the Malaysian government through the good services of the Malaysian contingent. They discussed and sought assistance, especially in the field of investment, to ensure that all people in Somalia can shape and develop their own economy. In another example, Malaysia's civic project in Somalia has been heard by a local ex-air force pilot. He informed that there were 25 families living in the northern part of the North Gate

airport who had been cut off from food supplies and had not received any assistance either from the government or non-governmental organizations. Therefore, he represented the group to ask for some help from the Malaysian peacekeepers. Malaysia has provided food aid, clean clothes and some other necessities for them to ensure that they do not miss out on any aid. This shows that economic activities should be fair and inclusive so that local people can grow and improve their lives and well-being.

In the near term, real gains in security as a result of peacekeeping missions should help host countries' economic activities, while the restoration of the rule of law and order should pave the way for long-term prosperity. Caruso et al. (2017) investigate the relationship between UN peacekeepers and cereal output in Sudan, where the agricultural sector is harmed by conflict. They discover that the presence of UN peacekeepers boosts grain production, showing that peacekeeping has a favourable impact on the local economy. In addition, the peacekeepers' security covers invite non-state entities like NGOs and government development agencies to direct aid and assistance to the host countries. Many peacekeeping deployments, in fact, begin concurrently with development assistance projects (Bove & Elia, 2017).

In order to boost local economic activity, peacekeepers should adhere to all good governance norms. This will have resulted in the approval of the local populace, which is crucial in peacekeeping operations.

H₁ There is a significant relationship between economic activities and the acceptance of Lebanese towards Malaysian peacekeepers.

H₂ There is a significant relationship between economic activities and good governance.

H₃ There is a significant relationship between good governance and the acceptance of the Lebanese towards Malaysian peacekeepers.

4. Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Sampling Design

The community of Tebnine and Maarakeh, aged 18 and above, was used to generate the respondents for the study. A stratified random sampling procedure was applied to select participants who satisfied the required criteria until a minimum sample size of 375 was obtained (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). For this study, data from 532 participants was gathered over a two-month data gathering period. The criterion sampling approach was used to review all cases that satisfied preset criteria. This method of sampling allows researchers to have access to previously unexplored populations. Because the target population in Tebnine and Maarakeh is easily accessible, stratified sampling was employed for this investigation.

Table 1. Respondent profile

| Characteristics | Number of respondents (n=532) | Percentages (100%) |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 392 | 73.68 |
| Female | 140 | 26.32 |
| Age | | |
| 18-24 | 34 | 6.39 |
| 25-34 | 89 | 16.73 |
| 35-44 | 121 | 22.74 |
| 45-54 | 201 | 37.78 |
| 55 and above | 87 | 16.36 |
| Religion | | |
| Islam | 386 | 72.56 |
| Christian | 72 | 13.53 |
| Druze | 40 | 7.52 |
| Other | 34 | 6.39 |

According to Table 1, there were 532 total responders, with 392 (73.68 percent) men and 140 (26.32 percent) women. 34 (6.39 percent) of respondents are between the ages of 18 and 24, while 89 (16.73 percent) are between the ages of 25 and 34, 121 (22.74 percent) are between the ages of 35 and 44, 201 (37.78 percent) are between the ages of 45 and 54, and the remaining 87 (16.36 percent) are beyond the age of 55. Muslims make up

the bulk of respondents, accounting for 386 (72.5 percent), with Christians accounting for 72 (13.53 percent), Druze for 40 (7.52 percent), and other religions accounting for 34 (6.39 percent).

4.2 Research Instruments

4.2.1 Economic Activities

The study employs a 10-item scale based on Bove and Elia (2017), Gledhill et al. (2021), and Peacock (2021) to assess economic activities. The scale, in particular, assesses the components of economic activities. This tool uses a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

4.2.2 The Acceptance of Local Population

The 10-item scale developed based on Kool (2016), Walter et al. (2020), and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (2013) was used to assess the local acceptance of peacekeepers in this study. This tool uses a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

4.2.3 Good Governance

In this study, a 10-item scale to assess good governance as a mediating role in the relationship between economic activity and local acceptance was utilised, based on UNESCAP (2009), Blair (2020), and Seaman (2014). This tool uses a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

4.3 Data Analysis Procedure

SmartPLS was the main statistical tool employed in this study, with correlational analysis serving as the secondary statistical technique.

5. Results

PLS gives a more thorough explanation of variable interactions than covariance-based structural equation modelling and may accept samples with a limited sample size and distribution (Hair et al., 2017). Using Ringle, Wende, and Becker's (201) earlier review of the Structural Equation Model-Partial Least Squares, the hypothesised model is assessed using the Smart PLS M3 version 3.3 software (SEM-PLS).

5.1 Measurement Reliability and Validation

Construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity tests were performed on all constructs. The standardised loadings (λ) of each reflective measurement item on its associated latent construct were all more than 0.50 and significant at p 0.01, meaning that convergent validity was obtained (Hair et al., 2017). All latent constructs had Cronbach alpha values (α) and composite reliability (ρ) more than 0.70, implying that the multi-item scales proved sufficiently trustworthy (Hair et al., 2017). The average variance extracted (AVE) values were all more than 0.50, indicating that the latent constructs were legitimate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017). The fact that the AVE was greater than the squared correlation with other constructs supported the discriminant validity of each concept, as seen in Table 2. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Malhotra, 2010).

Table 2. Correlation and discriminant validity

| Construct | PO | AL | GG |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Political Organization (PO) | 0.802 | | |
| Acceptance of Lebanese (AL) | 0.731 | 0.709 | |
| Good Governance (GG) | 0.734 | 0.822 | 0.746 |

5.2 Mediation Analysis

Table 3. Mediation analysis results

| Statement | R ² | β | t value | Descision | Mediation Type |
|---|----------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Political Organization → Good Governance → The Acceptance of Lebanese | 0.751 | 0.77 | 40.16 | Accepted | Complementary Partial Mediation |

To evaluate the role of good governance in mediating the relationship between economic activities and Lebanese approval of Malaysian peacekeepers, a mediation study was done. Preacher and Hayes (2008) developed an SPSS technique for producing 95 percentile confidence intervals that was used to analyse the latent variable scores obtained by SmartPLS. Table 3 summarises the findings of the mediation analysis. According to Hair et al.

(2017), the strength of mediation is measured by the variance accounted for (VAF) values, with VAF values greater than 80% suggesting complete mediation, 20%–80% indicating partial mediation, and less than 20% indicating no mediation. Table 4 shows that complementing partial mediation occurred in the hypothesis investigated.

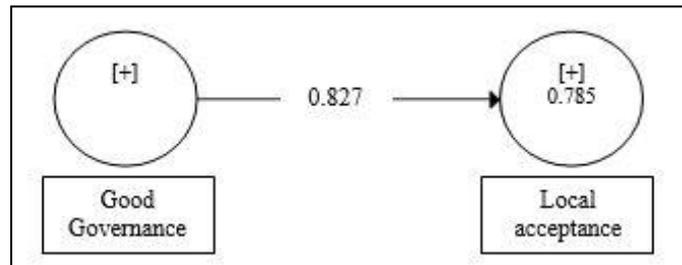


Figure 1. The relationship between economic activities and Lebanese acceptance towards Malaysian peacekeepers

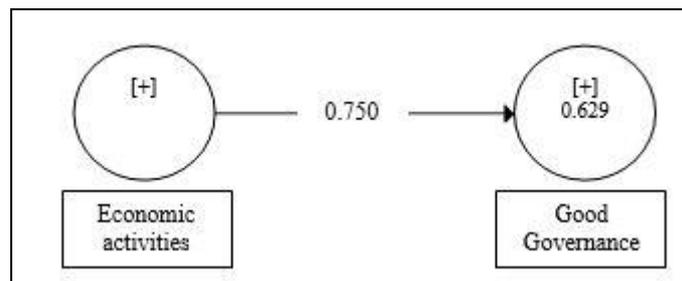


Figure 2. The relationship between economic activities and good governance

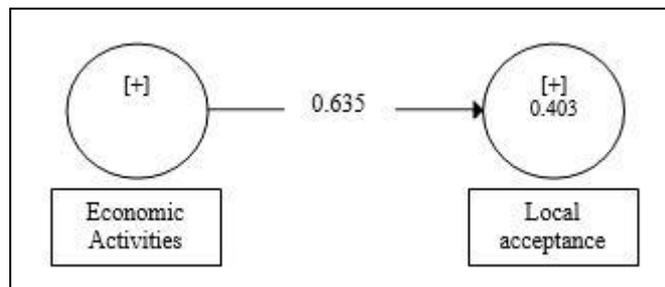


Figure 3. The relationship between good governance and Lebanese acceptance towards Malaysian Peacekeepers

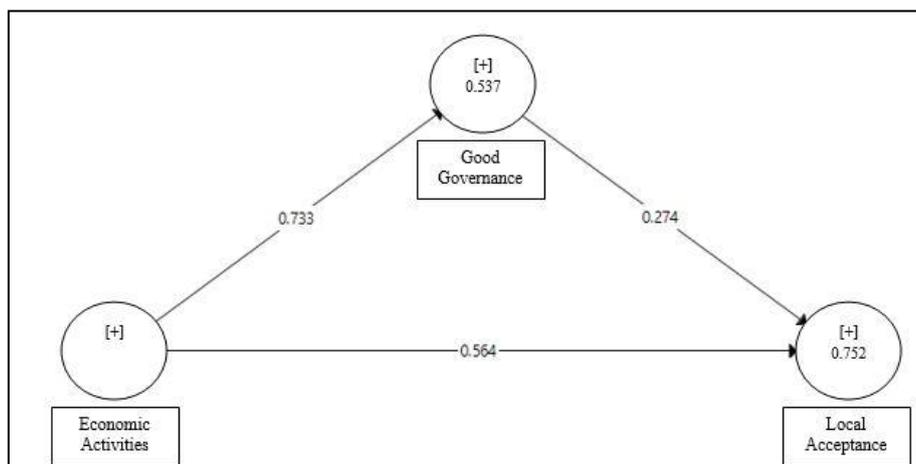


Figure 4. The relationship between economic activities and the acceptance of Lebanese towards Malaysian peacekeepers with good governance as mediator

5.3 Discussion

Figure 4 above shows that good governance provides complementary partial mediation on the relationship between economic activities and the Lebanese people's acceptance of the Malaysian peacekeeping force. The direct effect between economic activities and the acceptance of Lebanese has a value of R2 0.403 (40%), while the mediator effect on the relationship causes the value to increase to 0.752 (75%). This has shown that good governance has an influence on the relationship. Apart from that, the results of the interview process with local community leaders have proven that the Malaysian peacekeeping force is well received by local people in terms of economic activities based on the principles of good governance as highlighted by UNESCAP (2009).

The findings showed that good governance influences the relationship between economic activities and the acceptance of Lebanese peacekeepers by Malaysians. Real improvements in security resulting from peacekeeping missions should boost economic activities of the host countries in the short-run, whereas the restoration of law and order should set the stage for long-term development. The economy plays an important role in a country, especially for countries in conflict. The majority of respondents stated that it is important for each peacekeeping force to understand the economic activities of local communities in conflict areas. According to other respondents, economic activities in most of the conflict areas are more focused on agricultural activities and small businesses. Thus, the Malaysian peacekeeping force introduced several new crops, such as bananas, to be developed by the local community in increasing economic activity (Azhar, 2018). In addition, the Malaysian peacekeeping force also built suitable infrastructure for traders to help them to place products for sale (Jamal, 2018).

A total of 3 officers and 12 women members from MALBATT 850-9 participated in the Women's Handicraft Cooperative Exhibition Program held at the UNP 2-3 Shama Camp. The programme is a collaborative effort between the Gender Focal Point and civilian women around Camp Shama. The initiative not only explores income opportunities through business, but is also able to be a group that extends help to other women who face various challenges and pressures (MALBATT 850-9, 2022). This proved that participation and consensus-oriented principles are important for local economic activities.

In the Key Leader Engagement (KLE) program, Col. Azudin bin Hassan met with the representative of Tebnine's Mayor. This brief ceremony was held at the Tebnine Municipality building. He held discussions on operations, current economic activities, as well as programmes implemented within MALBATT's area of responsibility and accountability. During the meeting, he also presented a donation of 8,000 face masks and hand sanitizers to be distributed to the less fortunate residents of Tebnine. The handover of these donations is part of the efforts of the MALBATT 850-8 Contingent through the Civil-Military Cooperation Cell (CIMIC) to help local communities curb the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic. This donation is given to help the Tebnine community members who cannot afford the necessities. The representative of Mayor Tebnine stated that he was very pleased with the contribution presented by the MALBATT 850-8 and was ready to offer any form of cooperation from the community around the area (Kdouh, 2022). This programme indirectly fulfils the mandate given by UNIFIL, which is to protect the local community under the responsibility and accountability of MALBATT 850-8 from the threat of COVID-19.

The MALBATT 850-8 contingent, through its Civil-Military Cooperation Cell (CIMIC), was actively carrying out its responsibilities to update socioeconomic data within the MALBATT Area of Responsibility. This is one of the responsibilities of the CIMIC Cell, which is to maintain as much information as possible about the area's history, geography, population, politics, economy, social assistance, public infrastructure, military and civil administration, and human rights protection. Through the implementation of this activity, the contingent will be able to identify local leaders and issues that arise in their area of responsibility. Apart from gathering information about an area's socioeconomic situation, it is critical to understand the area's and local people's conditions in order for this contingent to channel aid to the Lebanese people transparently (Houssein, 2022). Transparency is critical in establishing trust and winning the hearts of the local populace toward Malaysian peacekeepers, thus ensuring the assignment of MALBATT 850-8 operations runs smoothly.

The President of Atit's municipality hosted an inauguration ceremony for the electronic and computer equipment project to support the public library in the presence of Colonel Ezzedine Bin Hassan, the commander of the MALBATT. The inauguration was held in front of the local population and UNIFIL civil affairs officer from MALBATT 850-8. In response to the lack of infrastructure in the local library, this project which funded by UNIFIL through the Malaysian battalion, will allow the residents of the town to use the public library and equipment, and will also allow students to benefit from the use of the Internet to obtain information related to their studies and attend school classes in the event of a return to school afterward. Following the mayor's

remarks, in which he welcomed the guests and thanked UNIFIL for the donation, the commander of the MALBATT 850-8 emphasised the importance of strong relations between Malaysian peacekeepers and the people of southern Lebanon, as well as UNIFIL's continued support (Bazoun, 2021). The principle of responsiveness held by the Malaysian peacekeepers has made it easy for the team to be accepted by the people of South Lebanon.

Lt Cdr Faies Izwan, Staff Officer 2 CIMIC, and Capt. Mohamad Hazim, Assistant Head of MALBATT 850-8 Workshop Elements, have carried out monitoring on the agricultural tractor supply project for Hallusiyat Al-Fawqa Municipality. This activity was also joined by the UNIFIL Engineering Unit as a "Subject Matter Expert" and the Civil Affairs Western Sector Headquarters as an intermediary between UNIFIL and the Municipality. This project is one of the projects funded by UNIFIL to help boost the local community's economy in the agricultural sector more effectively and efficiently. The Municipality of Hallusiyat Al-Fawqa expressed its appreciation to UNIFIL and MALBATT for realising this project and further easing the burden of local farmers (Deputy Mayor, 2022).

Major Wan Suhaimi bin Abd Rahman, Officer of KAGAT MALBATT 850-8, presented Darul Aitam, a community centre in Kawkaba, Hasbaiya, with the zakat contribution of MALBATT members. The community centre's objective is to provide advice, motivation, and skill development to more than 250 residents in the area. Aside from that, this community centre offers memory recovery assistance for the elderly, life skills education for the disabled, deaf and dumb, and single mother skills education. People with autism and down syndrome can also get self-management training at the institution. This financial contribution will, at the very least, assist this community centre in carrying out economically beneficial activities for the group. Darul Aitam expressed its gratitude and appreciation for MALBATT's financial assistance (Karnid, 2022). In keeping with their duty as peacekeepers as well as an ambassador to the country, such actions have given MALBATT a positive image and further developed strong relations between MALBATT and the inhabitants, particularly the less fortunate. This clearly shows that the Malaysian peacekeeping force has always practised the principles of equity and inclusiveness in their daily work.

Besides the positive behaviour and attitude portrayed by the Malaysian Peacekeepers also could be due to the combination of the Malay culture, Islamic values and military culture. In fact, there is a dedicated organization known as *Kor Agama Angkatan Tentera* (KAGAT) which is responsible to internalize Islamic values in the Military organization and peacekeepers, and also cultivate the moderate form of Islamic approaches and the extreme views are not tolerated (Wan Husin et al., 2019)

6. Conclusion

The role of good governance in mediating the relationship between economic activities and Lebanon's acceptance of Malaysian peacekeepers was studied in depth to see how the variable can improve or decrease the relationship. In order to trigger economic activity to boost UN peacekeeping operations, the approval of the local community is considered an outcome variable in this study. It provides solid statistical data and support for the claim that peacekeepers who are familiar with the local population's economic activities and good governance practises are more likely to be welcomed by them, reducing the likelihood of conflict. The study adds to the theoretical framework that will be used to back up future studies on governance, economic activity, and conflict situations. The findings show that, despite their cultural differences, the Maarakeh and Tebnine local people welcome Malaysian troops because of their awareness and understanding of local economic activities and beliefs during their deployment. Even though these practises of tolerance and understanding do not instantly end the problem, they should be included in more comprehensive conflict resolution tactics that include neutrality and tolerance.

7. Implication

The findings of this study may aid peacekeepers in their efforts to get a better understanding of the linkages between economic activity and local population acceptance in war-torn countries. In war zones, economic activities and good governance should be considered as tools that contribute to the acceptability of international peacekeepers rather than a basis for refusing them entry into the country. Through pre-deployment training and mentoring, it is possible for peacekeepers to obtain a better grasp of local economic activity. Peacekeeping troops are aware of the value of the information obtained from local economic activities with the support of good governance as a mediator, and they are able to achieve the best and most appropriate solutions for warring parties.

8. Contribution and Direction for Future Research

It contributes to the existing body of knowledge regarding economic activity in peacekeeping operations and good governance research in a number of ways, including the development of new knowledge. As a starting point, the model lays the groundwork for the incorporation of a large and diverse body of knowledge. A reference to a peacekeeping operation allows the model to serve as a conceptual framework for study into the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and the economic comprehension of those activities. Additional organisations, such as police officers, humanitarian aid workers, or civilian workers, who are more indicative of the outcomes of peacekeeping operations should be included in future research. For example, police officers, humanitarian aid workers, and civilian workers are more indicative of the outcomes of peacekeeping operations.

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