Local Pakistani Citizens’ Benefits and Attitudes Toward China–Pakistan Economic Corridor Projects

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Abstract
The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a mega development plan in the South Asian region with the mutual cooperation of Pakistan and China. However, CPEC projects are still in the preliminary phase, and scholars and policymakers have continuously assured that CPEC projects will boost the economy of Pakistan through business creation and immense employment opportunities. This study investigated the influence of CPEC projects on the community lifestyle of local Pakistani citizens. The samples were gathered using an online survey from 335 respondents living in Pakistan. Most of the hypotheses supported by the existing data set showed the positive responses of local Pakistani citizens toward CPEC projects. The findings of this study will help government officials and the representatives of the CPEC understand the attitudes of the host community and their cooperation for the development of CPEC projects.

Keywords
CPEC, Pakistan, perceived income, local citizens, economic

Introduction
Recently, the economic, employment, and financial problems of Pakistan provide several reasons to develop regional infrastructure projects in the country. With prime physical infrastructure and connectivity, the local community economically gains benefits in terms of employment, business opportunities, and accessibility to education institutes (Kanwal et al., 2019a). Over the years, the Chinese government has played a crucial role in the economic escalation of Pakistan. To further support the bilateral ties, Chinese officials have initiated the project with the name “China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC),” which will economically be beneficial for China and Pakistan. The CPEC is one of the largest projects, which was imagined by China and actualized by Pakistan. Eventually, the local communities of both countries will gain benefits (Khetran, 2016; Raza et al., 2018). According to past research (Tehsin et al., 2017; Wasim & Siddiqi, 2018), the CPEC is not a name of a single project, but it comprises several projects that include energy, hospitals, schools, railway lines, industrial zones, and transport infrastructure. Chinese and Pakistani officials have affirmed that the CPEC will resolve the problems of Pakistan and that China can enhance its periphery of impact, strengthen its international presence, and have additional securing future routes of oil and businesses (Kanwal et al. 2019a). Almost 80% of China’s global businesses include oil trade based on marine shipping through the state of Malacca, which is under the control of the United States (Shaikh et al., 2016). Malacca State is the weakness of China in case of any problem, which badly affects the Chinese economy (Kanwal et al., 2019b). In addition, this route is approximately 12,500 km long and takes almost 25 to 35 days. Accordingly, China has planned an alternative route with the name “CPEC” to overcome this problem and to avoid any unpleasant circumstance in the future. Chinese policymakers understand that with the development of the CPEC, China will not fully depend on the Malacca State anymore (Shaikh et al., 2016). Nevertheless, only a small number of research scholars (Makhdoom et al., 2018; Raza et al., 2018) have investigated the influence of CPEC projects on the economic development of Pakistan, as well as its impact on the living standards of local residents (Kanwal et al., 2019b). Given the limited studies and policy guidelines related to the CPEC, exploring local community benefits and...
suggesting some policy guidelines related to the development of CPEC projects are interesting.

Over the past couple of years, the reaction of local communities toward project development has attracted scholarly attention, resulting in considerable research on this area (Kanwal et al., 2019b; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Yoon et al., 2001). Specifically, Kanwal et al. (2019b) suggested that the personal benefit factors of host citizens are key elements for supporting CPEC projects. Yoon et al. (2001) conducted research on tourism and indicated that the support of local residents is related to benefits. L. Ali et al. (2018a) investigated the influence of development of transport infrastructure projects under the CPEC on local residence education, and found that road and transport infrastructure has a significant effect on education. In addition, policymakers commonly utilize the results of regional community behavior in evaluating community necessities, acceptance, and lifestyle (Kanwal et al., 2019b). The proliferation of these studies implies the significance of understanding the local communities’ benefits and opinion toward the development of projects. It is a fact when local citizens gain benefits from the development of CPEC projects and when they perceive it positively, trust the policies related to the CPEC, and provide further support. Therefore, the attitudes of the host community regarding the development of CPEC projects and the regional community benefit-based approaches are being widely adopted in the existing study.

The existing study aims to evaluate the benefits and perceptions of the local community associated with CPEC projects through an online survey conducted in Pakistan. On the basis of social exchange theory (SET), the authors investigated the support for CPEC projects in Pakistan. In the background of the CPEC, SET explains that if Pakistani people perceive that the CPEC is useful for the whole area, then they will provide additional support. Conversely, if the community understands that the CPEC is not beneficial for them, then they will not contribute in the development process. According to the officials of China and Pakistan, CPEC projects will benefit China and Pakistan (F. H. Ali & Qazi, 2018). Previous studies related to the CPEC have suggested that the CPEC will benefit not only China and Pakistan but also other countries such as India, Iran, Afghanistan, Europe, and Africa (Y. Ali et al., 2018b). Specifically, the CPEC will provide employment, business, and economic opportunities for local Pakistani and Chinese communities (Kanwal et al., 2019d). It will also increase the competitiveness rate in the global market and boost the economy of a whole region through industrialization. Numerous scholars have investigated the fundamental factors exchanged by the host community, including education, accessibility, income, and economic factors (Kanwal et al., 2019b; Yoon et al., 2001). In sum, the native people are likely to support CPEC projects if they receive benefits from them; otherwise, they oppose. This research study has several practical implications for the policymakers and officials of the CPEC. First, to date, the Pakistani local residents’ perception associated to CPEC development has not been examined in previous studies. In response to these shortcomings, first, the existing study is based on local residents’ benefits and CPEC support in Pakistan. Second, this study analyzes the influence of the development of CPEC plans including energy projects, education institutes, and economic opportunities for the host community, and how these projects are favorable for the entire area. Third, the results of this study could also promote the awareness of local residents regarding CPEC projects and provide guidance for the policymakers of the CPEC in designing policies in accordance with the perception of local residents. From a theoretical perspective, this study provides advance information and knowledge related to CPEC projects. For practical contributions, the study results highlight the perceptions of local residents for policymakers. In addition, study results provide some information for foreign and local investors to invest and develop a competitive business environment. Therefore, on the basis of past literature and review papers, the authors propose a research framework, which reveals the host community’s observations and benefits associated with the CPEC.

The current article is systematized as follows: The section “Theoretical Background and Literature Review” illuminates the theoretical background and review of past relevant literature, section “Research Procedure” presents the hypothesis development, section “Data Analysis” explains the research methods, sections “Hypothesis Testing” and “Discussions, Implications, Limitation” show the results of data analysis, and section “Conclusion” summarizes the results with discussions, limitations, and implications.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

SET

SET extensively investigates the attitudes of the local citizens (Woo et al., 2015). SET also specifies a theoretical model for understanding the conversation of assets between individuals and groups (Ap, 1992). In addition, SET suggests that an individual would respond to another individual when he or she gains benefits from others (Blau, 2017). On the basis of this theory, the local people are likely to participate in projects if they perceive that they are likely to receive certain profits.

SET has been widely used by the local community in conducting attitude-based studies (Lindberg & Johnson, 1997; Perdue et al., 1990; Yoon, 1998). Specifically, Yoon (1998) used SET to investigate the impact of tourism on the living standards of the local community. Perdue et al. (1990) also employed SET to explore the local community support and restriction on tourism development. In the current study, we used SET to investigate the local community’s benefits and reactions toward the development of the CPEC. In the context
of the CPEC, SET affirms that the regional community is likely to contribute toward CPEC projects as long as they gain benefits from them. Similarly, with SET, the common conclusion is that the host community will participate and support the development of the CPEC if its residents understand the benefits and importance of the CPEC in the great interest of the community and its development.

**China–Pakistan Relationship**

For almost six decades, Pakistan had friendly relations with China, and they are termed as iron brothers within the local Chinese society. Pakistan–China friendship has a long history of mutual coordination on a certain principle, which includes tourism, trade, economic defense, and education (Jacob, 2018), and their mutual coordination has benefited them both. The Chinese government has generously supported Pakistan in economic, technology, education, and nuclear programs. Pakistan has started its nuclear program with the assistance of China when the United States forcefully sanctioned Pakistan. Accordingly, China has provided full support to Pakistan (Kroenig, 2009), and this cooperation has resulted in their close ties. The CPEC has then emerged due to their long and reliable relationship. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in April 2015, and he stated, “This will be my first visit to Pakistan, but I feel as if I am going to visit the home of my own brother” (Tharoor, 2015). Recently, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan visited China on November 25, 2018. He met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other officials. The officials of both states decided to further strengthen Pakistan and China relations in all the sectors as both countries are good neighbors, iron brothers, friends, and have trusted relations.

Pakistan and China enjoy their friendly relations, and the CPEC is one of the projects that makes them work more closely with each other. However, that self-interest is the primary motivation behind these mega projects cannot be ignored. The current research aims to ascertain the benefits of CPEC projects from the perspectives of local Pakistani citizens.

**CPEC Projects**

The Chinese government began a project named the “One Belt One Road” (OBOR) initiative in 2013, and the CPEC is part of this leading project (Kanwal et al., 2019e). OBOR is considered a mega project because it links almost 60 countries (Yu & Chang, 2018). Moreover, the CPEC is a leading plan of China, which is an essential part of the OBOR initiative. The CPEC is the most important and “economic game-changer” project of Pakistan. The CPEC was officially launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Pakistan in April 2015 with a total cost of US$46 billion (Ahmed et al., 2017; S. Ali, 2015; L. Ali et al., 2018a). The CPEC links Pakistan and China through Gwadar Port, Balochistan Province, Pakistan with China’s western region, Kashgar, and Xinjiang Province. Currently, 21 energy projects, four transport infrastructures, and eight different projects in Gwadar are under consideration (Haq & Farooq, 2016). This mega plan activity is the highest beneficial opening for Pakistan and China to increase their economic development and businesses and to improve the living standard of their local citizens (L. Ali et al., 2018a).

The main theme of this game-changer project is to bring economic development and to expand the market production of China in every nook and cranny of the world (Ahmed et al., 2017). However, it will also become one of the beneficial factors for Pakistan to bring industrial development and overcome economic crises because the economy of Pakistan is a key factor to be stable to ease the internal crisis (L. Ali et al., 2016).

**Local Citizens Benefit and Support for CPEC Development**

Local community support is mandatory for the successful implementation and operation of CPEC projects. If local citizens have positive perspectives toward the development of the CPEC, then they will provide support and keenness to contribute to the development phases. However, the local residents’ support changes with the benefit. According to government officials, CPEC projects are beneficial not only for the economy of Pakistan but also for its local people. Previous scholars have claimed that the benefits of the CPEC will significantly be shifted to Pakistani citizens (Shaikh et al., 2016). Jalil Abbas Jilani, a Pakistani ambassador, has addressed that CPEC projects not only benefit Pakistani citizens but also change the fortune of the whole region (Makhdoom et al., 2018) because the economic condition of Pakistan will reach its peak and be resolved for sustainable development through development of the CPEC. The CPEC comprises several industrial projects that are constructive for the economy of local citizens. It also has various electric power plans that will enhance Pakistan’s industrial projects followed by the overall enhancement of the economic environments (Idrees, 2015; Xie et al., 2015). Furthermore, the CPEC will provide a fully functional Gwadar Port that will increase the geopolitical importance of the region and trade through sea routes. All these directions will be positive and favorable to local citizens once the CPEC projects are completed.

CPEC projects appear highly beneficial for the Pakistani community in all facets due to potential advantages. Similar to the findings of Makhdoom et al. (2018), the CPEC not only is the name of a business route between Pakistan and China but also is an entire set of industrial, education, economic, and infrastructure development projects. CPEC projects are broadly categorized into three major projects, namely, Gwadar Port, road transportation infrastructure, and
energy sector development. Scholars have reported that the CPEC is a game-changer project for Pakistan and that it has the potential to increase the lowest economic state of Pakistan and generate thousands of new employment opportunities for the Pakistani community (Rana, 2016).

Considerable research and several government officials have considered CPEC projects to be beneficial for Pakistan and China as they provide an easy, safe, short, and reliable access to the former country in the Arabian Sea through Gwadar Port (Kanwal et al., 2020). Some CPEC projects have entered into the completion stage, some have already been completed, and some are still being developed on a fast track. These projects generate business and job opportunities for local residents. According to the estimation of CPEC projects, the CPEC will change the future of the Pakistani local community by increasing accessibility, economic opportunities, transport infrastructure, industrial zones, and business opportunities in Pakistan (Qureshi, 2015). The present study empirically investigates the attitudes and benefits of local Pakistani citizens and their support for the development of the CPEC.

**Hypothesis Development**

**Local Citizens’ Benefits, Support for CPEC Development**

Pakistan is facing an energy crisis, and CPEC energy projects will solve such a problem (Xie et al., 2015). Specifically, the CPEC will help remove poverty and grow the economy by offering a suitable setup and easy access to numerous facilities of life, that is, quality of education, health, access to city markets, and banking with reasonable fare rates. CPEC projects in Pakistan are already progressing, and its economy is gradually increasing in several directions.

Perceived economic benefit is defined as change, which influences society and may change the living standard of an individual or a group of individuals (Kanwal et al., 2019b). CPEC will increase the economy of the local community by providing numerous jobs and business opportunities (L. Ali et al., 2016). Specifically, the outcome of infrastructure development is based on the perceived economic evolutions of communities (Tehsin et al., 2017). However, considering the host community as the most essential element of development, several developed countries have ensured that country improvement comes from the development of the public (L. Ali et al., 2018a). The CPEC would be able to resolve the economic crisis of Pakistan, and the income of local citizens is expected to increase (Ibrar et al., 2019; Kousar et al., 2018). Several commentators have reported that the CPEC would be a game changer and would make Pakistan economically strong (Tehsin et al., 2017), the direct impact that would appear in the income of local citizens.

Generally, the economic condition of people is the main cause, which will change the attitudes of local people. A previous study has confirmed that the economic growth of citizens is the main reason to support a project (Islam et al., 2019; Ko & Stewart, 2002) if it economically benefits the local citizens. Considerable support for a project comes from the local community. According to scholars, CPEC projects are economically beneficial for the citizens (Makhdoom et al., 2018; Tehsin et al., 2017). For instance, they increase agricultural productivity, promote trade opportunities, and help local people establish small businesses, such as workshops, hotels, and petrol pumps along the CPEC route.

Another economic expert has proposed that the CPEC will enhance the economy of local people as the CPEC generates large-scale and local businesses. In addition, scholars have assumed that the local community of Pakistan will support the development of CPEC projects and that they are willing to gain opportunities from the CPEC (Hussain, 2019; Ibrar et al., 2018; Kanwal et al., 2019a). More the promotions of the economic, income, and business opportunities for the regional community, more the cooperation from the local community will be. Therefore, we can say that the impact of CPEC projects on perceived economic benefit will enhance income and can change the attitudes of local citizens for the development of CPEC projects. On the basis of literature support, we can outline the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1a (H1a):** Perceived economic benefits are significantly related to the perceived income of the local community.

**Hypothesis 1b (H1b):** Perceived economic benefits are significantly associated with the support of CPEC development.

Due to the low literacy rate and the poor economic conditions of the local community, the poverty rate is high in Pakistan. The Pakistani government has implemented different approaches to overcome this problem. One of the best approaches to strengthen the income of the local community and decrease poverty in Pakistan could be to enhance the approach to education for the populace. In line with the findings of previous research, higher education acts as a positive role in the future income of individuals and increases the chances to move into a high-income group (Kudasheva et al., 2015). Several scholars have reported that the standard of education is an essential element of individual income (Kanwal et al., 2019b; Makhdoom et al., 2018) because high-quality education enhances the capability of human beings in gaining skills and knowledge and enhances the quality of life (Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Kudasheva et al., 2015). Moreover, education is one of the key elements, which decreases inequality in humanity and convalesces the living standard of local people (Kudasheva et al., 2015). Recently, the relationship between the education of people and income has been investigated by many scholars (Friedman, 2005; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Melguizo et al., 2016). Specifically, Kim
and Sherraden (2011) argued that future income is based on children’s education. Melguizo et al. (2016) also reported the significant connection between education and income and conversely predicated that enhancement in the education of people boosts their income. CPEC projects also contain high-quality education and professional skill development institutes, which will yield highly skilled professionals and raise the education level of individuals (Kanwal et al., 2019a).

For the successful implementation of CPEC projects, scholars have proposed that the education of a local community is to be made essential because local residents are the major stakeholders of the CPEC (Hussain, 2019; Iqbal, 2017; Islam et al., 2017; Kanwal et al. 2019a). Furthermore, Li et al. (2015) argued that the education of the local community is a fundamental factor for the success of any project. Moreover, education provides awareness in local people to understand and participate efficiently in the development of the CPEC (Smith, 2001). For the support and development of CPEC projects, the Pakistani community must understand the importance of CPEC projects for Pakistan. Therefore, we argue that the CPEC will develop education institutes, and the local community will gain benefits.

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): The education of the local community is significantly related to the income of local citizens.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): The education of the local community is positively related to the support for CPEC development.

CPEC projects, such as transport infrastructure, provide easy and quick access to elementary services of life, such as health, education, market, and banking (Barrios, 2008). The infrastructural development under CPEC projects should focus on villages, small cities, and remote areas, through which homegrown products of Pakistan such as agriculture products should be promoted (Tehsin et al., 2017). The local residents should easily target a specific Chinese market. For instance, Gilgit Baltistan is a famous region of Pakistan due to several fruit products, and with the CPEC development, local community directly sells fresh fruits to Chinese consumers at reasonable prices. Specifically, direct access to big cities will establish economical and fast transportation, which causes considerable income opportunities for the local community. Furthermore, infrastructure development will decrease the transportation cost and time and provide easy access to the market that enhances the income of the local community (Agbelie, 2014; Islam et al., 2020). In addition, the majority of the population of Pakistan belongs to the agriculture sector (Uddin et al., 2016). The CPEC will present an easy and direct approach to a market where local farmers will advertise their commodities and will be able to purchase prime quality seeds and fertilizer, which will then enhance crop yield and profit (Gkritza et al., 2008). For instance, the easy entry of farmers to a large-scale market with a low shipping cost and the selling of goods at higher prices in the global market cause a substantial increase in revenue (Jacoby, 2000). Better accessibility of road and transport makes the whole area more beautiful, which develops resource distribution for the region.

Furthermore, the CPEC will provide access to high-quality health centers, markets, education facilities, and connectivity to several tourist places. Specifically, the CPEC will offer an easy approach to education institutes, city markets, and hospitals in various villages and remotely scattered regions of Pakistan. These elements contribute positively toward the development of Pakistani people and will lead toward the development of and support for CPEC projects. Therefore, when a local community receives benefits from CPEC projects, they are likely to have positive attitudes toward, and be motivated to support, the development of CPEC projects. On the basis of literature support, we posit the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a (H3a): Perceived accessibility is significantly related to the perceived income of the local community.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b): Perceived accessibility is significantly related to the support for CPEC development.

One of the most important aspects of local residents associated with CPEC projects is the generation of several employment opportunities. Presently, the employment ratio in Pakistan is unstable, and the Pakistani government is making policies to spend in several sectors of the economy to generate a requirement for people to overcome the employment problem. Previous research has shown that most employment opportunities will take place for Pakistani local residents rather than residents from China or any other country (Rehmani et al., 2020; Tong, 2015). According to Chinese and Pakistani officials, CPEC projects will create thousands of employment opportunities for Pakistani citizens, which will assist in gripping the problem of unemployment in Pakistan, and after hiring, people were trained, so that they were capable of the utmost operation locally (Kanwal et al., 2019a). The government argued that in June 2017, approximately 30,000 Pakistani people were hired in different CPEC plans (Kousar et al., 2018).

Furthermore, scholars have reported that individual income is related to employment (Oreopoulos et al., 2008). Specifically, Page et al. (2007) investigated the link between job opportunities and individual income, and reported that employment has a significant effect on income. The CPEC will provide job opportunities for Pakistani people in all sectors. On the basis of the literature, we can assume that the CPEC would have a significant impact on the local community via job opportunities, infrastructure, and businesses. When local people receive several advantages through the development of CPEC projects, they will understand the
The importance of the CPEC and will have positive attitudes toward the projects. Thus, the study proposed the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 4a (H4a):** Perceived employment is significantly related to the perceived income of the local community.

**Hypothesis 4b (H4b):** Perceived employment is significantly related to the support for CPEC development.

### Local Community Income and Support for CPEC Development

The link between income and support from the host community has been confirmed in previous research. The primary success of any project means that the general public should be benefited (L. Ali et al., 2018a; Kanwal et al., 2019c; Smith, 2001); more the benefit for the local community, greater the support from local people. The theoretical literature in several directions has recommended that the attitude of a local community can change depending on the benefits they obtain, such as improvement in income, economy, and employment opportunities (L. Ali et al., 2018a; Garcia et al., 2015; Woo et al., 2015). Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) investigated the link between the attitude of local people and tourism development, and discovered the positive relationship between improvement in income and support from local residents. Similarly, McMinn (1998) found that low-income people support tourism more compared with high-income ones. CPEC projects will generate millions of opportunities for the local community, including businesses and employment, which will enhance their income, where low-income people can easily enhance their income by doing small- or large-scale businesses. For instance, a mostly local community of Gwadar Port, Baluchistan Province, belongs to the fisheries profession, and they will have the opportunity to sell their products in the global market (Idrees, 2015). Furthermore, with the development of Gwadar Port, local people can open rest houses, restaurants, shops, and workshops, which can enhance their household income.

According to a policymaker, the CPEC will generate millions of opportunities, such as economic ones, thereby decreasing unemployment and reducing the poverty ratio, maximizing the income, and improving the living standard of the local community (Kanwal et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2015). This profit will motivate the regional community to support the CPEC plans. In addition, CPEC projects will provide geographic connectivity of different regions, and the local community of Pakistan will also have business opportunities within the country (A. Ali et al., 2019; Haq & Farooq, 2016), resulting in an increase in household income. The general conclusion is that when local people perceive that a CPEC project is beneficial for their future, they are likely to support and participate in the development of it. With literature support, the study can argue that the individual of the area welcomes and supports the CPEC project; hence, we can propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5 (H5):** Perceived income is positively related to the support for CPEC development.

### Research Procedure

#### Data Collection Procedure

A survey method, rather than other methods such as interviews and experiments, was used for this study because surveys help determine associations between different factors for an individual respondent at the point in time (Latif et al., 2019; Newsted et al., 1998; Pitafi et al., 2018). The target respondents of this study are local Pakistani citizens all over Pakistan. Three hundred thirty five samples aged >8 years were gathered from different parts of Pakistan. CPEC development is already in progress all over Pakistan; thus, the authors decide to gather data from all over the country. However, due to the dearth of knowledge and low education ratio in Pakistan, the authors only concentrated on educated people and targeted the big cities of the country, including Karachi, Lahore, Sukkur, Multan, Quetta, and Peshawar. Some respondents included in the study were also employed in several CPEC projects. For instance, the authors collected samples from Baluchistan Province and targeted Gwadar Port employees. The authors collected data from the employees of the Thar coal project in Sindh. To check the reliability, clarity, the understanding of the participants, and the validity of the questionnaire, three economic and management professors assessed and improved the first questionnaire as they have vast experience in survey design. Thereafter, the authors conducted a pilot study on 70 samples during November 2018 to December 2018, and the results were found to be of adequate level. The final data analysis did not include the respondents of the pilot study.

We used online survey website to collect data from all over Pakistan. As the respondents were living in different scattered areas of Pakistan, we collected data online. To increase the response rate, we sent reminder email and used social media. In total, we received 330 responses within a period of 8 weeks. As the data were collected online, there is no way of missing any missing data in the data set. Table 1 indicates the sample information.

### Measures

The proposed research model consisted of six variables. The items used in this study were adjusted from the earlier literature that has been well known in their particular areas. The wording of the questionnaire was changed according to the study purpose. Moreover, each instrument was computed by a 5-point Likert-type scale (Khan et al., 2019; Pitafi et al., 2018). The research model comprised of the following
variables: support for CPEC development, perceived income, perceive economic benefit, perceived education, perceived accessibility, and perceived employment. The item of support for the CPEC consisted of five items and were taken from the studies L. Ali et al. (2018a), Kanwal et al. (2019a), and Yoon et al. (2001). The item of perceived income contained nine items, and the items were used by L. Ali et al. (2018a) and Kanwal et al. (2019a). Furthermore, the item of perceived economic benefit consisted of five items, and the scale was taken by L. Ali et al. (2018a) and Kanwal et al. (2019a). The item of education consisted of eight items, and the scale was taken by Goo et al. (2000) and Šegota et al. (2017). In addition, the item of perceived accessibility contained nine items, and the scale was adopted by McGehee and Andereck (2004) and Stylidis et al. (2014). The item of perceived employment contained six items, and the scale was measured by McGehee and Andereck (2004), Quinn (1999), Stylidis et al. (2014), and Woo et al. (2015). All the measurement items are shown in Appendix A.

**Data Analysis**

**Assessment of Common Method Variance (CMV)**

The data were gathered from a single source, and we tested the CMV using multiple methods (Latif et al., 2020; Pitafi et al., 2020; Podsakoff et al., 2012). First, “Harman’s single-factor” approach was used on all the items. In the analysis, 16 factors were produced with eigenvalues >1.0 and having 86.80% of the variance. The first factor explains only “20.72% of the variance,” which is lower than 50%. Second, a common latent factor (CLF) method was used to analyze the common method bias (Pitafi et al., 2019; Podsakoff et al., 2012). According to this procedure, we initially computed the standard regression weights of all the constructs using the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Subsequently, a CLF is used in the research framework, and we reanalyzed the CFA. Lastly, the regression values of both results were compared, and no dominant value was found from the findings. These finding confirmed that the one-factor model threshold was worse than the measurement model. Therefore, our analysis findings corroborated that the CMV did not critically affect the results.

**Model Fit**

The fit of the research framework was examined to illuminate the organization of the whole set of relations as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). The findings confirmed that the measurement model and data set were in the given range ($\chi^2 = 1,670.21$, $df = 1,000$, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.04, standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] = 0.04, comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.95, normed fit index [NFI] = 0.91, and nonnormed fit index [NNFI] = 0.95). Therefore, the general model fit values specify that this model is suitable.

**Validity and Reliability**

In this study, we calculated the composite reliability (CR), validity, and reliability using different procedures. Table 3 shows that the loading of all the items is >.60 as mentioned by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The authors also calculated Cronbach’s alpha (CA), the CR of constructs, and the average variance extracted (AVE) to confirm the convergent validity. Table 2 specifies that CA values are .88 to .92, which are higher than .70 as suggested by Hinkin (1998). The CR values of .87 to .97 were also >.70 as suggested by Nunnally (1978), and Pitafi et al. (2018). The AVE values of .53 to .83 were >.50 as mentioned by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Wei et al. (2020) and greater than the maximum shared variance (MSV). In addition, the average shared variance (ASV) values were less than the MSV (Table 2). All findings ensured that the proposed framework has acceptable convergent validity. In addition, Table 3 specifies that the square roots of the AVEs for each variable were greater than the intercorrelations among constructs, which authenticated the discriminant validity of the study.

Furthermore, we examined the item and cross loadings of each item. Table 4 indicates that all items were properly loaded onto their corresponding constructs. Therefore, the proposed model held acceptable convergent and discriminant validity and reliability.

### Table 1. Demographic Information of the Samples.

|                | N   | Percentage |
|----------------|-----|------------|
| Gender         |     |            |
| Male           | 210 | 62.7       |
| Female         | 125 | 37.3       |
| Age            |     |            |
| 21–30 years old| 221 | 66.0       |
| 31–40 years old| 104 | 31.0       |
| 41–50 years old| 10  | 3.0        |
| Education      |     |            |
| Bachelor/undergraduate | 76   | 22.7 |
| Masters/graduate | 206 | 61.5 |
| Doctoral degree | 53  | 15.8 |
| Province       |     |            |
| Sindh          | 120 | 35.8       |
| Punjab         | 64  | 19.1       |
| KPK            | 55  | 11.3       |
| Baluchistan    | 38  | 16.4       |
| Gilat          | 30  | 9.0        |
| Islamabad      | 28  | 8.4        |
| Tenure         |     |            |
| <1 year        | 57  | 17.0       |
| 1–3 years      | 91  | 27.2       |
| 3–5 years      | 94  | 28.0       |
| >5 years       | 94  | 28.1       |

KPK = Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
Table 2. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

| Variable name         | Items | CA  | CR  | AVE | MSV | ASV |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Perceived economic benefit | 5     | .94 | .95 | .79 | .02 | .01 |
| Perceived education   | 8     | .97 | .97 | .83 | .02 | .01 |
| Perceived accessibility | 9    | .95 | .95 | .67 | .09 | .02 |
| Perceived employment  | 6     | .87 | .87 | .54 | .07 | .02 |
| Perceived income      | 9     | .91 | .91 | .53 | .09 | .04 |
| Support for CPEC      | 5     | .93 | .93 | .72 | .04 | .02 |

Note. Discriminant validity: AVE > MSV. CA = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted, MSV = maximum shared variance, ASV = average shared variance; CPEC = China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations.

| Variable                  | M    | SD   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
|---------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Perceived economic benefit | 2.44 | .94  | .88 | .96 | .99 | .93 | .91 | .89 | .87 | .85 | .83 | .81 | .79 |
| 2. Perceived education    | 3.44 | 1.24 | -0.01 | .73 | .91 | .95 | .91 | .73 | .72 | .70 | .69 | .67 | .65 |
| 3. Perceived accessibility | 4.28 | 0.74 | -0.06 | .81 | .92 | .94 | .92 | .75 | .73 | .71 | .70 | .68 | .66 |
| 4. Perceived employment   | 4.09 | 0.79 | -0.08 | .02 | .11 | .73 | .69 | .52 | .50 | .48 | .47 | .46 | .44 |
| 5. Perceived income       | 4.15 | 0.81 | -0.02 | .14 | .29 | .25 | .72 | .50 | .48 | .46 | .44 | .42 | .40 |
| 6. Support for CPEC       | 4.08 | 0.66 | .13 | .10 | .07 | .18 | .13 | .84 | .79 | .76 | .74 | .72 | .70 |
| 7. Province               | NA   | NA   | .08 | .01 | -0.04 | .04 | .19 | .0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 8. Tenure                 | NA   | NA   | -0.11 | .03 | -0.16 | -0.03 | .09 | .01 | .02 | .01 | .02 | .02 | .02 |
| 9. Education              | NA   | NA   | -0.03 | .07 | -0.02 | -0.03 | .03 | -0.01 | .04 | .27 | NA | NA | NA |
| 10. Age                   | NA   | NA   | .06 | .05 | -0.00 | -0.03 | .21 | .04 | .05 | .02 | .06 | NA | NA |
| 11. Gender                | NA   | NA   | .02 | -.07 | -0.09 | -21 | -38 | -0.03 | -0.09 | .02 | .03 | .02 | NA |

Note. The mean is assessed based on average factor scores; standard deviation (and correlations are from the second-order CFA output. The diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; CPEC = China–Pakistan Economic Corridor; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis; AVE = average variance extracted.

Structural Model

Figure 1 shows the structural equation results. The analysis results indicated that perceived education, perceived accessibility, and perceived employment have a positive effect on income, $\beta = .14, p < .05$; $\beta = .29, p < .01$; and $\beta = .23, p < .01$, respectively, which support H2a, H3a, and H4a. However, the perceived economic benefit shows the insignificant relation with income ($\beta = .05, p > .05$); thus, H1a is unsupported. The perceived economic benefit, perceived education, and perceived employment have a significant relation with support for CPEC development with $\beta = .10, p < .05$; $\beta = .10, p < .05$; and $\beta = .14, p < .05$, respectively, which support H1b, H2b, and H4b. The findings showed the insignificant relationship of perceived accessibility with support for CPEC development ($\beta = .04, p > .05$); hence, H3b is rejected. Income is also positively related to support for CPEC development ($\beta = .13, p < .05$), which supports H5. In sum, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, H3b, H4b, and H5 are supported, and H1a and H3b are rejected.

Hypothesis Testing

The data were examined with standard regression weights and $p$ value using AMOS. All the hypotheses were assessed corresponding to the model of study. The results showed that H1a is rejected (Table 5). Perceived economic benefit shows an insignificant effect on income with $\beta = .05, t = 1.34, p > .05$. H1b is supported by results with $\beta = .10, t = 2.69, p < .05$, which shows that perceived economic benefit is significantly related to the support for CPEC development. Furthermore, the findings verified that perceived education is significantly related to the perceived income ($\beta = .14, t = 2.69, p < .01$) and support for CPEC development ($\beta = .10, t = 2.05, p < .05$). They also validated that H2a and H2b are both supported. Perceived accessibility is significantly related to income ($\beta = .29, t = 5.37, p < .01$), and H3a is supported. However, the perceived accessibility has an insignificant effect on support for CPEC development with $\beta = .04, t = 0.81, p > .05$, and H3b is rejected. H4a and H4b are supported by results with $\beta = .23, t = 4.54, p < .01$ and $\beta = .14, t = 3.17, p < .05$, respectively, which means that perceived employment is positively associated with the income and support for CPEC development. Finally, H5 suggests that perceived income is significantly related to the support for CPEC development with $\beta = .13$, $t = 2.53, p < .05$. Table 5 shows the outcomes of all the tested hypotheses.
Discussions, Implications, Limitation

Discussions

The basic theme of the research is to predict the common people’s benefits and support for the CPEC plans in Pakistan. The fundamental elements that are recognized to affect the host community’s attitude toward CPEC development were analyzed and hypothesized. On the basis of the previous literature, a model for CPEC support was proposed, using data obtained from across all provinces of Pakistan including Islamabad. The findings of the research supported the maximum suggested hypothesis, illustrating the support of the Pakistani community for the development of the CPEC. The results also showed the significant relationship between

| Table 4. Item Loadings and Cross Loadings. |
|--------------------------------------------|
| Constructs                    | Items | PA   | PED  | PINC | PE   | CPEC  | PEM  |
|--------------------------------------------|
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA01  | .878 | .041 | -.025| .081 | -.024 | .007 |
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA02  | .870 | -.007| .034 | -.052| .044  | -.042|
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA03  | .870 | -.053| .025 | -.031| .069  | -.026|
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA04  | .869 | .004 | -.002| .025 | -.014 | -.010|
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA05  | .836 | .012 | .047 | .022 | -.029 | .002 |
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA06  | .813 | .026 | -.037| .002 | -.038 | .038 |
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA06  | .785 | .067 | -.002| .046 | -.037 | .026 |
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA07  | .777 | .010 | -.020| -.011| -.002 | .046 |
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA08  | .773 | -.049| -.032| -.065| .077  | -.033|
| Perceived accessibility                  | PA09  | .705 | -.049| -.034| -.018| -.047 | -.006|
| Perceived education                      | PED01 | -.017| .984 | .016 | .025 | -.013 | .007 |
| Perceived education                      | PED02 | -.013| .979 | -.015| .007 | .008  | .027 |
| Perceived education                      | PED03 | .003 | .961 | .010 | .002 | -.013 | .006 |
| Perceived education                      | PED04 | -.014| .961 | .047 | .028 | -.009 | -.005|
| Perceived education                      | PED05 | -.029| .947 | .028 | .032 | .008  | -.049|
| Perceived education                      | PED06 | -.001| .926 | .052 | .013 | .003  | .004 |
| Perceived education                      | PED07 | .016 | .846 | -.088| -.031| .021  | -.036|
| Perceived education                      | PED08 | .071 | .607 | -.079| -.169| .044  | .039 |
| Perceived income                         | PINC01| -.074| -0.44| .835 | -.030| .025  | -.077|
| Perceived income                         | PINC02| -.074| .001 | .786 | -.063| -.036 | .069 |
| Perceived income                         | PINC03| -.074| .001 | .772 | -.032| -.004 | -.008|
| Perceived income                         | PINC04| .057 | -.038| .732 | -.032| -.013 | -.005|
| Perceived income                         | PINC05| .063 | -.110| .726 | -.009| .001  | -.037|
| Perceived income                         | PINC06| .031 | .004 | .703 | .046 | .084  | -.061|
| Perceived income                         | PINC07| .022 | .056 | .686 | .084 | -.034 | .085 |
| Perceived income                         | PINC08| .018 | .091 | .666 | -.053| -.036 | .056 |
| Perceived income                         | PINC09| .092 | .041 | .655 | .015 | .004  | .008 |
| Perceived economic benefit               | PE01  | .017 | -.029| .012 | .925 | .010  | -.012|
| Perceived economic benefit               | PE02  | .023 | -.001| .034 | .913 | .010  | -.034|
| Perceived economic benefit               | PE03  | -.021| -.071| .009 | .882 | .010  | .016 |
| Perceived economic benefit               | PE04  | .034 | .030 | -.063| .860 | -.008 | .069 |
| Perceived economic benefit               | PE05  | -.053| .005 | -.009| .857 | .007  | -.030|
| Support for CPEC                         | CPEC01| -.011| .013 | .015 | -.017| .922  | -.043|
| Support for CPEC                         | CPEC02| -.013| .029 | .006 | .012 | .909  | -.023|
| Support for CPEC                         | CPEC03| -.023| -.036| .025 | .048 | .853  | .067 |
| Support for CPEC                         | CPEC04| .000 | .022 | -.008| -.039| .795  | .036 |
| Support for CPEC                         | CPEC05| .044 | .016 | -.039| .028 | .762  | -.011|
| Perceived employment                     | PEM01 | .003 | -.028| -.094| -.008| .007  | .809 |
| Perceived employment                     | PEM02 | -.008| .007 | -.003| .026 | -.040 | .785 |
| Perceived employment                     | PEM03 | -.059| -.054| .022 | -.045| .086  | .718 |
| Perceived employment                     | PEM04 | -.040| .029 | .034 | .043 | -.035 | .694 |
| Perceived employment                     | PEM05 | .025 | -.037| .090 | -.059| .045  | .694 |
| Perceived employment                     | PEM06 | .085 | .062 | -.019| .046 | -.026 | .683 |

Note. CPEC = China–Pakistan Economic Corridor; PA = perceived accessibility; PED = perceived education; PINC = perceived income; PE = perceived economic benefit; PEM = perceived employment.
perceived economic benefit and support for CPEC development. That is, agreeing to author possibility; thus, H1b is validated. The CPEC will give huge economic benefits to the local community, and it maintains a crucial position in developing the economy of Pakistan. These findings are consistent with the past literature (L. Ali et al., 2016; Asomani-Boateng et al., 2015; Kanwal et al., 2019b) that local community support for any project is associated with benefits. L. Ali et al. (2018a) suggested that CPEC plans, such as road and transportation, connect local small villages with big cities, where local people have the opportunity of having several businesses. Similarly, Kanwal et al. (2019b) also confirmed that support for CPEC plans is associated with local residents’ personal benefits. Surprisingly, the results of this study cannot support H1a. Perceived economic benefit shows an insignificant effect on the income of common people. Furthermore, the impact of the perceived education of local residents on income and that of education on support for CPEC plans also show positive associations, supporting H2a and H2b. The quality and ratio of education will be increased through CPEC projects as there are many education projects that are directly and indirectly related to the CPEC. Several education and professional training institutes have also been constructed under the name of CPEC. CPEC infrastructure, such as roads, will connect small villages with cities where local residents have access to better education. A high education rate provides awareness among residents, and they take this mega project positively.

The study discovered the positive relation between perceived accessibility and perceived income of the host community, and H3a is supported. Perceived accessibility to markets, banks, and education institutes with the development of CPEC projects would be highly convenient and easy. Local residents are able to sell their products in the market, which increases their income. In addition, with the development of CPEC projects, several new business opportunities will be generated, which not only will enhance the local trend of businesses and remove poverty in the region but also will increase the living standard of local people. This result is also similar to that of previous studies (Forkenbrock & Foster, 1990; Sheehan, 2006). However, the link between perceived accessibility and support for the CPEC show an insignificant relation; hence, H3b is rejected.

The findings also showed the significant link between perceived employment and income and support for the CPEC as hypothesized in H4a and H4b, which is consistent with prior studies (Coelli, 2011; Stevenson, 2018). A representative of the CPEC has claimed that thousands of job opportunities will be created in various CPEC projects for the regional community, which will improve resources of income and lifestyle of the people and will thus motivate the people to support the development of the CPEC more. Finally, study

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Figure 1. Results of structural model.
Note. CPEC = China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.
*p < .05. **p < .01.
results confirmed the significant relationship between the perceived income of local residents and support for CPEC development. Previous studies in different directions also confirmed the same results (Asomani-Boateng et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2017); thus, H5 is also supported.

In sum, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, H4a, H4b, and H5 are validated; however, H1a and H3b were not. Few causes for the unsupported hypotheses are observed. First, data were gathered using Google services, which may affect the understanding of the respondents, and second, data were gathered almost in the capital cities of Pakistan. And, it is expected that local communities living in capital cities are financially better as compared with residents residing in villages. In addition, residents of big cities already have accessibility to education institutes, markets, banking, health centers, and enhanced infrastructure roads and transport as contrasted with residents residing in villages. Possibly a change in questionnaire and community may generate another interesting result. Definitely, this problem should be addressed in future research.

**Implications**

This study has several theoretical and practical implications. For theoretical implications, the current study contributes to SET that local community support related to CPEC projects is related to the interaction session. The findings ensure that the local community understand that CPEC projects are favorable for them in all aspects. For practical implications, the current study provides suggestions to the officials of the CPEC in terms of local community perception. First, the findings of the study increase the knowledge of the common people related to CPEC plans based on considerable evidence and reports. However, CPEC projects are still in the initial stage of development; thus substantial research is required. To fill this research gap, the authors investigated the beneficial factor related to CPEC projects, and the findings imply that local community support is essential for the development of CPEC projects. Yoon et al. (2001) also verified that local community support is connected with benefits.

Finally, the authors also recommend that the officials and policymakers of the CPEC develop confidence of the local community related to CPEC projects as Baloch community and KPK leadership have some uncertainties related to the CPEC route. Policymakers should arrange some public programs, conferences, and talk shows on television media to highlight the benefits of the CPEC. The Pakistani government can also utilize social media tools, such as Facebook, to publicize CPEC advantages among the native community.

**Limitations**

Although the current study has several implications, it is an emerging research area. The authors also indicate some limitations for future research. First, the respondents of the current study reside in capital cities; however, CPEC projects are in progress all over Pakistan. Future scholars are suggested to collect data from the local community, specifically those living along the CPEC route, such as villages and small towns. Second, the current study is only based on the local community of Pakistan; however, local community of Xinjiang Province, China, is also a beneficiary of CPEC projects. Hence, scholars can include the Chinese community as respondents in future. In addition, Xinjiang Province has changed compared with the rest of China in terms of economics, religion, and politics. Its people mainly belong to the agriculture sector, and the CPEC route will be beneficial for the province.

### Table 5. Hypothesis Testing.

| Relationship                                      | Standard coefficient | t value | Result     |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------|------------|
| Perceived economic benefit to Perceived income    | .05                  | 1.34    | Not supported |
| Perceived economic benefit to Support for CPEC    | .10*                 | 2.86    | Supported  |
| Perceived education to Perceived income           | .14*                 | 2.69    | Supported  |
| Perceived education to Support for CPEC           | .10*                 | 2.05    | Supported  |
| Perceived accessibility to Perceived income       | .29**                | 5.37    | Supported  |
| Perceived accessibility to Support for CPEC       | .04                  | 0.81    | Not supported |
| Perceived employment to Perceived income          | .23**                | 4.54    | Supported  |
| Perceived employment to Support for CPEC          | .14*                 | 3.27    | Supported  |
| Perceived income to Support for CPEC              | .13*                 | 2.53    | Supported  |
| Province to Support for CPEC                      | .01                  | 0.92    | Insignificant |
| Tenure to Support for CPEC                        | .00                  | 0.29    | Insignificant |
| Education to Support for CPEC                     | -.07                 | -1.48   | Insignificant |
| Age to Support for CPEC                           | .01                  | 0.78    | Insignificant |
| Gender to Support for CPEC                        | .06                  | 0.31    | Insignificant |

Note. CPEC = China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.

*p < .05. **p < .01.
Third, the respondents of the current study are mixed, such as employees, students, teachers, and other local community individuals. As the CPEC is a mega project, numerous business opportunities are available for the local business community, and scholars are suggested to conduct a study and include only the business communities of both countries. Fourth, the current study only highlights the positive impact of the living standard of CPEC local residents, whereas future research should investigate some negative impact of the CPEC. Fifth, India is a neighbor state of Pakistan and China, and the Indian government is totally against the CPEC (S. Ali, 2015), and scholars should investigate the perception of the Indian local community related to the CPEC.

**Conclusion**

The idea of the current study was to examine the benefits of CPEC projects for the local community, and on the basis of benefits, to analyze the perception of the local community related to the CPEC. Most of the hypotheses are validated by the current data set, showing the local community interest associated with the CPEC. Specifically, the results confirm that local community support is associated with benefits. When a local community gains benefits from CPEC projects, their attitudes will be positive, and they will provide considerable support. Therefore, the current research summarizes that the native community of Pakistan can acquire benefits related to the CPEC.

**Appendix A.**

| No. | Construct       | Items                                                                 | Scale | Likert-type scale |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1   | Perceived economics | 1. CPEC will create more jobs for the area.                           |       | 1–5               |
|     |                  | 2. CPEC will make the economy strong.                                 |       |                   |
|     |                  | 3. CPEC leads to more investment in the area.                         |       |                   |
|     |                  | 4. CPEC will improve living standard of the native people.            |       |                   |
|     |                  | 5. CPEC will create economic profits and businesses for native people |       |                   |
| 2   | Perceived education | 1. CPEC will provide opportunity to get a quality education.         |       | 1–5               |
|     |                  | 2. Access to big cities through CPEC would create greater opportunities for quality education. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 3. Betterment of family income with CPEC is ensured through getting education. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 4. New educational institutions are expected to be established under CPEC. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 5. Road improvement encourages school enrollment especially among females. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 6. The most fundamental societal needs such as education are the main components of CPEC. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 7. CPEC will play a positive role in the improvement and development of education. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 8. CPEC will improve the quality of existing education.               |       |                   |
| 3   | Perceived accessibility | 1. CPEC will increase easy access to quality health care center.   |       | 1–5               |
|     |                  | 2. CPEC will provide the farmer access to the big cities through building chain roads/routes. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 3. CPEC provides access to quality education.                        |       |                   |
|     |                  | 4. CPEC will provide access to the remote area.                      |       |                   |
|     |                  | 5. CPEC will provide access to quality of public services (fire, police, etc.). |       |                   |
|     |                  | 6. CPEC will reduce shipping cost and provide access to a high-quality mode of transportation. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 7. CPEC will reduce travel time to destination.                      |       |                   |
|     |                  | 8. CPEC will provide access to big cities.                           |       |                   |
|     |                  | 9. CPEC will provide good and safe public transportation.            |       |                   |
| 4   | Perceived employment | 1. CPEC will generate employment opportunities in the area.         |       | 1–5               |
|     |                  | 2. CPEC will create chances for a person to find a good job.         |       |                   |
|     |                  | 3. CPEC will generate new business opportunities in the area.        |       |                   |
|     |                  | 4. Employment wages will become better in CPEC jobs.                |       |                   |
|     |                  | 5. CPEC will provide employment and skills for improved livelihood opportunities. |       |                   |
|     |                  | 6. More employment opportunities mean less crime.                    |       |                   |

(continued)
### Appendix A. (continued)

| No. | Construct | Items | Scale | Likert-type scale |
|-----|-----------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| 5   | Perceived income | 9     | 1. CPEC will increase the household income. | 1–5 |
|     |           |       | 2. CPEC will generate revenue in the local economy. | |
|     |           |       | 3. Feeder roads along CPEC will increase the economic activities, which lead to increase in income. | |
|     |           |       | 4. CPEC will improve the economic conditions of the area. | |
|     |           |       | 5. CPEC will improve living standard of the common people. | |
|     |           |       | 6. CPEC will cover current energy crises in the country, which leads to increase in family income. | |
|     |           |       | 7. Long term, investments have positive economic consequences. | |
|     |           |       | 8. CPEC would mitigate poverty across its lines. | |
|     |           |       | 9. CPEC will increase business in the area, which increases the income of local people. | |
| 6   | Support for CPEC development | 5     | 1. CPEC should develop. | 1–5 |
|     |           |       | 2. CPEC attracts more people to the area. | |
|     |           |       | 3. CPEC will play an important role for the area’s economy. | |
|     |           |       | 4. Development of CPEC is vital to the area. | |
|     |           |       | 5. Supporting services development (travel agency, hotel, restaurants, entertainment, etc.). | |

Note. CPEC = China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.

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