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Abstract

This study examines how the COVID-19 shock affects households by drawing the economic challenges and provide an opportunities to reduce the impact of crisis. The online survey was used in the data collection which focuses on economic indicators such as income, job, salary, spending, debt, saving, and price level. The survey reveals significant association (p<0.0001) between job category, job status and age with job risk. Low income level found to have higher risk on income reduction (ChiSq=23.94, C=0.271) at this point. Part-time and contract workers are also more vulnerable when come to the risk of income cutting because of the MCO measures. Data shows, 53.8 percent of the households agree with the high price of goods and services after the pandemic. This support with 73.3 percent of households said the pandemic slightly contributes to higher spending for basic or necessary goods. Despite a number of challenges, the pandemic offers a window of opportunity for the development of household production which there is evidence of coping strategies, such as supplementing income through gig work and home gardening. Findings can be used to target interventions designed to reduce pandemic risk and the economic challenges of the COVID-19 required monitoring in real-time.

Keywords: Economic Challenges, COVID-19, Socioeconomic, Households, Micro Level.

Introduction

Lockdown measures due to health problem and authorities ordered for social distancing have driven many economic challenges on individual households resulting from the pandemic of COVID-19. World Bank (2020a) reported that economies are expected to contract due to the widespread of business closes. This situation may worst in lower income populations which lead to 11 million of people could fall into poverty across East Asia and Pacific. Analyzing the effect of pandemic on poor people, Buheji et al (2020) estimates that more poverty in the society which data estimated that 49 million individuals will be driven into extreme poverty which living on less than USD1.90 per day in 2020. UNICEF, 2020.

World Health Organization (WHO) said, the health crisis can contribute to the losses in individual social welfare in a number of defined ways both directly and indirectly (OECD, 2020). Reflecting the negative impact of measures taken both globally and domestically to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, data for Malaysia economic performance year-on-year basis shown that Malaysia economy contracted around 17.1 percent in the second quarter of 2020. The household consumption has also slumped about 18.5% as compared 6.7% in the first quarter. These macroeconomic indicators clearly shown how the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has put a significant challenges on the Malaysian households in micro level as well. As the government enforced the first movement control order (MCO) from 18th March to 14th April 2020 throughout the country in preventing people from infected, then this measure has limits the overall economic activities and affects the economic aspects like income, jobs and savings of various groups of people. This condition is a central focus to many of economic studies (UNICEF & UNFPA, 2020(a); World Bank, 2020(b); Pouliakas & Branka, 2020), especially among the lower bottom income and vulnerable households who are unable to continue their daily activities during this uncertainty and challenging environment. Without urgent action to protect families from the economic hardship caused by the pandemic, this would increase the number of household living in poverty in Malaysia to 4.5 million which growth of almost 5 percent from previous year (UNICEF, 2020). The lockdown measures have implied significant restrictions to social interactions and economic activity which gave highly uncertain economic implications at this point.

There are numbers of economic challenge and impact studies has grown exponentially since the first MCO in March 2020. Although ongoing research is assessing the economic ramifications of COVID-19, most of these studies are focused on the macro level and general financial impact of the pandemic. As a top-down approach the impacts on national economies are then translated into socio-economic impact on individuals, including consumption and poverty rates. There has also increasing policy and research interest in better understanding the micro economic consequences of the pandemic particularly at the household level. Looking across the large body of existing literature, it is a considerable degree of methodological heterogeneity, and also that many studies suffer from a range of conceptual deficiencies. In light of these above mentioned shortcomings, this study is proposing a defined conceptual framework within which the economic challenges of pandemic can be considered and appropriately estimated, with a view to enhancing the consistency and coherence of economic impact studies in health. In this study, a closer look at the possible extent of the first wave of economic challenges of the pandemic faced by Malaysian households. This is done by identifying which households of is most affected by the pandemic. Therefore, the goal of this study is to analyse the economic challenges and of the COVID-19 containment at the household level.

The Risk on Job, Salary and Income
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a large economic shock across the world due to business, and factories shutdowns which significant contributes to jobs interruptions because of social-distancing measures. Gopalan and Misra (2020) stated that the economic downturn because of the pandemic has greatly affected people especially from the lower socioeconomic stratum. Study found that the economic challenge is likely to be more severe which pushing more people below the poverty line and worsening of socioeconomic inequalities (Fernandes, 2020).

Like other economic crises, the impact of this pandemic was hardest on the most vulnerable. The case in Malaysia where it has been estimated that around two-thirds of job losses will fall on low skilled workers (UNICEF, 2020). The pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented labour market shock and unemployment crisis. It is expected to bring about marked structural changes for countries job and skills in the short to medium term (Pouliakas & Branka, 2020). The pandemic expected to have not only on different economic activities and occupations in the labour market, but also on diverse workforce groups. Studies (UNICEF, 2020; Beland et al., 2020; Fana et al., 2020) show that, peoples are struggling with the trade-off between lives and jobs. The value of saved lives by prolonging lockdown and social distancing measures exceeds the associated economic lost of jobs and businesses. Beland et al. (2020) reported that pandemic has caused a negative short term increase in unemployment and decrease in the labour force participation rate and work hours. Occupations that depend on physical proximity to others are more affected, which in contrast to occupations that can be performed remotely. COVID-19 will likely exacerbate downside risk for hourly workers, who may see their hours cut. Study across Europe show nearly 59 million jobs which potentially at risk of reductions in hours or pay, temporary furloughs, or permanent lay-offs (McKinsey, 2020).

Studies found that, the lockdown measures has also increased the gender wage gap. More women have lost their jobs than men which women are 1.5 times more likely than men to have either lost their job or quit since the lockdown began (Beland et al., 2020; Andrew et al., 2020). Yet, there is no data to show how many percent the wage different between gender in Malaysia, but data have shows that young age employee (aged under 25 years) are more likely to be affected by sector shut downs. According to the Department of Statistic of Malaysia, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years are higher (12.0%) as compared to youth aged 15 to 30 years (8.3%) and for adults aged 25 to 64 years (3%) in 2020 (Department of Statistic of Malaysia, 2021). Job vacancies are down to 8 percent and the fall has been sharpest in the lowest paid jobs (Farre et al., 2020). However, for the high-skilled and salaried workers, the finding shows that this group are more likely to be able to continue working from home and have paid leave and vacation time they can use to cover their needs to stay at home. As compared, low earners work are more likely than high earners work in a sector that is now closed (ILO, 2020).

With many business operating on reduced hours or closed entirely, and workers increasing sheltering in their homes or unable to go to work, many workers will face reductions in labor demand and earnings. Study (UNICEF, 2020) shown that families experience significant income volatility, and that the share of this volatility stems from within jobs, as apposed to transitions between jobs, with low-income households most susceptible to downside risk. Household incomes have fallen particularly among the lowest earners, with severe losses for single parents (ILO, 2020; Gopalan & Misra, 2020; UNICEF & UNFPA, 2020a; Champs, 2020). Galicki (2020) found men were more affected by loss of income than women, because they were more likely than women to be employed before the COVID-19 crisis. Study show that the lockdown measures has seen an increase in people signing up for credit and unemployment benefits. UNICEF & UNFPA (2020b) reported on how the COVID-19 put a challenge on low-income urban households. Study shown there are about 25 percent and 31 percent of heads of households are unemployed and faced cuts in working hours during MCO

respectively. Therefore, in this segment, the study identify the challenge of Malaysian households regarding job, salary and income as hypotheses below:

H1: There will an association between job category and job risk.
H2: There will an association between job status and job risk.
H3: There will an association between education level and job risk.
H4: There will an association between age and job risk.
H5: There will an association between job category and salary reduction risk.
H6: There will an association between job status and salary reduction risk.
H7: There will an association between income and salary reduction risk.
H8: There will an association between gender and salary reduction risk.
H9: There is significant differences between job category with income reduction.
H10: There is significant differences between income level with income reduction.
H11: There is significant differences between gender with income reduction.

Debt, Spending, Saving and Price Level
The sudden stop of economic activity creating a challenging situation for many Malaysian households, especially those that are highly indebted. Looking from financial stability perspective, a key concern is whether households can keep up with their debt payments. Economist has agree that the financial resilience of households is important for financial and macroeconomic stability (Galicki, 2020). In this pandemic, the ability of the household to carry on despite life's challenges is very importance to measure. Financial resilience appears to be very important to people during this crisis, which indicates people's ability to withstand life events that impact an individual's income or assets. Financial stressful events because of this situation such as being unemployed, temporary laid-off or salary cutting.

Consumption is important for country growth process and its typically accounts for about 60 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Banks' claims on the household sector, mostly in the form of mortgages were about 20 to 40 percent of asset portfolio. Study shows that middle and high income households have larger liabilities than low income households (Martin et al., 2020). Holding liquid asset during the pandemic are a key driver of households' financial resilience. Household capacity in capability to continue servicing their financial commitments while maintaining reasonable levels of consumption in the pace of income loses. Such income losses translate directly into decreases to spending and well being, particularly for those with less a cash buffer and who experience more sustained losses. In general, household cut their spending when they lose a job involuntarily. As incomes shrink because of the pandemic shock, household must balance repaying debt with keeping up reasonable level of consumption (Zabai, 2020; Galicki, 2020). Households rationally will respond to an adverse income shock by reducing consumption to some minimum level by cutting expenditure on non-essentials and durable, before eventually starting to fall behind on debt repayments. In several countries, low and middle income households have insufficient liquid buffers to weather a long spell of unemployment without falling behind on debt repayments. Study found that the resilience of middle income households is especially importance. They hold relatively more (mortgage) debt and are more vulnerable in the countries that are more heavily exposed to the economic shock.
One of the many consequences of the COVID-19 is the interruption of supply chains which had lead to limited and shortages in a number of household essential products. This shortage

may be due to an increase in demand, or insufficient production caused by difficulties in the distribution of products due to quarantine measures. (ILO, 2020). Supply disruptions and the strong demand from consumers stockpiling food and medical supplies have increase substantially. These shortage are influencing the behaviour of firms and may led to potentially exploitative prices in some cases. The food component of the CPI has increased at a much faster rate than the overall CPI in all regions of the world (ILO, 2020). Studies found that the implications of intervening high prices must be carefully taken. This may lead to products being diverted to and ending-up in places where prices are not subject to constraint, leading to local consumers being worse off (OECD, 2020a).

Therefore it is important to looks in the ability of the households in the area of challenge in debt, spending, saving, and price level.
H12: There will an association between income level and household's debt.
H13: There will an association between income level and household's spending.
H14: There will an association between income level and household's saving.
H15: There will an association between location and raw food price.
H16: There will an association between location and dried food price.

Methodology
The questionnaire survey was used to reveal what challenges and opportunities taken of Malaysian households related to economics condition after COVID-19 pandemic. As social distancing practice during this pandemic, a study gathered data using online survey. A self-completion questionnaires using google form was performed and conducted in May to July of 2020. Close-ended questions were used in the questionnaire. These closed questions will be easily answered by respondents as well as direct answers to standardized forms that allow researchers to measure and analyze quickly and easily (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). However, Mcneill and Chapman (2005) noted that the findings obtained from closed questions may be biased since those essential points that not included in the questionnaires are likely to be excluded. Therefore, to maximize the amount of information gathered, an 'other' category was added when necessary to offer respondents the opportunity to write their answers that did not fall into listed categories.

From pilot's observation, the five pages A4 questionnaire would take about fifteen minutes to complete and thus seemed to be acceptable. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. In the first section, the respondents were asked about their social economic information such as gender, age, education level, income, and others. The next 15 questions in the second section focused on eliciting the respondents' economic challenges for the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents were asked about their job, salary, income, spending, saving, and price level. This section used existing scales (Martin et al., 2020; Farre et al., 2020; Buheji et al., 2020; DOSM, 2020) and new items to elicit households' views on job, income, debt, spending, saving and price during crisis. Based on the outcome of OECD study (OECD 2020b), the opportunity were then explore in third section, which asked respondents to share on their approach in minimizing the impact of COVID-19 to their household economic condition.

To ensure that the questionnaire of the survey can be understood correctly by respondents, a pre-test was conducted with the households from a few places using Google form format,

to get a real understanding of the questions. Some of their comments and suggestions were then included in the final version of the survey. Households aged 18 years and above are selected to be a sample by using a multi-stage random sampling strategy. In stage one, the state been choose for represent the five regions of Malaysia, as northern, south, east coast, central and east Malaysia. Then it follow by the location for the study. Facing with the ordered of social distancing, then the online survey through Google Form were applied as a platform of data collection. This method of self-completion questionnaire bring more convenience for respondents as they can complete it whenever they want, and also assists researchers in reducing considerable time and efforts needed for questionnaires distribution and coding and analyzing responses. Within three months of data collection, study's managed to get 303 respondents which then analyze using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive analysis focused on frequencies, and percentage while chi-square tests was utilized to determine the differences between groups for selected demographic variables. The statistical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Result and Discussion
Demographic Profile
Table 1 represent the various demographic characteristics of the respondents. Out of the total, the average age was 41 years (SD=10.92) with gender composition of the respondents was 67.3 percent female and 32.7 percent male. It is submitted that females are still, in some instances, more likely to be breadwinners and thus the distribution of the sample was considered to be reasonably representative. From this data, 8.9 percent households are female headed with 92.7 percent are Malay.

Regarding the education background, data indicates that 75 percent had tertiary education, 22.1 and 2.9 percent for secondary and primary respectively. Considering the employment status of the respondents, data shows that 51.8 percent are salaried employees in public sector, 25.4 percent in private sector, 5.3 percent in business and others are retired, full-time housewife, and students. From this hired employees, 78.9 percent are permanent status, 11.2 percent under contract job and 8.6 percent as a part time employees. Taking the above employment data, it became evident that the sample included respondents with a highly secure level of employment in general.

Table 1
Respondent characteristics

Characteristics	Percent	Characteristics	Percent
Role of household		**Education level**	
Head of household	37.3	Primary	2.9
Spouse	44.9	Secondary	22.1
Household member	17.8	Tertiary	75
Gender		**Marital status**	
Male	32.7	Single	20.5
Female	67.3	Married	73.3
Ethnic group		Others	6.3
Malay	92.7	**Household size**	
Chinese	1	One person	2.6
Indian	2	2 – 5	55.8

Others	4.3	6 – 10	40.9
Regional area		More than 10	0.7
Northern coast	8.6	**Job category**	
South	24.8	Public sector	51.8
East coast	12.2	Private sector	25.4
Central	51.9	Business	5.3
East Malaysia	2.6	Retired	2
Location		Housewife	5
Urban	99	Students	8.9
Sub-urban	153	Others	1.7
Rural	51	**Job types**	
House types		Permanent	78.9
Flat	4.3	Contract	11.2
Apartment	15.8	Part time	8.6
Double storey terrace	24.4	**Income level**	
Single storey terrace	24.4	Less than RM 3860	39.9
Semi-D	5.9	RM 3861 – RM 8319	35
Bungalow	8.3	More than RM 8319	25.1
Others	16.8	**Part time job**	
House ownership		Yes	16.5
Own	57.8	No	83.5
Rent	27.1	**Types of part time job**	
Family's house	15.2	Online business	50
Age		Business	28.3
18-24 years	11	Tutor	8.7
25-34 years	14	Home-stay operator	2.2
35-44 years	31	e-hailing	2.2
45-54 years	34	Unit trust consultant	2.2
55-64 years	9	Coway	2.2
65 years and above	1	Courier service	2.2

Data from Table 1 indicates the respondents' income per month which found that 39.9 percent earn income less than RM 3860, 35 percent with income between RM 3861 and RM 8319, and 25.1 percent income more than RM 8319. this data shows a wide spread between all levels of income, with larger proportion of respondents in the sample being in the lower income brackets. Data on regional basis shows that 51.9 percent of respondents came from the Klang Valley (central region) and follow by Southern area in Malaysia (Melaka and Johor) 24.8 percent. The majority of the respondents are stay in terrace houses (48.8%), and apartment about 15.8 percent. Other type of dwelling stated as flat (4.3%), bungalow (8.3%), Semi-D (5.9%) and others (16.8). In addition, 57.8 percent own the house, 27.1 percent rent and family's house 15.2 percent. Findings showed that a somewhat higher percentage of the respondents have between two to five persons living within their household. 40.9 percent are living in six to ten people and only 0.7 percent respondents indicated that they had more than ten persons residing within their household. Data shows interesting finding that 16.5 percent respondents said 'Yes' to part-time job, with 50 percent are involved in online business.

Households' Economic Challenges

Next section is analyze the risk and challenges face by the household because of the lockdown measure. Table 2 indicate the percentage of respondents regarding job risk who are agreed (Yes), disagree (No) or had not sure. In general, respondents have secured job and a low risk of salary cutting. For example, about 51.8 percent of respondents confident to said 'no' for the statement "If my current employer faces economic problems, my job will be the first to be laid off''. It is also interesting to note that 87.8 percent (82.2 percent) of the respondents said they got paid every month (with full salary) and 63 percent believe of their employer would not reduce their working hours. Stated that 73.9 percent of respondents are highly secured with their current job. In relations to the respondents' views on income, it was noted that 22.4 percent of respondents have problem with income reduction because of this pandemic. However, 77.2 percent agreed they still have enough money to cover their daily basic needs. With some difficulties, 31.4 percent said 'yes' of doing part-time work and 47.2 percent of the respondents agree on a way of finding better income opportunities.

Table 2

Respondents' challenge on job, salary and income

Challenge (statement)	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Job			
The employer where I work now will not reduce the number of my working hours.	63	21.1	15.9
If my current employer faces economic problems, my job will be the first to be laid off.	11.2	51.8	37
Salary			
I get paid every month.	87.8	4.6	7.6
The employer offered me unpaid leave.	12.2	73.9	13.9
I am paid full salary every month.	82.2	8.3	9.6
My employer cut my salary	4.6	82.8	12.5
Income			
I have enough money for my daily basic needs.	77.2	16.5	6.3
I have a problem with income reduction at this point.	22.4	70.6	6.9
I need to work overtime / part-time work to earn a better income every month.	31.4	60.7	7.9
I need to find other better income opportunities.	47.2	43.6	9.2

Table 3 shared finding on households' financial shock regarding debt, spending, saving and price level during this pandemic. Data indicate that 20.5 percent households' facing trouble on paying their utility bills. However, there are only 11.9 percent respondents' problem with house payment rent or installment. Data shows only a few number (less than 8.6 percent) of the respondents borrow money to cover their expenses. In regard to spending behaviour, 75.2 percent agreed with statement 'I can spend according to my needs'. This statement may be supported with respondents saving behaviour which evident about 31.7 percent had use saving to cope with current expenses. This pattern of saving strongly support the statement 'I only use my savings in time of emergencies' which about 79.9 percent respondents agreed. More finding stated 51.2 percent have use saving at this point with 26.7 percent said had use more at this time of pandemic. Price level is one of the challenging issue during COVID-19. Response to the question 'I am satisfied with the price of raw food items such as fish, chicken

and vegetables in the market', 60.7 percent of the respondents said 'no', with 73.6 percent agree that the price of food is expensive. This statement would also support with 55.4 percent said they are not satisfied with the price of dried food.

Table 3
Respondents' response spending, debt, saving and price level

Challenges	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Spending			
I can spend according to my needs.	75.2	15.5	9.2
I always make plans for my family expenses.	86.5	6.6	6.9
Debt			
I borrowed money to cover my family's expenses.	8.6	88.4	3
I always borrow money from my family.	5.9	92.7	1.3
I always borrow money from my friends.	3.6	95.4	1
I often defer payment of my monthly rent/ instalment for house	11.9	83.8	4.3
I often have trouble paying my monthly utility bills	20.5	74.9	4.6
Saving			
I had to use my savings to buy my family's daily necessities	31.7	65	3.3
I only use my savings in times of emergency.	79.9	14.2	5.9
I have used my savings.	51.2	45.2	3.6
I have used more of my savings	26.7	68.3	5
Price			
I am satisfied with the price of raw food items such as fish, chicken and vegetables in the market.	24.8	60.7	14.5
I am satisfied with the price of dried food that I bought.	31.7	55.4	12.9
The price of food items is expensive.	73.6	10.2	16.2
The prices of goods are generally reasonable.	28.4	53.8	17.8

Socioeconomic Factors and The Economic Challenges
The Pearson chi square results (Table 4) seemed to indicate a significant association between job category (ChiSq=59.4, p=0.0001) and job status (ChiSq=134.38, p=0.0001) with job risk during the pandemic, thus supporting H_1 and H_2. An examination of the cross-tabulation between the above two variables resulted in the findings that employee in private sector shown higher percentage on job risk compared to the person in the public sector. The strength of association between job category and job risk was found to be moderate at C=0.405. The risk of job losses are more on part-time workers with 38 percent compared to contract workers (23.5%) and permanent workers status (0.07%). This result is accordance with the previous research conducted by the United Nation (2020) and McKinsey (2020) which had in conclusion that the impact of pandemic are most on the vulnerable, which in this case, the private sector and temporary workers are having more risk on job loss during this pandemic. As contrast, the workers in the private sector with permanent status are having more secure job in the long term.

Association between education level (as proxy to the skill of labor) shows a non-significant relationship with job risk. Then H_3. is not supported. This finding is contradict with ILO (2020)

who found significant impact for low skill workers. However, age factor indicate a varies challenge of job losses between age (ChiSq=51.207, C=0.380, p=0.0001). Early career people (18-24 years) and (25-34 years) seem to have higher risk on job losses with stated as 25.6 percent and 28.9 percent accordingly. The strength or degree of association between age and job risk was found to be moderate at C=0.380. Then H$_4$ is supported. Furthermore, this research is an accordance with Beland et al. (2020) which states that young age employee are more likely to be affected by sector shut downs.

Table 4
The association between job category, job status, education and gender with job risk

		If my current employer faces economic problem, my job will be the first to be laid off.						
		Yes	No	Not sure	Total	ChiSq	C	Sig.
Job category	Public sector	11	102	44	157	59.42	0.405	0.0001
	Private sector	7	38	32	77			
Job status	Permanent	16	140	83	239	134.38	0.554	0.0001
	Contract	8	10	16	34			
	Part-time	10	7	9	26			
Education	Primary	0	1	0	1	24.25	0.272	0.147
	Secondary	4	35	28	67			
	Tertiary	30	116	81	227			
Age	18 - 24 years	10	9	20	39	51.207	0.380	0.0001
	25 - 34 years	13	17	15	45			
	35 - 44 years	6	56	33	95			
	45 - 54 years	4	55	42	101			
	55 - 64 years	1	2	17	20			
	65 years and above	0	3	0	3			

Notes: ChiSq=Chi Square, C=Contingency coefficient, Sig.=Significance probability.

Table 5

The association between job category, job status, income and gender with salary reduction risk

		My employer cut my salary						
		Yes	No	Not sure	Total	ChiSq	C	Sig (p-value)
Job category	Public sector	2	150	5	157	127.12	0.544	0.0001
	Private sector	4	68	5	77			
Job status	Permanent	7	213	19	239	215.97	0.645	0.0001
	Contract	2	28	4	34			
	Part-time	5	10	11	26			
Income	Less than RM 3860	6	74	26	106	23.944	0.271	0.001
	RM 3861 – RM 8319	6	106	9	121			
	More than RM 8319	2	71	3	76			
Gender	Male	5	78	16	99	2.769	0.095	0.429
	Female	9	173	22	204			

Notes: ChiSq=Chi Square, C=Contingency coefficient, Sig.=Significance probability.

Table 5 shows the association between job category, job status, income level and gender with salary reduction risk. The Pearson chi square results (ChiSq =127.12, p=0.0001) seemed to indicate a significant association between job category and salary reduction risk, thus supporting H_5. An examination of the cross-tabulation between the above two variables resulted in the findings that households' work in the private sector having risk on salary reduction, even at low as 3 percent compare to the public sector. The strength or degree of association between job category and salary was found to be moderate at C=0.44. An examination of the relationship between the job status and salary reduction resulted in the findings that the part-time workers would have more risk on salary reduction compared to contract workers. The study also found a very tiny effect of salary cutting for permanent staffs. The strength or degree of association between job status and salary was found to be moderate at c=0.645 with the Pearson chi square results (ChiSq =215.9, df=9, p=0.0001) and thus supporting H_6. Therefore, this finding is interesting to support the study by ILO (2020) which found a high risk of salary reduction for the certain sector especially with contract and temporary basis.

Analysis in regard to income differences indicate a significant association with salary reduction. The Pearson chi square result (ChiSq =23.94, p=0.001) which found low level of income has higher risk of income reduction than middle and higher income level. This result support hypothesis H_7 and consistent with the study done by (Farre et al., 2020; Fana et al., 2020). Gender base test confirm there are not significant association between gender and salary cutting with the value of chi square at 2.769 and p-value, 0.429. Therefore, H_8 was not supported. Then, it was argue with previous finding (Beland et al., 2020) which found women are more risky to job loss and income reduction.

Table 6
The association between job category, income level and gender with income reduction risk

| | | *I have a problem with income reduction at this point.* | | | |
		Yes	No	Not sure	Total	ChiSq	C	Sig
Job category	Public sector	19	135	3	157	97.216	0.493	0.0001
	Private sector	20	54	3	77			
	Self employed/ Business	10	6	0	16			
Income	Less than RM 3860	39	51	16	106	47.142	0.367	0.0001
	RM 3861 – RM 8319	24	95	2	121			
	More than RM 8319	5	68	3	76			
Gender	Male	33	57	9	99	12.308	0.198	0.002
	Female	35	157	12	204			

Notes: ChiSq=Chi Square, C=Contingency coefficient, Sig.=Significance probability.

Based on the Table 6, the Pearson chi square results (ChiSq =97.216, p=0.0001) seemed to indicate a significant association between job category and income reduction risk, with value of coefficient, C=493 (moderate association), thus supporting H_9. An examination of the cross-tabulation between the above two variables resulted in the findings that the people who a self employed or involved in business tended to have more challenge on income reduction at this point of pandemic. This result support the finding of McKinsey (2020) which shows that a business people have facing a critical time during Covid which suffer a lot of income reduction because of the MCO measures.

Next, the result for the relationship between income level and income reduction risk, confirm to shows significant relationship (ChiSq =47.142, p=0.0001). The strength or degree of association between income level and income reduction risk was found to be moderate at c=0.367. Based on the result it can be concluded that the lower the income the more risk on income reduction. The result is consistent with Gopalan & Misra (2020) which stated that this economic downturn because of the pandemic may give a big impact for lower socioeconomic stratum and may push many people below the poverty line. Analysis on gender basis also agree to have an association between gender and income reduction. Output of analysis confirm and agree with Galicki (2020) which found men are more affected of income losses than women. However the result contradict with Beland et al (2020); Farre et al (2020) which said women have 1.5 times more risk than men to have lost job and income since the lockdown began.

Table 7

The association between income level and households' debt, spending and saving.

		Yes	No	Not sure	Total	ChiSq	C	Sig
	Debt	*I borrow money to cover my family's expenses*						
Income	Less than RM 3860	11	88	7	106	10.5	0.183	0.032
	RM 3861 – RM 8319	12	108	1	121			
	More than RM 8319	3	72	1	76			
	Spending	*I can spend according to my needs*						
Income	Less than RM 3860	71 (67%)	19	16	106	16.4	0.227	0.003
	RM 3861 – RM 8319	88 (73%)	22	11	121			
	More than RM 8319	69 (91%)	6	1	76			
	Saving	*I have used more my savings*						
Income	Less than RM 3860	40 (38%)	57	9	106	23.1	0.266	0.0001
	RM 3861 – RM 8319	32 (26%)	84	5	121			
	More than RM 8319	9 (12%)	66	1	76			

Notes: ChiSq=Chi Square, C=Contingency coefficient, Sig.=Significance probability.

The Pearson chi square results (ChiSq =10.5, p=0.032) seemed to indicate a significant association between income level and household debt, thus supporting H_{12}. An examination of the cross-tabulation between the above two variables resulted in the findings that the low and medium income groups tended to have more challenge on having debt to cover their family expenses compared to households' with income more than RM 8319 per month. Although the association between these two variable, the strength of association between income level and debt was found to be low at C=0.183. Analysis also found significant association between income level and households' spending an saving, thus supporting H_{13}. and H_{14}. Analysis shows that the low income group tended to have more challenge on spending their income, which shown as 67% agree with the statement on "I can spend according to my needs" as compared to medium income (73%) and high income (91%). The strength or degree of association between income level and spending was found to be low at C=0.227. An analysis also found the low income group tended to have more challenge on saving compared to medium and higher income groups. The strength or degree of association between income level and saving was found to be low at C=0.266. Refer to Table 7.

Table 8

The association between location and price level.

		Yes	No	Not sure	Total	ChiSq	C	Sig
		I am satisfied with the price of raw food items such as fish, chicken and vegetables in the market						
Location	Metropolitan	22	64	13	99	5.161	0.129	0.523
	City	25	66	15	106			
	Sub urban	16	26	5	47			
	Rural areas	12	28	11	51			
		I am satisfied with the price of dried food that I bought.						
Location	Metropolitan	26	60	13	99	7.638	0.157	0.266
	City	38	56	12	106			
	Sub urban	17	27	3	47			
	Rural areas	15	25	11	51			

Notes: ChiSq=Chi Square, C=Contingency coefficient, Sig.=Significance probability.

The Pearson chi square results for two questions (ChiSq=5.161, p=0.523; ChiSq=7.638, p=0.266) related to price level during COVID-19 shows a non-significant association between both the price of raw food and price of dried food with location (Table 8). An examination of the cross-tabulation between the above two variables resulted in the findings that the price level are consistently became a challenge to the household during the pandemic regardless of area and location. Therefore H_{15} and H_{16}. were fail to accept. This result is not consistent with previous study which found that, households who are living in urban areas (metropolitan, cities, and sub-urban) tended to have more challenge on their daily expenses compared to those living in the rural areas. These results may support what shared by the ILO (2020) because of the shortage in supply and highly demand on food products during the lockdown and mobility restriction. Increase in food prices can have major impact on the living standards of lower-income households, which generally spent most of their income on food. Even a small increase can confront the member of such households with difficult decisions.

Conclusion

This study analyze the economic challenges and the Covid-19 containment at the household level. There are seven criteria of economic challenges has been analyze in this study, namely, job losses, salary cutting, income reduction, debt, spending, saving and price level. Risk on job losses are more associated to the private sector, part-time and temporary workers (38 percent compared to 23.5 percent for contract workers), and the early career people (age lower than 34 years old). Therefore, this result is consistent with the United Nation (2020) and McKinsey (2020) study which had in conclusion that the impact of pandemic are most on the vulnerable, as the private sector and temporary workers. As contrast, the workers in the public sector with permanent status are having more secure job in the long term. This finding also support the study by Beland et al (2020) which states that young age employee are more likely to be affected by sector shut downs. Next, study found a moderate relationship between job category and job status with salary reduction risk. People working in the private sector having risk on salary cutting which is three percent more compared to the public sector

workers. Permanent staff are more secure rather than contract and temporary basis which agree to study finding of ILO research in 2020. Gender analysis confirmed that there is no different on salary cutting between gender. However, the income factor found the low income level has a higher risk of salary cutting which consistent with study done by (Farre et al., 2020; Fana et al., 2020).

As income become a major factor for economic stability of the household, study found an association between job category, job status, level of income and gender with income reduction risk. People are having higher risk on income reduction when they are a self employed or business owner, lower income category, and men. This result is support the finding of McKinsey (2020) which shows that a business people is facing a critical time during Covid-19 which suffer a lot of income reduction because of the MCO measures. The result is also consistent with Gopalan & Misra (2020) which stated that this economic downturn because of the pandemic may give a big impact for lower socioeconomic stratum. However, analysis on gender need more focus in future because this output of analysis is agree with Galicki (2020) which found men are more affected of income losses than women. However the result contradict with Beland et al (2020); Farre et al (2020) which said women have 1.5 times more risk than men to have lost job and income since the lockdown began.

Analysis on debt, spending and saving found to have an association with income level. The low and medium income found to face more challenge on debt during this pandemic. The lower income also found to have more difficulties on spending and to keep saving during the crisis. Regarding the price level, 55 percent of the respondent said they having difficulties with the increasing cost of buying dried food. Then, more people (more than 60 percent) are agree on the higher price of raw food such as fish, chicken, and vegetable in the market regardless of their location during this pandemic.

As a conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the associated lock-downs, mobility restrictions and physical distancing rules, has not only led to a significant increase in unemployment and considerable income losses for many people, but has also altered the spending patterns of consumers and the level of price inflation that they face. In particular, the lockdown measures have affected the supply of and demand for certain products and, hence, their prices. The evidence from analysis reviewed supports expectation that the challenges of COVID-19 have not been felt equally. The pandemic has both exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities in society. Men, private and business sector, contract and temporary workers, low income workers are those vulnerable during this pandemic. They are all at greater risk of economic instability. As the evidence shows, the unequal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic go further than the direct impacts of the disease itself. The unintended consequences of lockdown and other measures to control the spread of infection such isolation at home, economic shutdown, reduced access to services have had impact on the well-being of people. By summarizing the evidence about the challenges facing by the households because of this pandemic on well-being, this may further assist with the development of priorities and mitigating actions to support recovery. This findings may call for targeted policy response to prevent ongoing job losses and widening of labor market and social inequalities due to the pandemic. Understand how different segments of the population are facing economic challenge by the pandemic is very critical and priority in

making evaluation on the measures, which hope for placing the right remedy with the correct disease.

Limitation and Suggestion
The COVID-19 pandemic has a global reach. The outcome of this situation is much more uncertain. Households' economic recovery from the pandemic could be challenging. Economic activity will undoubtedly rebound as mandated lockdown are gradually eased. However, this is likely to be a slow process, meaning that some household economic challenges and the effects of the pandemic may linger. To what extent can households weather the storm is ultimately depend on a few conditions such as the financial health of households when the shock began or the effectiveness of policy actions aimed at bridging the road to recovery or the speed at which the labor market recovers.

An important line of enquiry underlying challenge at the micro-economic level has been articulation of the coping strategies that households utilize in order to mitigate the unwanted consequences of job losses, or income reduction. Fiscal policy measures are playing an important role in supporting households through this difficult period. The most pertinent of these measures is the PRIHATIN, which provides individuals experiencing income loss due to COVID-19 with RM 10 billion allocation to fund B40 and M40 families under the National Caring Aid (Bantuan Prihatin Nasional) and other measures as additional support to lower-income households. Another important aspect is the ability of households to defer mortgage payments which most banks are allowing households affected financially by COVID-19 to defer payments for up to six months.

Barbara (2012) found that there are a few characteristics that enhance household resilience in the face of life's changes and challenges. Positive people view challenges as opportunities, while focused people determine where there are headed in the future and stick to their goals so that life events and other barriers do not deter them. Flexible people then are open to new and different options when faced with uncertainty. Other type, as an organized people, they set priorities and develop structured approaches to manage change. For proactive people, work with change are good rather than defend against it. Therefore, in future analysis, the feedback from the respondents is important to note on how best they manage this critical time and set the best opportunities from the difficulties.

Resulting estimates for a particular aspect, can carefully inform decision makers about overall magnitude of economic challenges and their distribution across socioeconomic background. Despite a number of challenges, the pandemic offers a window of opportunity for the development of household production which there is evidence of coping strategies, such as supplementing income through gig work and home gardening. Although insufficient as a basis for setting priorities and allocating resources in reducing the impact of pandemic or which data on effectiveness are also needed, households coping strategies studies may help to identify possible strategies for reducing the cost of pandemic via appropriate preventive action or treatment strategies. This bottom-up approach is not expected to replace macro-level analyses that can better capture the interaction across sectors and countries or the effect of economics downturn at the macro level, but this findings can complement it by providing much finer estimates of the distributional impacts.

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