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# The Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Marginalized Youth Communities in Malaysia: Key Issues

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**Abstract** – This article presents youths' opinions on the positive or negative Coronavirus (COVID-19) impacts from economic and daily routine perspectives. Interview sessions were conducted to determine the intricacies encountered by Malaysian youth communities. Although adverse effects involving unemployment denoted the key issue of local youth communities, positive counterparts were equally identified. For example, youths strived to venture into novel fields (online businesses and food delivery services) following new social norms. Predictably, this study would increase policymakers' awareness in determining the positive and negative influences faced by marginalised youths during the COVID-19 health crisis.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Marginalised Youth, Malaysia

## 1. Introduction

As an unforeseen, highly contagious, and life-threatening health crisis that has claimed millions of lives, COVID-19 globally and adversely influenced different sectors (financial, transportation, education, tourism, and sports). Despite the worldwide financial downfall following the spread and transmission of COVID-19, some positive implications were highlighted (improved air quality, human behavioural changes following the new norms, novel financial activities, and digital educational revolutions).

### 1.1 Covid-19 pandemic crisis

The aforementioned pandemic impacted public health, national economy, labour market, and global economy. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 dashboard, a total of 178,118,597 confirmed cases and 3,864,180 deaths were officially reported as of 21 June 2021. Essentially, the rapid spread of COVID-19 resembled the influenza virus (through respiratory drops from sneezing and coughing). Subsequent exposure and symptoms (cough, fever, fatigue, muscle pain, breathing difficulties, severely inflamed lungs, septic shock sepsis, respiratory distress syndrome, and death) were typically detected within the next five days (potentially ranging from two to 14 days) (Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020). As infected individuals might not show clinical signs, health officers have advised people who had close contact with COVID-19 positive patients to be under supervision and undergo swab tests as a safety precaution.

The global pandemic (worst health crisis that threatened human survival and well-being) has also adversely affected Malaysia. For example, most financial activities were disrupted following the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, specific sectors were rendered inoperable due to revenue loss and the incurrence of other costs. The affected sectors strived to minimise operational costs by decreasing the number of employees. Following the United Nation (U.N.), over 1.25 billion employees worldwide potentially faced retrenchment due to the pandemic.

On another note, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) denoted that the COVID-19 outbreak gravely impacted specific industries, including accommodation, service, food, real estate, business and management, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation (motor vehicles and motorcycles) (see Table 1). In line with the ILO forecasts, approximately 25 million employees would face unemployment throughout 2020. Notably, the negative consequence also impacted the youths within marginalised local communities who lost daily income sources due to retrenchment.

Based on the subsequent ILO report ('ILO Monitor 2nd Edition: COVID-19 and the World of Work') on 7 April 2020, the drastic global rise of unemployment reflected financial activity disruptions following the COVID-19 outbreak. Globally, 3.3 billion workers were impacted by the health crisis (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Workers at risk (Sectoral perceptive)*

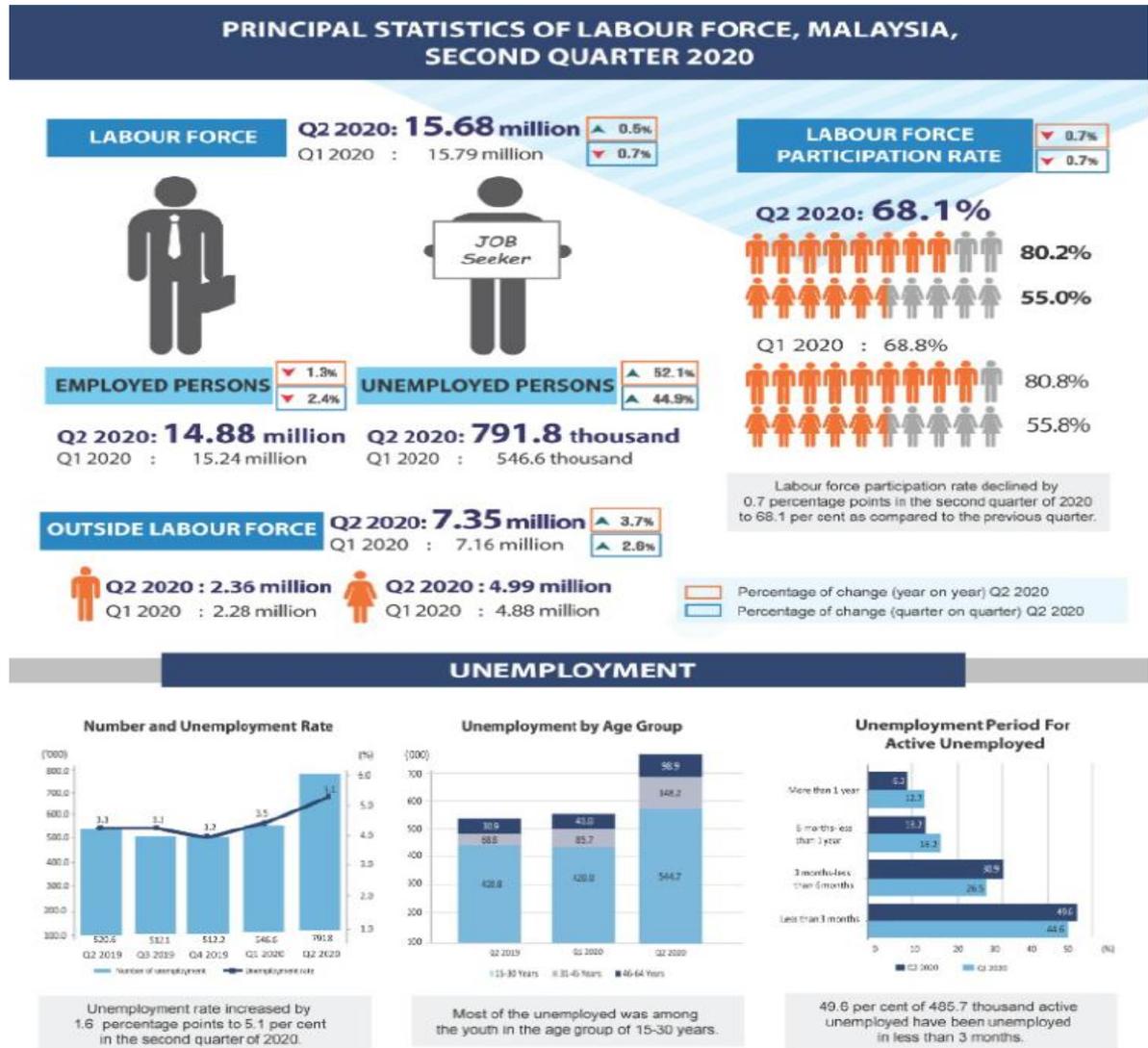
Economic sector	Current impact of crisis on economic output	Baseline employment situation (global estimates for 2020 prior to COVID-19)			
		Level of employment (000s)	Share in global employment (%)	Wage ratio (av. monthly sector earnings/av. total earnings )	Share of women (%)
Education	Low	176560	5.3	1.23	61.8
Human health and social work activities	Low	136244	4.1	1.14	70.4
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	Low	144241	4.3	1.35	31.5
Utilities	Low	26589	0.8	1.07	18.8
Agriculture; forestry and fishing	Low-Medium*	880373	26.5	0.72	37.1
Construction	Medium	257041	7.7	1.03	7.3
Financial and insurance activities	Medium	52237	1.6	1.72	47.1
Mining and quarrying	Medium	21714	0.7	1.46	15.1
Arts, entertainment and recreation, and other services	Medium-high*	179857	5.4	0.69	57.2

Based on the epidemiologic and comprehensive assessments published on 23 Mac 2020 by the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER), approximately 2.4 million employees potentially faced unemployment with 67% encompassing unskilled labourers. Notwithstanding, increased digital business activities offered novel employment possibilities for courier service and transportation industries through delivery services. Reportedly, the total unemployment rate increased by 4.9% between Feb – June 2020 (one of the highest rates in three decades). The impacted group involved self-employed communities with low income (approximately 2.3 million people) and fresh graduates seeking employment. The financial downfall increased unemployment and poverty rates (due to limited vacancies), thus adding to the total number of work loss and retrenchment.

In line with most financial experts, the global health crisis predictably led to low economic activities (Kabir et al., 2020) post-pandemic. The decline inevitably increased unemployment and reduced job vacancies (particularly for youths and fresh graduates). In an initial report by the Department of Statistics Malaysia between 23 and 31 March 2020 (‘The Impact of COVID-19 to the Economy and Individuals’), 52.6% of the 168,182 participants were reportedly impacted by COVID-19. Meanwhile, the highest staff layoff encompassed food and beverage service employees (approximately 35.4%) followed by agricultural and fishery industries (21.9% and 11.8%, respectively).

Following the Department of Statistics, the unemployment rate in Malaysia increased to 5.3% (826,100 unemployed individuals) in May 2020 (see Figures 1 and 2). The unemployed category for youths approximately ranged between 15 and 30 years old

(the highest unemployment rate at 6.9%), followed by individuals between 31 and 45 years old (1.4%), and people between 46 and 64 years old (1.1%).



**Figure 1: Principal Statistics of Labour Force, Malaysia (Second Quarter, 2020)**

Source: (Labour Force Survey, Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020)



Figure 2: Labour Force Malaysia June 2020

Source: (Monthly Labour Force Survey, Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020)

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Marginalized youth communities*

Marginalised youth communities imply younger generations residing in urban or suburban areas (apartments or slums) with a household income of RM 3,000 and below and youths in remote areas (Felda development lands, estates, and traditional villages) with a household income of RM 2,000 and below (Koha et al., 2019). As the youth category is a vital contributor to the national labour market (encompassing almost 40% of the entire workforce nationwide) (Kasim et al., 2014), younger generations indicate the most substantial national resource that potentially facilitates national economic development and prosperity for social, economic, and political resilience.

In Hourcade, Bullock-Rest and Schelhow (2010), younger generations became marginalised following specific geographical elements, age, race, gender, sexual orientations, and religion. Although local youths between 15 and 29 years old were risk of dropping out education due to social concerns, relevant programmes to address the aforementioned complexities remained scarce (Yassin, 2016). Additionally, the recent COVID-19 outbreak financially impacted marginalised youths as the individuals hailed from problematic and economically unstable families with insufficient parental attention (Kasim et al., 2014; Omar et al., 2016).

In this regard, emotionally-driven marginalised youths with low self-esteem and no life goals tended to engage in deviant activities. Thus, Malaysian youths must be moulded as intelligent humans individuals in a post-modern knowledge era with strong personalities, lifelong learning competencies, and intentions to facilitate national and social advancement.

Essentially, younger generations (new graduates) needed to obtain appropriate employment that corresponded to paper qualifications. Current labour market complexities (restricted movements and financial activities) with the ongoing health crisis adversely affected youths, specifically fresh graduates (challenges in seeking and retaining employment and income).

Following Hassan, Shiratuddin and Abd Rahman's (2016) list of key concerns involving marginalised youth communities, the individuals were marginalised following several aspects (living area, age, and household revenue). The social category reflected the most significant issues (hobbies, sports, health, beauty, arts and entertainment, crime, racial issues, current social issues, and life quality) while the economic counterpart implied economic, corporate, employment, and living expenditure issues. Meanwhile, present political intricacies influenced national and financial stability and the rural-urban gap (Hassan, Shiratuddin & Abd Rahman, 2016).

In line with past studies on marginalised youth communities that proved essential in determining current complexities due to the pandemic (Othman et al., 2016; Kasim et al., 2014; Omar et al., 2016), five focus groups encompassing 50 individuals from marginalised youth communities in Negeri Tumpat (Kelantan), Besut (Terengganu), Lembang Subang (Selangor), Kulai (Johor Bahru), and Taiping (Perak) were established. The following section outlines the research methodology and outcomes.

## **3. Study Methodology**

Although Malaysian youths ranged from 15 to 40 years old, this research denoted local youths to range between 15 and 25 years old in line with UNESCO recommendation (from 15 to 24 years old) (UNESCO, 2001). The focus group discussions encompassing 50 youths between 15 and 25 years old was conducted in five local states (Selangor, Kelantan, Terengganu, Johor, and Perak) with 11 empirical tools from Hassan et al. (2016). Essentially, this study aimed to examine youths' perspectives of positive or negative COVID-19 effects on daily economies and lives. The research was also crucial in determining the key concerns impacting marginalised youth communities. A set of questions (distributed using WhatsApp voice notes) were duly structured for the focus groups to facilitate research objective attainment. The study respondents were required to address the questions with WhatsApp voice notes. The aforementioned strategy was selected following restricted network access in respondents' living areas that deterred virtual meetings (Google Meet and Webex). Furthermore, all the information was extracted with note-taking for data collection purposes. Lastly, the research implemented thematic data assessment (using the study themes) for qualitative data evaluation.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The study respondents' demographic details and interview excerpts are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic

Area	Gender	Number of respondents
Lembah Subang, Selangor	Male	5
	Female	6
Tumpat, Kelantan	Male	5
	Female	5
Besut, Terengganu	Male	5
	Female	5
Kulai, Johor	Male	6
	Female	6
Taping, Perak	Male	3
	Female	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>

Table 3: Excerpts of the interview with the respondents

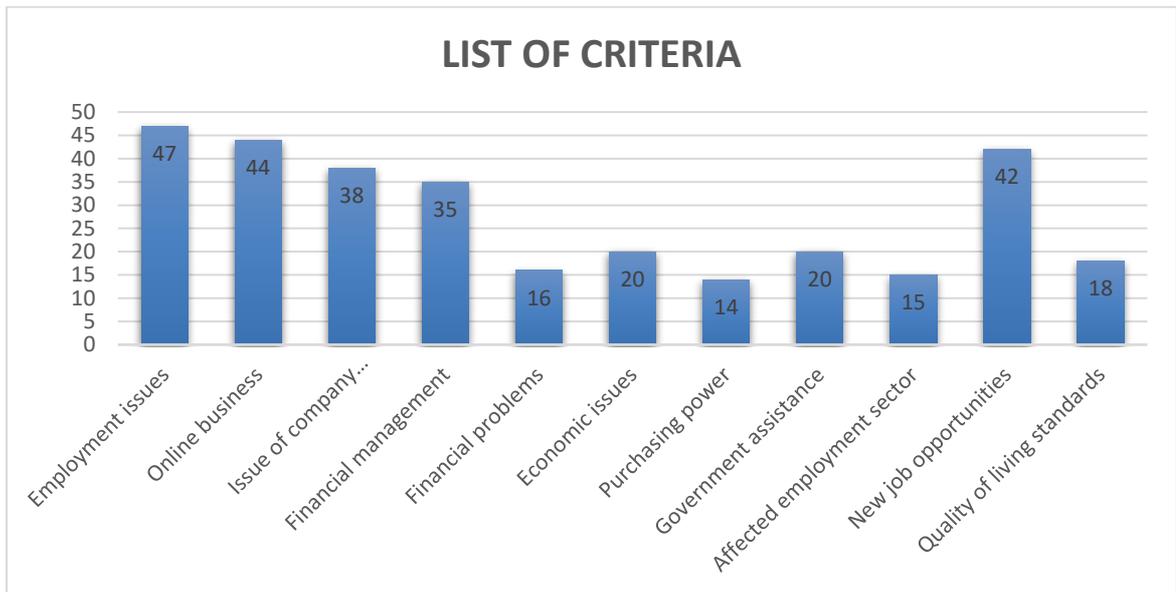
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>The number of respondents reflecting the criterion</b>	<b>Respondent Interview Excerpts</b>
<b>Employment Issues</b>	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...difficult to get a job during the covid-19 pandemic season, some even lost their jobs..."</li> <li>▪ "...the income gap among youths is marginalized due to the difficulty of getting a job..."</li> </ul>
<b>Online business</b>	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...the marginalized youth engage in online business to earn monthly expenses ..."</li> <li>▪ "...E-wallets and online banking are increasingly used in buying and selling to reduce contact between sellers and buyers ..."</li> </ul>
<b>The issue of company deterioration</b>	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...the actions of employers who implement unpaid leave to reduce operating costs in the face of a sharp decline in demand for goods ..."</li> <li>▪ "...marginalized youths were laid off because employers could not afford to pay salaries ..."</li> </ul>
<b>Financial management</b>	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...thrift and save money to be used in times of emergency that is when MCO is carried out ..."</li> <li>▪ "...wise in buying and they definitely want to plan the use of money for more important things ..."</li> </ul>
<b>Financial problems</b>	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...borrowing money from others to cover expenses temporarily ..."</li> <li>▪ "...expenses increased so much that they had to limit food consumption..."</li> </ul>
<b>Economic issues</b>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...foreign currency inflows and outflows will be disrupted ..."</li> <li>▪ "...Malaysia's import and export activities will be affected ..."</li> </ul>
<b>Purchasing Power</b>	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "... society becomes more frugal to avoid the purchase of panic and the use of goods and food at home ..."</li> <li>▪ "...lack of purchasing power for marginalized youths due to relatively affected incomes ..."</li> </ul>
<b>Government assistance</b>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "...6-month delay such as car and house payments are seen to be able to have a big impact after</li> </ul>

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		COVID-19 gradually recovered ..."
		▪ "...delaying the repayment of loans such as PTPTN can reduce the burden of marginalized youth..."
<b>Affected employment sector</b>	15	▪ "...barber shop services lost source of income..." ▪ "...small companies that may be run by marginalized youth suffer losses..."
<b>New job opportunities</b>	42	▪ "...participate in food / goods delivery jobs such as Foodpanda, Grabfood, Express, J&T and Poslaju..." ▪ "...marginalized youths begin to perform new jobs that can be done in situations like this, such as food delivery services..."
<b>Quality of living standards</b>	18	▪ "...the living standards of marginalized youths are becoming increasingly unsatisfactory..." ▪ "...unbalanced eating patterns due to life are not as usual..."

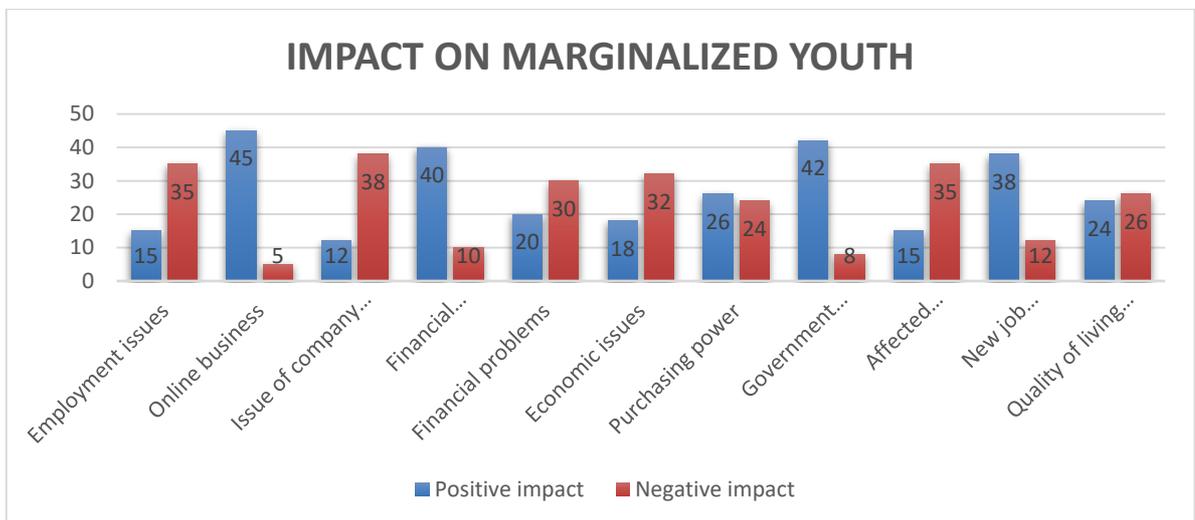
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Based on the aforementioned tables, 11 themes were identified during the focus group discussions (see Table 3 for respondents' interview excerpts).



**Figure 3: List of criteria**

Following Figure 3 (the criteria list contributed by marginalised youths), three substantial concerns were highlighted (employment, online business, and new job opportunities), followed by company deterioration concerns, and financial management issues. The least significant intricacies involved financial problems, economic issues, purchasing power, government assistance, affected employment sector, and quality of living standards.



**Figure 4: Impact on marginalized youth**

Meanwhile, Figure 4 demonstrated two respondent impact categories: positive and negative COVID-19 effects. Resultantly, specific criteria outlined positive influences (online business, financial management, government assistance, and new job opportunities), followed by company deterioration concerns, and financial management issues. The least significant intricacies involved financial problems, economic issues, purchasing power, government assistance, affected employment sector, and quality of living standards.

opportunities) while positive counterparts denoted employment issues, company deterioration, financial problems, economic problems, and affected employment sectors.

## **5. Discussions**

### *5.1 Employment Issues*

Summarily, most Malaysian companies and marginalised youth communities were impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Specifically, self-employed marginalised youths (small-time traders at night markets and sidewalk hawkers owning beverage and snack stalls) were more adversely affected than marginalised individuals who worked for a living. As self-employed marginalised youths needed social contact for business growth, monthly revenues might be impacted by the movement control order or MCO (Lim, 2020; Been et al., 2020). Consequently, the self-employed group lost income sources following work disruptions (restrictions on external movement). Additionally, the number of regular customers rapidly declined due to stay-at-home orders during MCO. Fresh graduates would also encounter employment-oriented challenges (albeit with a lesser impact) following insufficient job markets post-pandemic. As such, the conundrum could instigate higher unemployment rates among marginalised communities if left unattended.

On another note, marginalised youths running small businesses (food stalls and barber and telephone shops) were similarly affected as only essential businesses were permitted to operate during MCO. In this vein, non-essential businesses tended to encounter financial losses due to insufficient market demands. As employed marginalised youths with small incomes were more adversely impacted compared to individuals with higher incomes, marginalised youths needed to generate additional financial sources during and post-MCO. Carroll et al.'s (2020) examination (through interviews) on employment stability concerns among Canadian families demonstrated intricacies involving work loss and business closure. In this vein, unemployment denoted a worldwide phenomenon that surpassed local concerns.

### *5.2 Online Services*

Digital systems and e-wallets are increasingly utilised in goods trading in line with Vision 2020. A substantial number of marginalised youths are currently engaging in online businesses (more convenient and time-saving for users) for monthly expenditure in the wake of MCO. For example, marginalised youths could employ digital purchasing systems as an alternative income approach through social media platforms. Additionally, the individuals proved resourceful in seeking appropriate work opportunities for financial sustenance during MCO. Fresh graduates who might encounter employment challenges should strive towards novel approaches (gauging online businesses and developing online business networks and digital promotion strategies) to compete against other online business rivals. The aforementioned methods served as preparatory steps to prevent unemployment and future income source concerns (online business execution).

Following increased online shopping activities due to MCO, marginalised youths sought to perform financial investments using digital applications (Shopee and Lazada) to purchase specific items (cosmetics and stationeries). Notwithstanding, specific individuals

prudently limited financial expenditure and practised frugality during MCO for future sustenance.

Online business successes facilitated cash flows with an anticipated increase of online staff for an implicit and explicit exploration of digital employment and activities among marginalised youths. Although Nguyen and Vu (2020) revealed food delivery to homes as an advantageous, convenient, and secure health risk-reducing strategy, specific countermeasures proved necessary. For example, contactless delivery is implemented by GrabFood (contactless Grab transactions) where riders can deliver food at a specific location (two meters from customers) followed by e-wallet or digital credit card payment approaches. In emerging nations, digital or credit card payments supported limited contact with external parties (riders).

The most significant aspect that encouraged customers to utilise food-delivery applications indicated doorstep delivery with discounts and cashback promotions (Dang, et. al. 2018; Das, 2018). The popularity outlined an opportunity for marginalised youths employed in digital services to optimise income sources. Likewise, Md Rahim and Mohd Yunus (2021) proposed that customers continued buying through digital services following high satisfaction with e-hailing food delivery service and food qualities. As such, increased orders during MCO financially catalysed local e-hailing food delivery services.

### *5.3 New Job Opportunities*

Given the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, marginalised youth communities should consider optimal income sourcing methods with novel employment opportunities. Specifically, the individuals were required to be innovative and self-sufficient in seeking novel work possibilities through Grab and Foodpanda services (as runners) in line with current demands. Additionally, the aforementioned youths were prepared to serve as frontliners (Foodpanda riders) for other people's convenience and well-being in delivering sumptuous and famous fast food items. The number of agents and stockists in health food, food delivery, and postal services has also significantly multiplied.

Novel employment possibilities could increase marginalised youth incomes during the COVID-19 outbreak. Likewise, Raj. et al. (2020) discovered that although COVID-19 proved disruptive for multiple services and businesses, a significant performance level was documented on food delivery demands in most online companies resembling Grab. Following advanced technologies in Malaysia, such digital applications proved necessary for substantial market opportunities and a competitive advantage over rival businesses (Foodpanda services) (Kee et al., 2021). As the Vietnamese government ordered the closure of non-essential services with restrictions for restaurants (only takeaway services in compliance with minimal social contact), the imposition induced an increase of novel employment, including Vietnamese food delivery services. Consequently, food delivery to homes proved to be a useful, convenient, and secure means of minimising COVID-19 risk infections (Nguyen & Vu, 2020).

### *5.4 Company Deterioration Issues*

Several businesses (tourism, construction, and transportation) faced losses in the wake of MCO. Although hotels denoted one of the key catalysts in maintaining and attracting tourists to Malaysia, the present financial circumstance following Covid-19 resulted in

several hotels closing down and halted business operations. For example, Hotel Equatorial Penang and G City Club Hotel were closed down following low occupancy rates and negative profit (Emmanuel, 2021; The Star, 2020). Meanwhile, marginalised youths employed in certain small businesses were compelled to consider potential retrenchment following high labour costs (wages that needed to be paid from low sales incomes and company cash flows). Consequently, many employers began downsizing the companies. Marginalised youths who offered haircut services also faced income loss during the pandemic (employers failed to pay workers' wages as anticipated following negative business output).

Many of the aforementioned youths were retrenched as companies needed to reduce business expenditure. Household incomes were similarly minimised (household leaders were compelled to take unpaid leave). For example, wage-earning marginalised youths were compelled to take unpaid leave due to minimal operational costs and unforeseen decline in goods and service demands locally. Consequently, marginalised youths were urged to acknowledge employers' decisions on unpaid leave or salary reduction for low operational costs.

Following multiple past studies, small and medium-sized businesses were more adversely impacted by crises compared to big counterparts. The aforementioned companies failed to sustain during financial downfalls following high liabilities and insufficient resources (Dimson et al., 2020; Eggers, 2020). Zucchi and Subramanian (2020) who researched organisational complexities proposed enhanced staff scheduling during the health crisis by using Mixed Integer Linear Programming (MILP) with open-source optimisation software. The study outcomes could predictably facilitate optimal company management and operations.

### *5.5 Financial Management*

Several studies that examined economic equilibrium during COVID-19 highlighted household expenditure as a financial concern. The study outcomes proposed prudent purchasing based on priority (Carroll et al., 2020). Past research also implied the inability to manage present living standards, particularly individuals with high debts. Specifically, unemployed individuals (due to the health crisis) would be significantly impacted by insufficient savings for the month (Ram, 2020; Lim, 2020; Been et al., 2020). In this vein, marginalised youths would soon encounter concerns involving daily expenditure management based on economic limitations. For example, individuals needed to stock up on food and practice frugality. Additionally, financially distraught youths needed to work multiple jobs for pocket money due to low savings and unemployment.

From a positive viewpoint, youths proved competent in financial management by prioritising needs rather than wants. Similarly, Mohammad (2020) disclosed that the shifts caused by financial complexities during MCO subsequently changed individual behaviours (increased savings, essential expenditure, risk management, and financial investments for daily life support). Implicitly, youths could competently manage savings without unnecessary expenditure. As such, marginalised youths have begun to acknowledge the essentiality of financial savings during MCO through frugality (savings derived from daily revenues and thriftiness). The individuals could also apply competent money management approaches for early savings for unforeseen circumstances (COVID-19).

Given the rapid rise of unemployment and debts, many people felt incompetent to cope with current living standards (Lim, 2020). For example, Been, Suari, Knoef and Alessie (2020) mentioned that negatively impacted individuals would encounter future financial complexities (high debt liabilities), particularly if debts were unpaid within the stipulated period. The financial conundrums have shifted Malaysians' attitudes towards saving, spending, risk management, and investment for daily life support (Mohammad, 2020). Despite government and private sector initiatives, inadequate awareness of appropriate financial management was palpable among local working adults (Jay, 2017). Following the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, the situation worsened when most unemployed individuals faced insufficient savings for a month, (Ram, 2020).

### *5.6 Government Assistance*

As previously mentioned, the Malaysian government offered assistance through loans and economic aids (Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat) during the pandemic. The financial assistance supported unemployed marginalised youths during MCO who single unmarried youth to minimise the economic burden. From April 1, 2020, the government also increased healthcare employees' monthly allowance from RM400 to RM600 until the end of the health crisis (Sunil, 2020). As such, the Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat was implemented to catalyse stagnant economies during MCO. Less fortunate (homeless) individuals were also provided with shelter and food. Meanwhile, several employers stepped forward to offer revenue generation opportunities.

Although the Prihatin stimulus package for marginalised youths and family members (money, Internet, and social support) considerably eased economic constraints, the livelihood assistance needed to be frugally utilised. This research was performed by examining governmental engagement in health crisis management. Resultantly, approximately 89.9% conceded that the Malaysian government managed to control the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Ministry of Health recommended an action plan of utilising public halls and indoor stadiums if the cases reached 1000 per day, retired nurses would register as volunteers to assist the government and frontliners in combating COVID-19 (Ang, 2020). In this vein, collective local participation, specifically from the Ministry of Health proved crucial in regulating people's daily lives and stabilising the national economy (Azlan et al., 2020).

### *5.7 Quality of Living Standards*

The current health crisis inevitably impacted the quality of living standards (education system, job, family issues, and health). Past research implied that educational institutions, educators, and students experienced challenges in managing online or distance learning (induced adverse effects on personal, emotional, social, and financial well-being) (Chandra, 2020). For example, parents encountered intricacies in facilitating children to adapt to the significant shift from conventional physical teaching to virtual counterparts following time constraints (Burgess & Sivertsen, 2020). Notwithstanding, parents could spend more time in monitoring children's school work and providing motivation for continuous learning despite the pandemic.

In terms of income sources, marginalised youths needed to generate or contribute ideas to elevate national incomes (minimal national Gross Domestic Product led to zero

revenue source). On another note, social life qualities also implied a significant decline. For example, several marginalised youths employed in Singapore were compelled to remain in Malaysia following MCO that prohibited activities in and out of the Johor Bahru-Singapore border. Meanwhile, some youths were separated from family members (due to being employed in Singapore) with burdensome debts and stress in sole financial management (Eisenberg et al, 2007).

Health-wise, imbalanced food patterns were identified following the unavailability or scarcity of food sources (vegetables and other food sources could not be sold in the market). Additionally, daily goods in grocery stores often ran out of stock due to panic-buying behaviours (beyond grocers' predictions) and resulted in increased new supplies. Obtaining such supplies proved time-consuming following restrictive goods shipment protocols. Specifically, balanced purchases proved challenging for less fortunate individuals and people who suffered daily hardships.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Although several concerns were presented by youths based on the aforementioned discussions, positive implications owing to MCO were also highlighted. For example, social media (TikTok and Instagram) influences inspired novel hobbies involving room-painting, cake-making, and other artistic activities despite the high costs incurred to purchase the necessary tools. Power et al. (2020) denoted that education, health, and social care services proved limited for youths and families during COVID-19 following social distancing (to avoid infection). The outcomes corresponded to Wang et al. (2020) where the pandemic potentially impacted life quality with adverse influences on youths' emotions. As such, young individuals who needed to study and work at home might encounter insufficient sleep, discomfort while learning, and difficulties in controlling emotions during the pandemic.

Overall, self-development, social relationships, identity, self-competence, leisure time, health, media penetration, security, deviant behaviour, education, politics, and financial equilibrium were implied in the Malaysian Youth Index (2015) as essential predictors for optimal life quality and well-being among Malaysian youths. Notably, positive implications (awareness of marginalised youth community roles during MCO and Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) could also be observed. For example, youths served as frontliners in combating COVID-19 through government bodies, including the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM), enforcement agencies, such as the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) and Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM), and other government counterparts. Youths also played a significant role in supporting the local communities within residential areas. In this vein, marginalised youth communities were highly engaged in offering assistance during food distribution to senior citizens, the disabled, single mothers, and the poor residents in the surrounding areas.

Youth participation in volunteer work under non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also encompassed food delivery (ordered from digital applications). The substantial contributions implied that youths who facilitated national growth and strived to aid the community should be highly regarded.

This study particularly elaborated on how Covid-19 affected Malaysian

marginalised youths with recommendations for mutual collaboration with policymakers, NGOs, and community members to implement the empirical outcomes for perpetual enhancement and development of marginalised communities and the nation.

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