

## Factors Affecting Students' Mental Health in B40 Households During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

Concerns regarding mental health and substance usage have increased throughout the COVID-19 epidemic, particularly worries about suicide ideation. People's emotions, psychological well-being, social wellbeing, and many other facets of mental health are impacted by this situation on a regular basis. Like the B40 group, they could have difficulties that are measured and centred on their mental health. It is clear that B40 households, regardless of their industry of work, are more likely to experience mental health problems such sadness, anxiety, and stress. Additionally, it has a significant impact on the financial vulnerability of households in B40 groups when financial issues like high debt are included. However, little research has been done on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the population at the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Negeri Sembilan Seremban Campus. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to identify the significant relationship between the factors (financial problem, problematic quality of life, unemployment, and confinement) and mental health among B40 households of UiTM Seremban Campus student families. In this study, 371 observations were used as data. Multiple linear regression is the method employed in this study. It is clear from this study that a number of factors, such as unemployment, financial hardship, poor quality of life, and unemployment, have an impact on the mental health of B40 households, which are the families of students during the COVID-19 epidemic. Future researchers are strongly encouraged to do research on students from all UiTM campuses in Malaysia and from all different socioeconomic groups.

**Keywords:** Mentalhealth, Households, Covid19, Multiple Linear Regression

### Introduction

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), mental health is a state of wellbeing distinguished by self-awareness, the potential for productive and fruitful work, and the capacity to give back to one's community. In fact, it can be challenging to reconcile the myriad challenging life situations in which well-being may really be harmful with the idea that well-

being is a fundamental component of mental health. For instance, the majority of people would view it as mentally unhealthy for someone to be in a good mood while carrying out a war action that results in the deaths of several people (Galderisi et. al, 2015).

The WHO has expressed concern regarding the pandemic's implications on psycho-social and mental health. It makes the assumption that new regulations like self-isolation and quarantine have altered how people conduct their daily affairs, which may have an effect on issues like loneliness, anxiety, depression, and insomnia as well as harmful alcohol and drug use, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts and deeds. The global lockdown has led to an increase in domestic violence cases involving women and children who are unable to flee their abusers while confined. However, the biggest challenge to lessening the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on mental health is the lack of medical facilities where one can seek such support (Kumar & Nayar, 2021).

According to the Ministry of Health, approximately 4 million cases of COVID-19 were reported in Malaysia between 2021 and 2022, compared to just 8658 cases in 2020. up till July 4, 2020, since the first day Malaysia contracted a positive case. The growing number of COVID-19 cases is alarming news because the illness is starting to burden the nation. As the number of infected cases grew quickly, the Malaysian government issued a public health declaration that included lockdown and social seclusion. These tactics disrupted daily social interactions and employment. As a result, during the outbreak, unemployment in COVID-19 increased significantly. As a result of the severe disruptions to supply and production, the price of everyday items is rising daily. The households with lesser incomes are the ones who suffer the most because it is so difficult for them to make ends meet when faced with financial hardship and pandemics. In particular, B40 households and those who work to provide for their families' fundamental necessities face difficulties as a result of the price increase and income collapse (Sultana, 2020).

Based on the increase in suicidal incidents, there is a possibility that the general public will experience a significant mental health crisis, especially among vulnerable or at-risk populations like low-income urban communities. Given that the B40 families in Selangor were said to have been the most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic (Min Fui et. al, 2022). They consequently have a lower perception of their quality of life (QoL) than the general population and are more susceptible to psychological problems.

However, there aren't many studies on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the population at the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). In order to learn more about these difficulties, it was decided to look into how indirectly the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the mental health of the B40 household. Investigating the factors that contributed to the increase of COVID-19 cases should, in theory, increase public awareness of mental health issues. More than three factors, according to the study, affected the mental health of B40 households during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the significance of the association between the variables of financial difficulty, poor quality of life, unemployment, and lockdown on the part of B40 households of UiTM Seremban Campus student families and mental health.

## **Methodology**

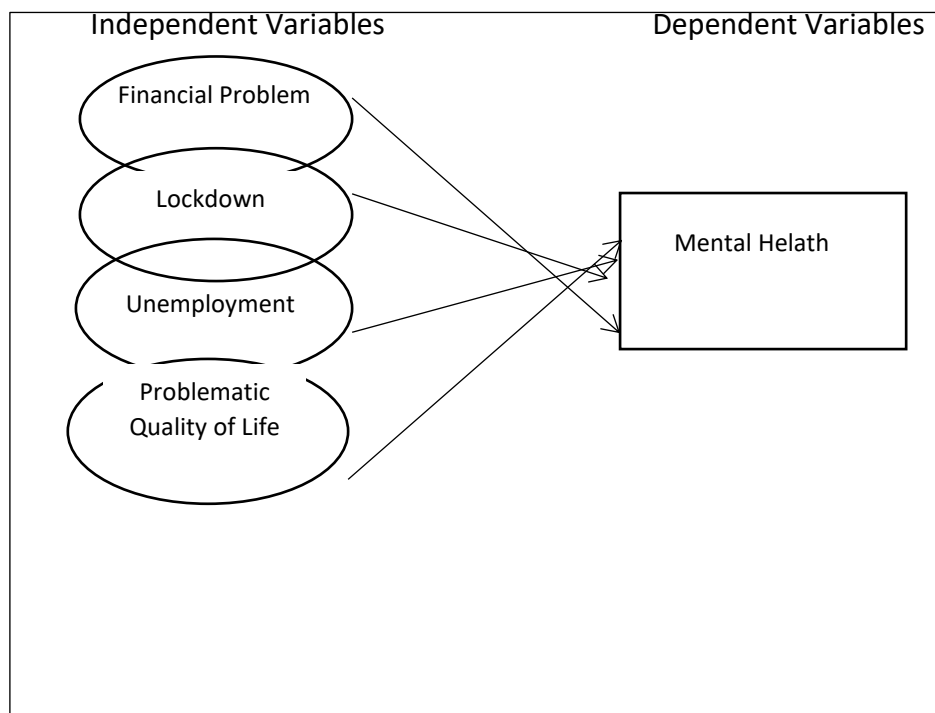
### ***Data Collection and Instrument***

Data for this study were gathered using a questionnaire as the tool. Sections A, B, and C make up the three sections of this questionnaire. Multiple sorts of variables were used in Section A, which was a demographic and personal information questionnaire. The socio-demographic

profile surveys from Min Fui et. al (2022) were adopted as questions in section A. Questions about the issues affecting mental health, such as unemployment, financial difficulty, poor quality of life, and incarceration, will be asked in Sections B and C. The question for Section B was taken from (Kasprzak, 2022).

In this theoretical framework, the main focus is on identifying the factors of mental health problems in the B40 group. Figure 1 displays the independent and dependent variables used in this study.

Figure 1 : Theoretical Framework



### **Multiple Linear Regression**

Multiple linear regression is a statistical technique that uses two or more independent variables to predict the outcome of a dependent variable (Eberly, 2007). In order to determine the significant factors that cause mental health, multiple regression analysis is employed. Multiple linear regression required some assumptions need to be satisfied. The assumptions are linearity, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, independency, normality and detection of outliers. The multiple linear regression equation is as Equation (1).

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

where

$Y_i$  : mental health

$\beta_0$  : regression intercepts

$\beta_i$  : coefficient describes the factor of the effect of independent variables where  $i = 1,2,3,4$

$X_1$  : financial problem

$X_2$  : problematic quality of life

$X_3$  : unemployment

$X_4$  : lockdown

After the model is developed, the general fitness of the model will be the first statistical test applied. A test called the F-test identifies which to determine the model's overall significance or validity.

## Results and Discussions

At the first stage of the model, four independent variables are introduced to the model which includes financial problem, problematic quality of life, unemployment and lockdown with mental health as the dependent variable. The p-value for F Statistics showed that this model is significant at the value of 0.000. Based on the regression coefficient test, all coefficient are significant, hence are included in the model. Thus, the final model obtained is as Equation 2.

$$Y_i = 0.699 + 0.224X_1 + 0.250 X_2 + 0.309X_3 - 0.117 X_4 \quad (2)$$

where

$Y_i$  : mental health

$\beta_0$  : regression intercepts

$\beta_i$  : coefficient describes the factor of the effect of independent variables where  $i = 1,2,3,4$

$X_1$  : financial problem

$X_2$  : problematic quality of life

$X_3$  : unemployment

$X_4$  : lockdown

The results shows that the value of financial problem increases, the mean of mental health also tend to increase by 0.2444. The value of problematic quality of life increases, the mean of mental health also tend to increase by 0.250. The value of unemployment increases, the mean of mental health also tend to increase by 0.309. The value of lockdown decreases, the mean of mental health also tend to decrease by 0.117.

## Conclusion

This study was conducted the 371 sample of B40 group among UiTM Seremban Campus students' families. The results of the objective of this study by using SPSS indicate that the independent variables, unemployment, financial problem, problematic quality of life and unemployment are significant to the multiple linear regression. The finest model out of the ones considered, with mental health of 0.699 constant + 0.224 financial problem + 0.250 problematic quality of life + 0.309 unemployment - 0.117 lockdown. Financial problem, problematic quality of life, unemployment and lockdown have p-values of less than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), which indicates that all of the independent variables are significant in the model. In conclusion, the result of this study met the objective of this study where the relationship between the factors (financial problem, problematic quality of life, unemployment and lockdown) and mental health among B40 households of UiTM Seremban Campus students' is determined. The final model developed can now be utilized to estimate future values for mental health among B40 households of students' families in UiTM Seremban branch.

## Research Contribution

Some potential advantages could result from the study's findings. The government and upcoming researchers are among the stakeholders who gain from the study. Additionally, the government gains from the discoveries. They now have a clearer understanding of what is happening among those with low incomes thanks to this study. These findings also prompted the government to launch a programme to improve the lives of low-income Malaysians (B40) both now and in the future. Additionally, by thoroughly examining the factors affecting mental health among B40 households, this study is helpful for students who are affected by

the COVID-19 pandemic because it makes the UiTM's superiors more aware of the conditions of the students during the pandemic.

As a result, the students who require assistance can receive the necessary financial and mental support to handle their problems. Last but not least, this research offers fresh perspective to next researchers. The analysis and findings that are presented in this study will help future researchers better understand and spread knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on various mental health issues as well as the factors that influence mental health among B40 households. Additionally, the study concentrated on the family dynamics and personal behaviours that can affect mental health and contribute to it. The findings of this study can also be applied to conversations in the future about the causes of mental health problems.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

Future researchers may do additional research on additional factors that may affect the B40 household's mental health such as social disadvantages and childhood abuse and debt. Besides that, this study focused on the B40 households which the results may vary due to cost of living and average monthly income of household from different state of Malaysia. As result, this study is an applicable for other income group in certain area. Hence, It is highly suggested that future researchers to carry out a research on students from all universities in Malaysia and from all different group of income.

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