



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



The Narratives of Victims of Domestic Violence during The Covid-19 Pandemic

Daniella Mokhtar, Nur Asmira Mohd Saad, Nurul-Azza Abdullah

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i8/14270>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i8/14270

Received: 16 June 2022, **Revised:** 18 July 2022, **Accepted:** 30 July 2022

Published Online: 09 August 2022

In-Text Citation: (Mokhtar et al., 2022)

To Cite this Article: Mokhtar, D., Saad, N. A. M., & Abdullah, N.-A. (2022). The Narratives of Victims of Domestic Violence during The Covid-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(8), 368 – 384.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s)

Published by Human Resource Management Academic Research Society (www.hrmars.com)

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 12, No. 8, 2022, Pg. 368 – 384

<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARBSS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



The Narratives of Victims of Domestic Violence during The Covid-19 Pandemic

Daniella Mokhtar¹, Nur Asmira Mohd Saad², Nurul-Azza Abdullah¹

¹Centre for Research in Psychology and Human Well-being, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, ²Hospital Bukit Mertajam
Email: daniellamokhtar@ukm.edu.my

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world globally since the end of 2019 has indeed give a huge impact on human life which for some was domestic violence. In Malaysia, cases increased even higher after the implementation of Movement Control Order (MCO). Women, especially from the Malay ethnic group in Malaysia have shown the highest statistics involved in domestic violence problems. The objectives of this research are to identify the factors influencing domestic violence during the MCO and explore the steps taken by the victims to escape from domestic violence during the MCO. This study was conducted using a qualitative design by using a phenomenological approach to understand the various experiences of being a victim of domestic violence during the MCO. Informants were recruited via purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was used to explore themes that emerged from the study. Results found that financial problems, the influence of alcohol and drugs as well as the negative attitude of the husband influenced domestic violence where victims suffer either in a form of physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse. Stress management and seeking social support were mostly reported by the informants as means of coping with domestic violence. Further discussions can be found in the article.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Covid-19, Social Support, Stress Management

Introduction

In this era of pandemic, the issue of domestic violence has become a worrying phenomenon in the social community (Arumugam, 2020; Syah, 2020). The weakness of the family institution in society is becoming one of the causes of domestic violence. The issue of domestic violence cases is increasing every day due to the lack of public exposure, especially women, about the rights that they can fight for if they experience this problem of domestic violence (Saadah & Shuhadah, 2018; Nuruaslizawati & Hajar, 2019; Nuruaslizawati et al., 2021). Malaysia was the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to have laws to protect victims of domestic violence (Domestic Violence Act, 1994) On 9 February 2012, was amended for the first time and the second amendment was made on 21 September 2017. The Act came into force on 1 January 2018. It aims to protect women and children from becoming victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a form of violence committed at home. It is a pattern of abusive behaviour used by a partner to gain or maintain power and control over his or her intimate partner. It can be physical, sexual, psychological, social, and even financial. Domestic violence can be described as a violation of human rights especially among women. It limits the rights of thousands of women in our country to life, the right to security, the right to equality and the right to self-development (Maizatul et al., 2008). This domestic violence indirectly harms women physically, sexually, emotionally, and economically. It has become a vicious circle of problems that weaken the institutions of society in our country as it also inherits violence between generations when abuse especially physical abuse is witnessed or experienced by children.

Mariam et.al (2018) also explained that domestic violence is a personal problem that is not discussed openly as this problem mostly occurs in the home environment which should be a place where individuals especially women get basic needs including protection and love. According to the statistics of domestic violence cases of the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) for the period January to October 2020, a total of 4,218 cases have been reported. This case has been recorded as the highest form of violence against women in Malaysia in this decade where a total of 69,978 cases of domestic violence were reported from the period 2000 to 2018. The increase in the number of domestic violence cases reported to the police shows a positive trend because more women are aware of their rights to come forward for help. Reports from abroad indicate this case of domestic violence was a frightening crisis during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This became a growing concern especially in the increase of domestic violence cases reported to hotlines of relevant organizations. According to call statistics from the Women's Protection Organization (WAO), the domestic violence helpline has recorded a 48 per cent increase in calls and inquiries since the beginning of the Movement Control Order in Malaysia in early 2020. Besides that, one of the largest charities defending women's human rights because of domestic violence in Europe has reported an increase of up to 700 percent in the number of calls received each day since the lockdown order was implemented. This suggests a global issue and not just locally.

Many studies have been conducted on the issue of domestic violence in Malaysia. However, many women are still unaware of their rights under Malaysian law. Many women experience problems at work, at home with family or husband and problems with neighbours (Noor, 2012). Yet they let the problem linger or be suppressed just like that, leading to chronic mental problems such as depression. It has become normal for women to be willing to suffer because of being abused instead of opening their chests. According to Rashidah et.al (2013), based on a study conducted by the Women's Development Research Center (KANITA), as many as 8% of every woman and man couple whether married or otherwise who are in Peninsular Malaysia have experienced domestic violence issues in their daily lives.

However, victims tend to choose to remain silent due to their lack of knowledge about the steps they can take in the event of this criminal case against themselves. Ironically, domestic violence can occur regardless of a person's economic status. This includes the economic status of whether the low-income group (B40), middle (M40) or high-income group (T20). When the Movement Control Order (PKP) was first implemented by the government, the main cause of domestic violence was financial problems which had a huge impact and put pressure on the affected groups in terms of income. According to Muhammad et al (2020), the closure of many sectors in the country especially the economy has resulted in psychosocial implications occurring among individuals. The loss of jobs and financial

resources due to the pandemic has affected large number of people in most countries that invites the occurrence of social crises in society.

People from the low-income group (B40) and the middle-income group (M40) who are self-employed or in business and daily wage are among those who have been badly impacted at the time. The situation becomes more serious when the family has many children and dependents. As a result of these financial problems, to some extent may put pressure on the husband or father whose income has been affected (Norzita & Siti, 2014). Conflicts may arise between husband and wife can cause the husband to lose consideration or fights leading to the occurrence of domestic violence. Therefore, this research focuses on the experience of domestic violence victims while exploring factors and impact on victims' well-being during the Movement Control Order period (PKP).

Research Objectives

- Identify the factors influencing domestic violence during the Movement Control Order (MCO).
- Identify the steps taken by victims of domestic violence during the Movement Control Order (MCO)

Literature Review

The Negative Impact of Domestic Violence

Every domestic violence definitely has an impact on the victim either in the short term or long term. Such effects can arise in the form of physical and psychological injuries. Individuals who experience domestic violence will feel inferior, lose self-confidence in meeting with the community because they often receive insults and abuse from abusers. According to Gluck (2019), victims of domestic violence often experience psychological disorders such as eating disorders, difficulty sleeping, digestive problems, chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder. Most female victims have difficulty finding their roles because of the effects of domestic violence itself. They are often seen absent from work due to injuries sustained or see a doctor. This makes it difficult for them to report violent situations to avoid losing their jobs. Victims often feel ashamed and feel they do not deserve to be loved and feel they deserve to be punished. As a result of the feeling of inferiority, the victim will isolate themselves from friends and family and do not want to participate in social interactions between the community (Siti & Elinawati, 2016).

Factors Influencing Domestic Violence

Substance Abuse

Various factors may lead to the occurrence of this issue of domestic violence. According to Nor et al (2016), individuals with less religious education are more likely not to perform responsibilities in the household. The scarcity of knowledge in the household among couples causes husbands not to know their true responsibilities. According to Nur et al (2019), there is evidence to suggest that individuals involved with drug abuse are more likely to commit domestic violence. Various government agencies and organizations have proven that drugs and domestic violence have a correlation with each other. Drug addiction and domestic violence can usually occur simultaneously because drugs will inhibit an individual's cognitive processes which in turn will cause them to be more likely to engage in criminal acts (Isaacs et.al., 2019). Their delusional state when under the influence of drugs will cause them to lose judgment until they do something without thinking about the consequences of the act.

Furthermore, decision making may be impaired when individuals are under the influence of drugs.

Financial Issues

The pressures of life caused by income issues and job loss are among the causes of domestic violence. According to Van Wijk (2012), women living in poverty are easily affected by violence. This is because women who do not have a job are forced to rely primarily on the economic resources of their spouses are more at risk of being abused. This can inevitably invite stress on oneself if it cannot be handled properly (Bassuk et al., 2006; Norazila et al., 2018). The statement is supported by Tan (2020) who states that poverty will make it more difficult for women to escape domestic violence because their financial needs depend entirely on the abuser. So, they have no choice but to provide food and shelter for themselves and their children. Domestic violence is also a barrier to a woman's financial independence (Weston, 2016; Nasrudin, 2016). Thus, creating a new cycle of poverty for children. During the period of this Movement Control Order, there were those who were unfortunate when they were laid off due to the economic downturn that hit the world. This causes them to lose their source of income and rely only on savings funds (Zulaikha, 2020). Whether domestic violence is a major cause of poverty or poverty is a co-existing condition and exacerbates domestic violence, intervention in this issue is crucial.

Financial management is one of the important aspects to maintain household harmony. Nevertheless, poor financial management by spouses has a negative impact on victims especially wives through emotional and physical abuse measures (Masarah et al., 2020). The statement is supported by Fan and Babiarez (2019), who translate individual attitudes towards financial management among households to be able to measure family economic well-being. The current situation today, Malaysia and the rest of the world is now facing the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic where it has had a huge impact on all walks of life, especially the low-income group referred to as the B40 group. The Movement Control Order (PKP) has added to their anxiety over economic issues such as job security and the educational development of their children. In 2020, the unemployment rate is expected to increase as a result of the country's economic uncertainty.

Intention to Report

The main supporting factor for the resolution of domestic violence cases lies in the victims themselves. Many women out there prefer not to report the violence they experience because they may not be sure what they are facing is a form of crime and not a domestic problem and consider such violent behavior as normal human behavior. There are women who feel guilty and deserve to be treated in such a way. According to the Women's Protection Organization (WAO) (2016), the issue of domestic violence occurs a lot due to the attitude of the women themselves who do not want to report incidents that happen to them. There are several reasons why women do not want to report the matter. One of them is the wife is afraid of being seen as a disgrace to the family, being blamed, the husband acting violently in the future, fear of divorce, not sure his complaint gets a good reaction, difficult to prove the violence experienced and fear of the husband being imprisoned for life dependence on the husband (Khadijah et al., 2021).

Besides that, the socialization of a society that emphasizes only one gender has led to a cultural definition of recognizing the role of gender and expectations about the role of gender in male and female relationships. Although it is stipulated that women should be

treated the same as men, but differences in practices or injustice (deviation and inequality) of gender cause violence against women to continue to occur to this day. It occurs because of differences in the roles and rights of women who are placed in a lower status than men. Men's "privileges" seem to make women "goods" to be treated at will, including violence.

According to Ahashim (2020), this aspect forms the belief that men are naturally superior to women where traditional values allow men to 'own' or 'inherit' women. It gives the impression that the family unit is the property of men absolutely and under the control of men entirely. There is also a traditional custom of marriage where women pay dowry or dowry to the men to allow them to marry. Such sociocultural values seem to allow for a justification of violence that is generally accepted as a means of resolving conflicts that occur in a household.

Perpetrator

In terms of the perpetrator as a factor, the personal nature of the perpetrator can lead to violence (Hanafi & Rohani, 2020). For example, people who are depressed due to poverty and unemployment, poor self-control and self-esteem, irrational thinking, sensitive, mental health issues and other uncontrollable traits, low communication skills, drug and alcohol addiction, facing conflicts and questions that get a reaction by way of committing violence to people around them. A man who is brought up in a family where his father is often abusive, will most likely also become an abuser in his household later (Ahashim, 2020). This situation is known as modeling theory in which the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviors of predators have been shaped by the elements and roles played by significant individuals in their social networks, i.e. individuals with whom they grew up in a father-like environment, mothers and immediate family members.

Research Method

Design and Sample

This study was conducted using a qualitative design. Qualitative methods are usually translated into everyday language and are suitable for studies related to the behavior, feelings, and self-image of an individual involving a situation or a process that is difficult to measure through numbers. In this qualitative study, the researcher used a phenomenological approach to understand the various experiences as a victim of domestic violence during the movement control order (PKP) took place. This study would like to look at the problematic issues that arise in more depth. Purposive sampling was used to collect the required data. This purposeful sample form is used to select a sample from the population in accordance with the purpose of a study to be conducted. The selection of informants as subjects should be in line with the requirements of the study. This can increase the value of the information needed in relation to the problematic issues and behaviours of an individual to be studied. Based on the objectives of the study, several informant criteria have been emphasized:

- i. Informants consisted only of victims among women who were married and had freed themselves from violence. This is in line with statistical data released by the Disease Control Division, IPKKM (VIP Sector) from 2019 to 2020 which recorded female victims recorded the highest number compared to male victims.
- ii. Victims that have reported to the Emergency and Trauma Department of a hospital in Penang to receive treatment.
- iii. The selected informants were those aged 18 years and above
- iv. Malaysian Citizen

A total sample size of 17 informants gave consent to participate in the interview. The informant who was obtained was abused and had sought help from a hospital in Penang. A good rapport with the informant is not only important in extracting information in the interview, but also facilitates the preparation of the results of this study.

Research Procedure

The researcher obtained permission from the Emergency and Trauma Department of a hospital in Penang to conduct an interview session to obtain research data. During the interview session, personal information of the informant such as name, address, telephone number was obtained during the first interview in the Emergency Department but was not revealed in the study to maintain anonymity. During the process of contacting the informants, the researchers introduced themselves and gave some explanations related to the purpose of the research. Verbal consent was also obtained when the explanation was given. This includes the emphasis on the confidentiality of the informant's data and personal information in the interview. In this study, the researcher did not set a time limit period that should be conducted during the interview process with the informants. However, overall, the average time of this interview is between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Finally, thematic analysis was carried out to analyse the themes that emerged from the interview.

Research Findings

Objective 1: Factors influencing domestic violence

Based on the interviews, several key themes emerged in line with the objectives of the study that have been targeted. One of the themes is the influence of alcohol and drugs which are the cause of domestic violence against victims. The second theme that emerges is financial problems which are a contributing factor to this issue. And the last theme that emerged is the husband's attitude towards the victim. Domestic violence is often associated with a husband's negative attitude toward the victim.

Influence of Substance Use

The results of the study show that the influence of alcohol and drugs are among the factors that contribute to domestic violence. The use of drugs and alcohol not only has a negative impact on the consumer himself, but it can also contribute to the collapse of a household institution. Below are some of the quotations from the interview.

R1 and R6 stated he had found packages of small packages in their house. Among their quotes are:

"I found a small package of white substance in the toilet.. My hunch..hmm, it looks like drugs".
(Informant 1)

"I found small packages of drugs in the closet."
(Informant 6)

Yet their husbands denied although they were exposed. As a result of the quarrel, the husbands

of R1 and R6 hit the victim. Meanwhile, R10 reported her husband was involved with alcohol to the point of inflicting injury on her if she tried to reprimand her husband for abandoning the

bad habit. This aspect is noted in his quotes:

"Apparently, his financial problems have been caused by alcohol with drugs. My husband is always drunk and when I advise him, I was hit again "
(Informant 10)

As for R17, she has detected the behavior of her husband who will get drunk if he has a problem. Among the victim's quotes are:

"My husband has bad habits. He likes to get drunk when he has a problem. At the same time, he is addicted". (Informant 17)

Also, R9 recounted that the husband admitted to spending money to buy drugs.

"My husband became the song because he was addicted to drugs. My husband admits that he has spent RM100 a day to buy drugs". (Informant 9)

R3 stated that her husband who likes to get drunk is due to the influence of friends. R16's husband dared to bring his friends home to be used as a place for drug addiction and her husband would hit the victim if reprimanded for the act. Among the victims' quotes about their

husband's activities are:

"For me, he is like that because his friends like to get drunk". (Informant 3)

"I was surprised when my husband made his port with his friends to hang out and take the stuff in our house". (Informant 16)

Financial Issues

Many individuals were affected by the Movement Control Order (PKP) that hit the country recently. Most of them have financial problems as a result of losing their jobs. This is because the financial aspect is one of the important requirements in daily life. Therefore, financial problems are seen as a contributing factor to this problem as a result of the interviews that have been conducted.

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, a total of ten victims stated that the problem of domestic violence they experienced was due to financial problems in their household. According to R1 and R4, their husbands had financial problems to the point of being in debt. Among the excerpts from their interviews are:

"I think my husband has a money problem. He borrowed a lot of money here and there with his friends" (Informant 1)

"He owes a lot to friends in his office. When he didn't pay the debt, people quarreled with him. Back home, he let go of his anger at me". (Informant 4)

For R3, R6, R9 and R17, their husbands were each arrested and fired by their superiors causing an argument between the victim and the husband. The matter resulted in the victim being physically abused. The following excerpts describe their experiences:

"He had to be fired. He was always getting caught drunk at work by the boss. No money. Then ask me, but I can't". (Informant 3)

"Saya dapat tau yang suami saya kena buang kerja sebab kanto curi duit kawan-kawan dia"

(Informant 6)

Meanwhile, R2 and R10 saw their husbands having financial problems in business dealings and this put pressure on the husband and in turn acted to release that pressure to the victim. The following is an excerpt from the victim:

“As for his business, I know he has financial problems. I think, as my wife, I should help her solve her financial problems”. (Informant 2)

“ My husband has a lot of financial problems. He has opened a small construction company. But he borrowed a lot of money evenly to support his business”. (Informant 10)

Financial problems also put pressure on R11's husband as he earns a relatively small monthly income. This is because all household expenses are provided by the victim's husband R11. Quoted by the victim:

“My husband told me that he felt depressed because of his low salary and had to bear all the household expenses”. (Informant 11)

Husband's Negative Attitude

This study also emphasizes the negative attitude of the husband that causes abuse towards the victim. There are various forms of negative attitudes of the husband that have been detected in the interviews of this study that are the cause of the victim being abused physically or mentally.

Based on the interviews with 17 victims, the results of the study found that one of the negative attitudes of the husband is the attitude of irritability or hot temper that invites physical and mental abuse of the victim. This can be seen through most informants' statements. According to R1 and R9, their husbands would act to scold the victim for reprimanding their respective husbands for abandoning the bad habit of being addicted to drugs. However, the victim's husband continued to beat the victim until there were injuries to the victim. Among the victim's quotes are:

“He heard me scold him, he kept shouting and that was the first time he hit me. Until the bruises on my face and body.” (Informant 9)

“He kept raging and that was the first time he hit me”. (Informant 1)

As for R1 and R2, their husbands were reported as hot headed especially when inquired about their husband's business. According to R8, her husband would be more irritable when drunk until he broke the door of their house. In addition, R5 told that her husband once broke a flower vase because the victim did not want to follow her husband's wishes. According to R6, her husband once went on a rampage because the victim reprimanded her for praying and injured the victim while she was pregnant. R4 stated that her husband also had a hot-tempered attitude resulting in injury to their child. In addition, R13 recounted that her husband was fired for not being able to control his hot temper while at work. For R16, her husband will be irritable if the victim does not want to follow her husband's wishes. The same thing happened to R17 as her husband would hit the victim even if it was only a minor offense. Here is a quote from the victim about their hot -tempered husband:

“I don't know where I went wrong. Every time I ask, he turns to be a monster”. (Informant 2)

“That day, my son crawled to climb and play with him. He kicked my son until his gums bled”. (Informant 4)

R7, on the other hand, said that her husband showed his hot temper before they got married again and the attitude got worse after they got married until he hit the victim's young child. Among the victim's quotes are:

"I thought after having a child, his temper would disappear. But it just got worse. One day, my son was unwell. Whining day and night. He took my son, then he crushed my son's left thigh until it cracked". (Informant 7)

According to R10, R11 and R12, they also received the same fate as R6 where the victim was beaten while pregnant. Among the victim's quotes are:

"She was willing to hit me when I was pregnant with her child" (Informant 10)

He hit me until I was sitting on the floor. At that time, he didn't know I was pregnant. He dragged me to the door. At that time, I was eight months pregnant".

(Informant 11)

"Every day I have to hit when I'm pregnant with my second child. Don't make a mistake. Must be hand perched on face".

(Informant 12)

The findings of the study also found that there were partners of victims who were jealous to the point of causing harm in the victim's household. This can be seen through R4's experience where her husband locked her in the house because he was jealous of the victim talking to their next-door neighbour. At the same time, R7's husband was so jealous that he thought badly of the victim when the victim expressed his desire to work again. Another victim's experience, R10 was once barred from going out to work and accused of cheating by the victim's husband. Due to being too jealous, R13's husband once threatened to kill the victim if the victim was found to have a relationship with any man. The victim's quotes about their husband's jealous nature are as follows:

"Every time he wanted to go to work, he would lock the front door with the back door. You don't want me to go out anywhere. I talked to the neighbor and he was jealous."

(Informant 4)

"I asked him to go back to work. He thought so badly that he accused me of saying, 'you really want to work because you want to meet another male there'. He said I cheated".

(Informant 7)

"That morning he asked where was I headed. I said I want to go to work, I don't want to just sit at the home. He kept raging. Then he accused me of having an affair with the boss".

(Informant 10)

"He said, 'if I found out there was an affair with another man at the hospital, I would kill him'. He said that".

(Informant 13)

This study also found the attitude of cheating husbands to have sexual relations with other women when they already have a wife and children at home. This was acknowledged by R14 who stated that their marital problems stemmed from the cheating husband's attitude and being willing to spend ringgit for the woman's sake. In addition, R14 also stated that because of the cheating, the victim's husband was willing to neglect his responsibilities towards their child who was ill in hospital. Among the victim's quotes are

"He's crazy about this girl. Spent thousands of dollars on that woman. Neighbors saw, him bringing the woman in and out of our house. He did not care at all about our son seeing all that".

(Informant 14)

In contrast to R15, the victim's husband was still carried away by his single behaviour with the habit of hanging out until late at night. This situation causes the husband to behave negatively towards the victim if the victim reprimands the husband. The following is an excerpt from the victim's interview:

“He doesn't seem to be able to leave his bachelor day. The days of karaoke until three in the morning. I asked him, 'when do you want to work'. But he said he wasn't ready to leave his carefree life”.
(Informant 15)

Objective 2: Steps taken by Victims of Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence may intend to leave their husbands in search of a better new life, but often this is not the case. Results of the interview on the 17 informants, can be merged into two themes which are largely steps related to stress management and gaining social support.

The first theme is related to the mezzo system where it is a social system that can help victims decide to come out of violence. While the second theme that emerges is related to the macro system which is a strong attraction in helping victims of domestic violence. Both themes can provide a clear picture of the measures that can help victims of domestic violence during this Movement Control Order (PKP).

Stress Management

This theme refers to the techniques or ways used by the victim to reduce stress to improve the level of well-being after being a victim of husband abuse. The results of the interviews found that the majority of victims of domestic violence make children as a source of strength and motivation in managing stress and of well-being. This approach has been used by 12 informants. They will each spend time taking their children for walks and vacations with the family if they could afford it. This situation is similar to the actions of R7 and R15 who spend time taking their children to do leisure activities such as in the park or by the beach to relieve the feeling of sadness that the victim experienced. In addition, R3 and R13 always share problems with their children. Although the victim's children are still small, they understand the situation experienced by the victim every day. The following is an excerpt from the victim:

“I always share problems with my son. Although he is still small, but he understands what I experience every day”.

(Informant 3)

“For now, I do a lot of activities with the kids. Take the child to the beach, to the park. If I can afford it, I'll bring my children to visit a little further”.

(Informant 7)

“If I can't take it, I will take my children to a nearby recreation park. When I feel calmer, then I'll go back home”.

(Informant 15)

The victim's children often give words of encouragement to always be by the victim's side no matter what happens. This situation is different from the R5 situation when the victim's husband tries to separate the victim with the child. Victims make the child a source of strength by looking back at the child's old pictures trying to fill their time with work. For R9 and R16, the victims only thought of their children's happiness and ignored all forms of emotional disturbance from their husbands as they considered the matter is unimportant. R12 gained

the strength of spirit to fight feelings of grief as well as reduce their stress by observing the behavior of the victim's children. For the victim, it was a strength to move on with life when seeing the children laughing happily at play.

"Now I only think about the children. The feeling of trauma disappears when you look at your child, it counts for enthusiasm".

(Informant 9)

"Just think about the child. Be strong. Whatever it is, I have to fight".

(Informant 16)

Sementara itu, R1, R8 dan R14 bertindak mendapatkan khidmat bantuan profesional dan bantuan sistem sosial bagi mengendalikan tekanan yang dihadapi oleh mereka. Hasil kajian mendapati R1 mendapatkan khidmat sesi kaunseling individu bagi menyelesaikan masalah rumah tangganya. Bagi R8 pula, mangsa menyertai sesi kaunseling secara berkumpulan bersama-sama mangsa keganasan wanita yang lain. Melalui sesi kaunseling tersebut, mangsa R8 dan rakan-rakan meluahkan perasaan, berkongsi, bercakap serta bercerita bersama-sama. R8 menyatakan dengan cara ini bukan sahaja membantu mangsa memberi motivasi sesama mereka malah mampu mengurangkan tekanan dan seterusnya meningkatkan kesejahteraan hidup mangsa. Menurut R7, mangsa telah menghadiri sesi kaunseling di pejabat agama kerana memerlukan seseorang untuk menyokong mangsa serta memberi jalan penyelesaian bagi sesuatu masalah yang dihadapi oleh mangsa.

Seeking Social Support from Social Systems

Meanwhile, some acted to seek professional help and social system assistance to handle the stress they faced. The results of the study found that R1 sought the services of individual counseling sessions to solve his household problems. For R8, the victim participated in a group counseling session with other victims of female violence. Through the counseling session, R8 victims and friends expressed their feelings, shared, talked and told stories together. R8 stated that in this way not only helps the victim to motivate each other but also able to reduce stress and thus improve the well-being of the victim. According to R7, the victim had attended a counseling session at the religious office because it needed someone to support the victim as well as provide a solution to a problem faced by the victim.

"I need to find someone who can support, who for me is strong, for that reason I went to the religious office for counseling"..

(Informant 7)

"I joined a group counseling session. That's what I said, share it with friends who have problems like this. We people share, talk. We people tell stories together. He has this kind of problem. I'm like this".

(Informant 8)

"I saw a psychiatrist. He heard all the expressions of my heart. He asked me to fill my free time by reading the Quran. I follow his advice. I swear I feel calm".

(Informant 14)

There were also victims who contacted the Women's Aid Organization to share the problem and find a solution to the problem faced. A religious approach can provide spiritual and spiritual peace to the victim's self. The results of the interviews also found that the victims chose to share problems as a measure of stress management. Sharing this problem is done not only to family members, but also to friends as well as neighbours. For example, R6 chose to narrate the various problems she faced as well as discuss the solution with her family.

Contrary to the opinion of R11 who opted out to a neighbour's house to share the problems that occurred. The victim also used to follow her neighbours back to their village to reduce feelings of grief.

"Right now, I meet a lot of my family members talking about problems and discussing how to solve them".

(Informant 6)

"I went out to the neighbor's house, it's a level I can't stand very much. I used to follow them back to the village just to get rid of this sad feeling"..

(Informant 11)

For R3, the victim took the opportunity to complain to God to ask for peace and find a way out of the problems he faced as well as to recite the Al-Quran to obtain peace of mind. R4, on the other hand, often draws closer to God through various religious activities organized by the local community and prays that God gives peace and happiness to him and his children.

"When my children are asleep, I take the opportunity to complain to God every midnight. I recite a lot of prayers to give me peace of mind. I think God can calm me down".

(Informant 3)

"I always take religious classes at the surau in my mother's house area. And I feel calm when I am close to God. I often pray that God gives happiness to me and the child".

(Informant 7)

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has emphasized the importance of the mezzo system in helping victims of domestic violence decide to come out of the violence they are experiencing. The mezzo system refers to a system that provides support to the victim's self, consisting of family members, neighbours as well as friends. From the study, majority of the victims have received support from various mezzo systems. For example, a victim's brother accompanied her to her counselling session and accompanied the victim to court to manage the victim's divorce process. Family members giving strong moral support to the victim, helping them with processes including court sessions, making reports at the police stations, and helping them get back on their feet.

Most of them were also thankful that their family members were able to care for their children after divorcing and that they were happy because that their children would still be able to grow up in a loving home. The mezzo system that often gives many words of encouragement might help build resilience. The findings of the study also showed the involvement of neighbours in helping the victims and children to continue living. Neighbours were reported to have donated food as well as money to help the victims and their children. There were also cases where neighbours offered their homes as temporary shelter to the victims.

Besides that, it should be emphasized that the influence of social systems which consists of various government and non-government agencies including the police, hospitals, WAO, PPW is a strong protective factor. Most of the informants have also sought support from the larger system (macro) to help them free themselves from being victims of domestic violence. For example, the police have assisted the victim by referring the case of violence that befell the victim to the hospital for confirmation treatment, NGOS such as *Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita (WAO)* and *Pusat Perkhidmatan Wanita (PPW)*, have also been some of the informants' resources for support. Some informants also sought assistance from the Social Welfare Department for financial assistance and protection assistance which provided

many other benefits to the victims and children to continue their new lives like getting a job recommendation from the Social Welfare Department. The victims who have successfully come out of domestic violence faced various life challenges including facing family and community perceptions to improve their lives.

Thus, there are several recommendations needed to protect victims of domestic violence if Movement Control Order (PKP) or similar were to be carried out. This is to help improve the social functioning of victims of domestic violence. First, the government needs to establish a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that provides a positive response to victims of domestic violence during the Movement Control Order (PKP) is carried out. This is to improve coordination between all relevant agencies and the effect will ensure that victims do not continue to be abused. This is due to the absence of clear SOPs related to case investigations, application for protection orders from the courts and the operation of shelters during the PKP period. Applications for protection orders such as Temporary Protection Orders and Protection Orders are also not possible as the Court were closed. This creates difficulties for the victims as they will be exposed to the abuser without any court order to prevent the abuser from continuing the violence against them. At the same time, there is also the problem of lack of financial allocation experienced by NGOs and shelters due to lack of external assistance, lack of shelters operating throughout the MCO and lack of human resources to assist in aid centres and shelters due to PKP exacerbating the situation of victims of violence. households in need of immediate assistance.

The government should also ensure that every victim can obtain an Interim Protection Order (IPO) from the court during PKP. The Interim Protection Order is critical in protecting victims because this order will warn abusers that they need to stop the abuse they are committing, or they will be detained. However, with the reduction in court operations, it is still unclear how victims can apply for an IPO. Therefore, the court should list the IPO application and action against anyone who violates it is counted as one of the services that are still carried out throughout the implementation MCO.

Overall, the findings of this study have identified many driving factors that include financial problems, the influence of alcohol and drugs as well as the negative attitude of the husband who is the main contributor to the victims involved in this domestic violence. Victims experience violence in the form of physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse. The action taken by victims trying to free themselves were driven by several pulling factors detected including emotional and social support of the surrounding community as well as the victim's family members. This support has also improved the level of well-being of the victims during the Movement Control Order (PKP). It is hoped that more studies including exploring interventions related to domestic violence and its effectiveness can be done to further improve existing programs.

References

- Abdul, G. (2014). *Exploring domestic violence experiences from the perspective of abused women in Malaysia*. London: Loughborough University.
- Abdul Ghani, M., Ahmad, N. A., & Mohamad, A. (2016). Profiles of Domestic Violence Victims and Perpetrators: A Qualitative Research Perspective. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 43-50.
- Ahmad. (2012). *Mangsa dera dan seksual*. Georgetown: Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hassan, A. (2011). *Konflik Batu pahat*: Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia.
- Atchley R. C. (2004). *Social forces and aging: An introduction to social gerontology, 10th edition*. United States: Thomas Learning.
- Awang, H., & Hariharan, S. (2011). Determinants of domestic violence: Evidence from Malaysia. *Journal of Family Violence*, 459-464.
- Ayotunde, T., Akintoye, O. O., & Adefunke, E. S. (2014). Influence of Women's Attitude on the Perpetration of Gender-Based Domestic Violence in Nigeria. *Gender behavior*, 6420-6429.
- Bassuk, E., Dawson, R., & Hungtington, N. (2006). Intimate partner violence in extremely poor women: Longitudinal patterns and risk markers. *Journal of Family Violence*, 387-399.
- Brecklin, L. R. (2002). The role of perpetrator alcohol use in the injury outcomes of intimate assaults. *Journal of Family Violence*, 185-197.
- Brosi, M. W., & Rolling, E. S. (2010). A narrative journey for intimate partner violence: From victim to survivor. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 237-250.
- Corcoran, C. B. (1994). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*.
- Elabani, S. M. (2015). Attitudes to and perceptions of domestic violence against women in an Arab community: a case study of Libyan migrants in the UK (Doctoral dissertation, Manchester Metropolitan University). Ellsberg, M., Pena, R., Herrera, A., Liljestrand, J., & Winkvist, A. (2000). Candies in hell: Women's experiences of violence in Nicaragua. *Social Science & Medicine*, 1595-1610.
- Faizah, M. L. (2015). Ke arah pengurangan indeks jenayah jalanan di Pusat Bandar Kuala Lumpur. *GEOGRAFIA OnlineTM Malaysian Journal of Society and Space* 11 issue 4, 97-107.
- Fan, L., & Babiarz, P. (2019). The Determinants of Subjective Financial Satisfaction and the Moderating Roles of Gender and Marital Status. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research*, 237-259.
- Ghani, M. A. (2014). Exploring domestic violence experiences from the perspective of abused women in Malaysia (Doctoral dissertation, Loughborough University).
- Ghani, M. A., Husin, S., & Mohamad, A. (2016). Isu keganasan rumah tangga: Keberkesanan perkhidmatan kaunseling berdasarkan perspektif klien wanita mangsa keganasan. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, 1-9.
- Hwang, Y. (2017). What Is the Cause of Graduates' Unemployment? Focus on Individual Concerns and Perspectives. *Journal of Educational*, 1-10.
- Khaironisak, H., Zaridah, S., Hasanain, F. G., & Zaleha, M. I. (2017). Prevalence, risk factors, and complications of violence against pregnant women in a hospital in Peninsular Malaysia. *Women & health*, 57(8), 919-941.
- Kishor, S., & Johnson, K. (2006). Reproductive health and domestic violence: Are the poorest women uniquely disadvantaged? *Demography*, 293-307.

- Lyons, M., & Brewer, G. (2021). Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence during Lockdown and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Family Violence*, 1-9.
- Maarof, R. (2003). *Psikologi*. Kuala Lumpur: Mc Graw Hill.
- Maizatul A. (2008). Keganasan Rumah Tangga: Corak, Punca & Kaedah Penyelesaian. *Seminar Kaunseling Keluarga*, 29-35.
- Abu Ahmad, M. (2020). *Keganasan Rumah Tangga: Kesan Psikologi Mangsa*. Retrieved from Pena Wan: <https://penawan.com/keganasan-rumah-tangga-kesan-psikologi-mangsa/>
- Maslow, A. (1970). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review* 24, 843-853.
- Masyitah, A. M. (2020). *Realiti dan Cabaran Dihadapi Pengurus Rumah Tangga Semasa PKP*. Kuala Terengganu: Terengganu Strategic & Integrity Institute (TSIS).
- Muzaffar, S. M. (2020). *Awasi peningkatan kes keganasan rumah tangga sepanjang PKP*. Retrieved from Malaysia Gazette: <https://malaysiagazette.com/2020/04/29/awasi-peningkatan-kes-keganasan-rumah-tangga-sepanjang-pkp/>
- Nasrudin, S. (2016). *Terperangkap di Perkahwinan Awal Usia*. Bangi, Selangor: Persatuan Wanita UKM.
- Natasha, D. (2017). *Perspektif Mengenai Keganasan Rumah Tangga*. Petaling Jaya: Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita (WAO).
- Noraida, E., & Intan Hashimah, M. H. (2011). *The Nature and Impact of Domestic Violence: A Study of Survivors of Wife Abuse in Malaysia*. George Town: Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Jamil, N., & Mat, S. H. C. (2014). Realiti Kemiskinan: Satu Kajian Teoritik. *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia*, 167 - 177.
- Nuruaslizawati, A., & Hajar, S. A. R. (2019). Tahap Pengetahuan Masyarakat Terhadap Keganasan Rumah Tangga: Kajian Rintis. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 62-67.
- Mahdzir, N., Rahman, A. A., Rahim, A. A., & Ismail, C. T. M. (2021). Perlindungan Terhadap Mangsa Keganasan Rumah Tangga dalam Situasi Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) Menurut Perspektif Undang-undang. *International Journal Of Law, Government And Communication (Ijlgc)*, 179-188.
- Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita. (2016). *Garis Panduan & Piawaian Tempat Perlindungan Keganasan Rumah Tangga*. Petaling Jaya: Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.
- Pesuruhjaya Penyemak Undang-Undang Malaysia Di bawah Kuasa Akta Penyemakan Undang-Undang 1968. (1994). *Akta Keganasan Rumah Tangga 1994 (2008)*. Kuala Lumpur.
- Postmus, J. L., Plummer, S. B., McMahon, S., Murshid, N. S., & Kim, M. S. (2012). Understanding economic abuse in the lives of survivors. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 27(3), 411-430.
- Ronald, B. (2006). *What is Personality Disorder?* Retrieved from Wiley Online Library: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470713594.ch2>
- Rotter, J. B. (1966). *Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement*. Psychological Monographs.
- Shariffah, N. A., & Noor, A. (2010). *The Crime of Domestic Violence Against Women In Malaysia: Its Concept & Solutions*. Universiti Teknologi MARA.
- Sheila, M. (2014). *Mengatasi Keganasan Rumah Tangga*. Retrieved from MyHealth: <http://www.myhealth.gov.my/coping-with-domestic-violence/>
- Simister, J. (2012). More than a billion women face 'gender based violence': Where are most victims? *Journal of Family Violence*, 607-623.
- Siti, M. M., & Elinawat, M. M. (2016). *Keganasan Terhadap Wanita*. Retrieved from Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA):

- <https://docs.jpa.gov.my/docs/pelbagai/Artikel/2015/KeganasanTerhadapWanita.pdf>
- Smith, M., & Powell, P. (2011). *Domestic Violence: An Overview*. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada .
- Tengku, A. T. I., & Zaharah, (2020). *Kesejahteraan Rumah Tangga Semasa Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan* . Retrieved from Sumber Informasi Perubatan COVID-19 & Pusat Sumber Komunikasi Risiko dan Media COVID-19:
<http://covid19.kk.usm.my/index.php/artikel/bacaan-umum/30-kesejahteraan-rumah-tangga-semasa-perintah-kawalan-pergerakan>
- Tharanya, A. (2020). *MCO-linked domestic violence rises*. Retrieved from New Straits Times:
<https://www.nst.com.my/news/exclusive/2020/04/581233/mco-linked-domestic-violence-rises>
- Tonging, J. (2014). *A study of domestic violence among south Asian women in Hong Kong*. London: University of London.
- Van Wijk, N. P. L. (2012). *Domestic violence by and against men and women in Curaçao: A Caribbean study*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Vrije Universiteit.
- Veenhoven, R. (2006). How Do We Assess How Happy We are? Tenets, Implications and Tenability of Three Theories. Paper conference on 'New Directions in the Study of Happiness: United States and International Perspectives'. *University of Notre Dame*, 22-24.
- Ventegodt, S., Andersen, N. J., & Merrick, J. (2003). Quality of Life Philosophy I. Quality of Life, Happiness, and Meaning in Life. *The Scientific World*, 1164–1175 .
- Walker, L. (1979). *The battered women*. New York: Harpes & Row.
- Weston, C. W. (2016). *Why doesn't she leave? civil protection orders for low-income women facing economic abuse*. Retrieved from Washington & Lee University School Of Law
World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>