

I. COVID-19 PANDEMIC DURING 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) – THE CASE OF RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH.

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ABSTRACT: The Covid-19 pandemic has waged a global rating crisis, covering all aspects of humanity. In such situations, universities and academics, particularly the Ministry of Higher Education, play a significant role in enabling the students to stay safe under such circumstances. Unfortunately, based on news reports and current observations, they are relatively passive and not forthcoming in this area of concern. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a huge economic downturn for every country afflicted by the disease, and many nations are more than desperate to revive their economy and the lifestyle of the community as more and more people come under stress. This calls for a new way of managing our daily lives. This paper aims to review the level of mental health among students living in the residential located within the university campus while facing the COVID-19 pandemic and confined by the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) crisis. It also addresses the importance of identifying and attending to the students' mental health. The social metric rules were used to assess and analyse the data and results showed that some students were not affected by this crisis while a small portion of the students were found to be affected by the crisis. It is recommended that they be given options to have some counselling sessions with experts.

Keywords: mental health, student psychology level, university resident

INTRODUCTION

Kairina (not her real name) is one of the third-year students majoring in Civil Engineering at a local university, and she lives in the hostel of one of the residential colleges. She is fortunate that this residential college takes the welfare of the students seriously. It was during the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) crisis, that all the students had become close to each other; they got to know the principal, the officers and other staff of the college who were managing the students welfare. The residential college had

certainly helped to facilitate the students' affairs during the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO).

Kairina had initially complained of being irritated by her situation, where she had to be confined to herself since she was also in the process of writing her thesis, doing her assignments, and also attending online lectures, all of which required her full attention. Yet, she also missed her family who were living in the village. The thoughts of them helped to keep her mind calm as she lived under the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) restraint which had caused her much difficulties. Her daily activities had changed 360 degrees, and unable to move around freely, she sometimes falls into depression. During her stay at the residential college, the university had announced that all students living in the residential campus was prohibited from returning home, after the government declared the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO). The move was to help the country to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it caused a huge impact on everyone living in the country. During the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) period, university students living within the campus were only permitted to leave the residential at the time that had been scheduled by the college management. Social distancing was imposed and each had to keep a meter away from others including taking food supplies provided by the college management.

THE LEVEL OF STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH WHEN FACING COVID-19 PANDEMIC DURING THE 2020 MALAYSIA MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER (MCO) WHILE LIVING IN UNIVERSITY RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

This paper reviews the unique case of the university students of a public university who were exposed to the psychiatric symptoms of stress while living in the residential colleges and confined to the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) restraint caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the general wellness crisis of the students concerned had been one that manifested boredom, anxiety, and restlessness. Many of the undergraduate students in the residential colleges were growing unhappy, with many developing nervousness, and impatience. These feelings had also affected their studies.

During the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), there were countless reasons causing the undergraduates to experience stress, anxiety, restlessness or even boredom. Due to their lack of activity, these students did not know how to cope with the many difficulties or barriers they faced. If these issues were not addressed duly, the students could experience more psychological health issues, and these could affect their personal wellbeing. The universities where these students reside in need to take a deeper look into these issues. They also need to provide the relevant support to these students so that the current 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) environment of boredom and restlessness can be dealt with to enable these undergraduates to experience a better learning and living environment. It became apparent that their stay in the residential colleges was going to be long and uncertain as numerous colleges had to extend their semester leave so that undergraduates could defer their studies, and also for the authority to curb the COVID-19 pandemic from spreading. When the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) was enforced, most universities had also notified students that they had to be quarantined at the residential campus because of the risks of spreading the COVID-19 virus to others. If confined to the residential colleges indefinitely, these students may lose critical opportunities for their scientific or professional advancement. Social isolation and decreased activities during the quarantine can exacerbate feelings of despair. The situation is likely to amplify levels of stress, anxiety, and bad moods. In other circumstances, there were also many university students who were not under quarantine, and are with their families. Yet they too also experience a lot of stress due to the change of the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) climate, such as online learning and teaching which they were not used to and which took up a lot of time, both by the teacher and themselves as students. Many had explained how tedious and intimidating the experience was because of the sudden shift to online learning. Additionally, many students were also stressed out by the assignments imposed by online learning, amounting to more work comparatively. Additionally, they were also stressed out by the cancellation of huge events which they had prepared for, such as graduation, performances, presentations, and social interactions. Many university students were also

disappointed by the confinement issue because they were unable to keep up with their momentum such as relationships, and these had caused many to experience more anxiety, depression, and undue pressures. It seemed that the university students were facing a potentially traumatic health crisis, and if left unattended, the issue can lead to clinically significant symptoms and illnesses. The COVID-19 pandemic had created extreme social isolation, and it could possibly lead to worse cases of stress and mental health issues.

This paper offers a window into the issue of mental health issues experienced by a group of university students based in the residential colleges of one public university. It aims to describe what students experience and how the university concerned should respond to the situation by developing some plans as support for those students living within the confines of the college residences during the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) enforcement (from March 18 to May 12, 2020).

It is important to support these students during this stressful and potentially isolating experience by providing counselling services. As a mental health department, the Department of Psychology could offer counselling services to students in the residential campus during the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) while facing COVID-19 pandemic. Time or session can be made flexible so that the counsellors are able to communicate with the students who need such services. The Mental Health Department in the university can typically uses exercises as practices for potential coverage of the semester gaps so that students can become involved and destress.

Mental health is defined as a wellness condition where each individual is aware of his/her potential; he/she can deal with normal life stress, can work productively, and is able to make contributions to the community. Mental health is related to the mental and psychological wellbeing. The individual's mental health is comprehensively noted as a mass. It includes looking for ways to promote one's mental wellbeing, the prevention of mental harassment, the protection of one's human rights, and care for one's personal wellbeing, especially when faced with some disruptions in life. The mental wellbeing of a person is very important because about 800,000 individuals in worldwide with mental issues commit

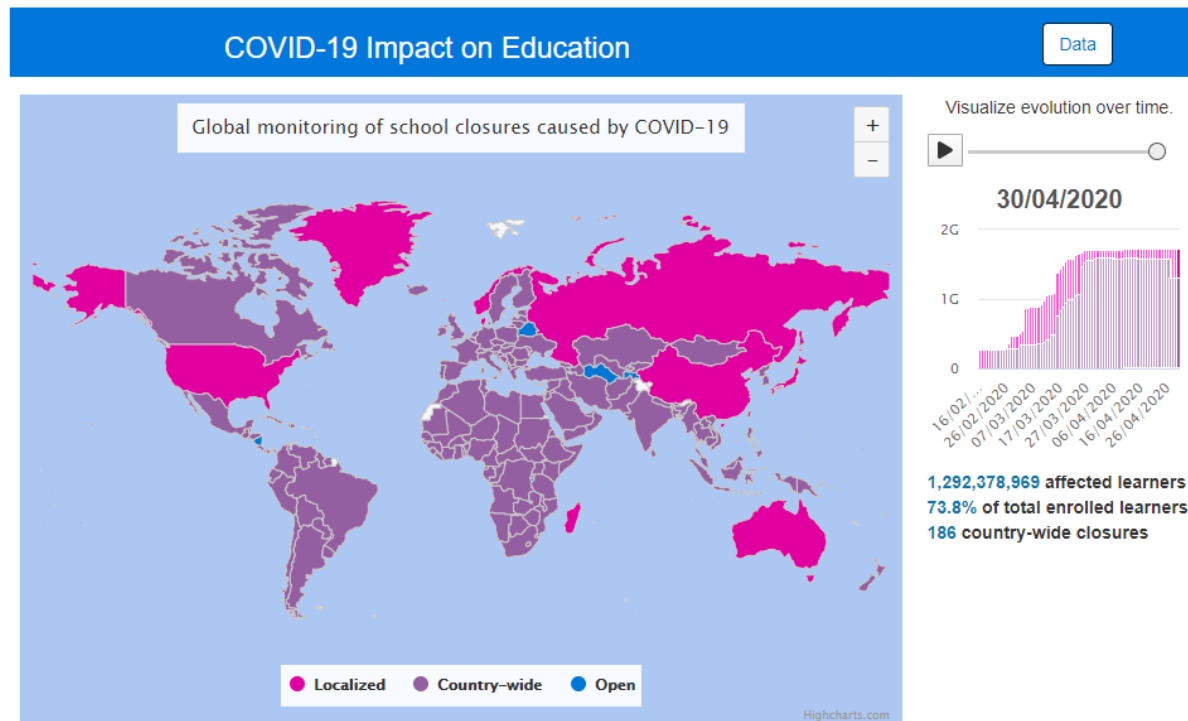
suicide. Mental illness seems to be driving force triggering deaths among people aged between 15-29 years old. This category of young people also seemed to be the most vulnerable to mental health issues, with no outlet to share their pent-up frustrations, hence death becomes the number one (1) coping mechanism. About one in every nine individuals with mental health issues is influenced by committing suicide, and the age for such individuals is getting younger by the day.

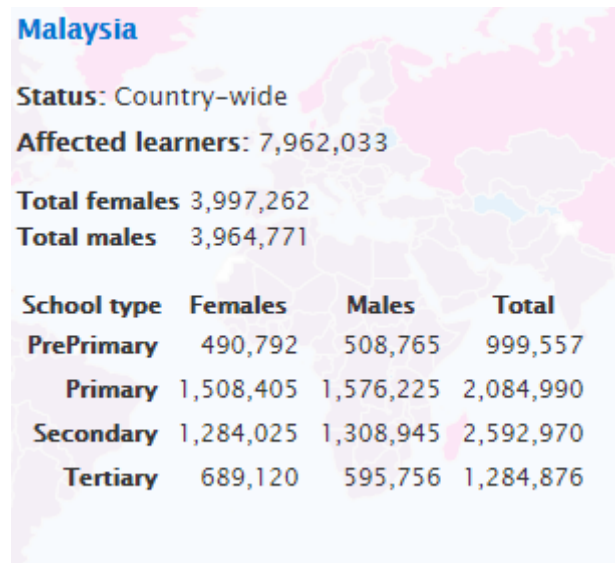
The rate of emotional wellness among labourers differ slightly, from less than two (2) persons for every 100 000 individuals in low-pay nations and more than 70 for every 100 000 people in high-pay nations with around 50% of the population in 139 nations in the world suffering from psychological well-being. These nations have governments that plan to help their citizens overcome mental health issues but they have not done enough to combat the mental health issues currently affecting their citizens. This is necessary and important because this privilege comes under the human rights law.

Mental, neurological, and substance use issues make up 10% of the world's maladies, and 30% of the non-deadly illness troubles. Around 1 in every 5 of the world's children and young people have a psychological problem. Sadness is likewise one of the primary sources of their incapacity, and sadness has influenced as many as 264 million individuals, as the psychological issues begins from as early as before the age of 14.

Turning to the university students under lockdown, as part of the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), some attention also needs to be given to them because their lives are most unlikely going to be normal again. During the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) enforcement, undergraduates from families with less economic means tend to suffer more from money related issues, accommodation needs, transportation, and last-minute lodgings and food consumptions, all of which incur stress and money. Further to this is that during their 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) quarantine, they may be suffering from perilous nourishment. This is a critical issue that influences undergraduates' studies. With restricted money, their lives can become exasperating when they require food or drinks and the pressure builds up when

they are unable to locate a place to purchase what they need. They could become so desperate that they may lose track of their studies. In comparison, those undergraduates staying at home also face pressure; they are unable to earn some pocket money to sustain their needs. Further to this, some undergraduates also lack innovative skills such as the inability to deal with online learning and teaching. This could put pressure on their scholastic goals. Moreover, they may also lack the capacity to connect with their virtual social networks, thereby prompting them to undergo more stress. It appears that some undergraduates do not know where to seek for help.





Figures 1: Correspond to number of learners enrolled at pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels of education [ISCED levels 0 to 3], as well as at tertiary education levels [ISCED levels 5 to 8]. Enrolment figures based on latest UNESCO Institute for Statistics data.

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF STUDENTS FACING COVID-19 PANDEMIC DURING MCO.

Aiming to understand how the undergraduates confront genuine stress over the COVID-19 pandemic, their wellbeing and their family conditions during the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) enforcement caused by COVID-19 pandemic, this section outlines some of the undergraduates' issues.

With the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) imposed on March 18 200 and the extension prolonged by the government, the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) has certainly placed many undergraduates under a lot of pressure. All have had to readjust their ordinary schedules, moving away from attending classes to doing online learning, thereby causing them to have less social contact. Others become more lonesome because they cannot interact with their friends on a close basis. Reports showed that in general, at least 1,260 of the respective university's undergraduates had to remain in college premises or in the vicinity. Many have got bored; grew more anxious by the day,

and they have become restless because they had been cooped up in the confines of their residential colleges with no outlet to release their energy, such as going to classes for lectures, interacting with friends or just socialising with others. These undergraduates are young people who feel shackled by the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), hence they tend to have bouts of dissatisfaction, rebelliousness, and unreasonableness, especially when others do not seem to understand how they feel.

All of these situations could lead to misery, restlessness, and discomfort. Several universities have reported an increase in the number of students becoming more negative as a result of the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO). It was noted that prior to the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), cases of depression and anxiety among students in *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)* was under 10%. Presently, from the total of 1,642 undergraduates being screened on the ground, 15.1% was found to be experiencing profound concerns, 11.2% were experiencing high gloom, and 7% were of the high-pressure level. It was further uncovered that these undergraduates living in the residential colleges were experiencing various issues. For instance, majority were worried about contracting the dangerous infection of COVID-19 pandemic due to the rumours which stated that of 1,084 students who were unable to get out of their stay, a total of 913 had suffered anxiety and depression, 382 of these students were experiencing loneliness, 417 students missed their family and were unable to receive money from home with 450 of them having inadequate finances. Undergraduates who profoundly focused on their college have also alluded to the college as hospitals where they lived alone, had to project self-care while feeling sick. This implies that the students could be going through some kind of depression or low feelings. One approach to help them overcome this 'sick period' was to empower them with the appropriate strategies to deal with their own mental state of mind. Conversing with someone is one approach but should no one be accessible, then there must be other resources. These undergraduates could proceed to using other alternatives such as social media or the internet to bolster their emotional stability and to enable them to feel more encouraged.

During a difficult period like the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary for the students to know how to stay calm and composed despite the hardship. They must also be able to blame circumstances or themselves for the situation because doing so would aggravate their negative emotions, thereby 'fuelling' their mind, body and spirit with dissatisfactions and more unpleasantness. As a matter of fact, they need to know how to practise having a positive attitude and how to maintain their personal strength and wellbeing so that they do not feel left-out or secluded. Care and concern is important because these empathetic practices would be able to strengthen their endurance and they would be able to feel the benevolence of others. This can help the individual students to develop a sense of mindfulness even though socially distanced from others. The respective students need to have the ability or skill to distinguish their negativity so that they can come out of these doldrums. In this regard, there is a need for their residential college, hence the university to provide these students with informative news-sites, supportive networking channels and the right technology for them to be connected to their families. In the long run, especially over the period of the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), these students are able to utilize the wide range of channels and social networking platforms to overcome their stress, anxiety, pressure and fear. Such positivity inevitably also affects their health and wellbeing. Table I illustrates the statistics.

LEVEL OF MENTAL HEALTH	PERCENTAGE (%)
Moderate severe depression	27.5
had severe or extremely severe depression	9.7
Moderate severe anxiety	34
Severe or extremely severe anxiety	29
Moderate severe stress scores (based on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 inventory)	18.6

Extremely severe stress scores (based on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 inventory)	5.1
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Table I: Review on the prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress, and their correlates among university students.

The Department of Community Health, the Department of Psychiatry, and the Department of Family Medicine, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, had conducted a research on a total of 506 undergraduates from four colleges in the Klang Valley, who were aged between 18 to 24 years old. Results were published in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry in 2013. A survey was conducted to determine how these students had addressed a mysterious, self-managed survey that refer illustrates the statistics table I. It was noted that both 'sorrow' and 'uneasiness' had been noted to be high among the students, especially those aged 20 years and above, and those who were from the rural districts of the country. It was also noted that the 'stress' score was fundamentally higher among the older undergraduates, i.e., those aged 20 years, among female students, among Malay students more and among those students who come from less well to do families as compared to those who come from better-income families. From the survey conducted, it was then concluded that age could be a factor affecting these students' emotions such as 'nervousness', 'misery', and 'stress'. To ensure that these students had some resources to help them deal with such emotional distress, it was necessary to develop better intervention programs. It was also proposed that more support and help need to come from the university in support of these young people who are the future leaders of the country.

HOW THE UNIVERSITY CAN HANDLE THE ISSUE

Based on the scenario illustrated above, it can be assumed that the undergraduates who were under restraint during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) had to endure many dreadful and difficult experiences; they worried; they

were homesick, they were confused; they felt lost; and they felt bored and lost. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the university concerned to do something about it. It is proposed that the universities provide a tele-counselling hotline for all the students being confined within the campus. This service must be publicized to all concerned. Guidelines must be drawn up and provided to these students so as to enable them to keep a positive outlook throughout the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) whilst the hotline may enable them to feel connected throughout 24-hours of the day. (Some students can feel extremely lonely). Universities can utilize numerous innovative methods to provide support to their students, for example, create a texting application which can update the students on the latest status of COVID-19 pandemic. Alternatively, post infographics on social network like the university's Facebook page with regards to words of comfort and solace, or even simple reminders on how to stay in touch with others. Reliable source from university should be provided for the students to either peruse or learn from this suggestion is similar to the one provided by the Health Ministry and the Malaysian National Security Council where authentic and up-to-date data on the disease is constantly being updated. The universities should also consider developing an e-advising line at the college site as a way to provide mentors or counsellors who can inspire the students to talk about their feelings, difficulties, interests, or matters of concern.

Without doubt, the distancing of human beings posed by the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) can develop a devastating effect on the mental state of affairs for the students, including intense pressure response and long term post-horrendous issue. Research from Health Ministry and the Malaysian National Security Council have shown that people placed in isolation for more than 14 days can react to the situation negatively. Alternatively, there should be videos and tips on managing emotions for the students because students are young people with very little exposure to hardship, hence they need to be guided to become more independent on their own. If not guided, their pent-up feelings and frustrations can cause them to suffer more stress. Depending on circumstances, human experiences and the distress cause by those experiences, can make the individuals do things they seldom do. As mentioned above, undergraduates experience

stress when under the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) they are homesickness; Muslim students are affected by the fasting month of the Ramadhan, and then the auspicious festival of the Hari Raya. While some remain strong, others may be mentally upset because they have no idea when they get to be home with the family, hence they would be even more heartbroken and frustrated. To prevent these undergraduates from having these feelings, they may need to be involved in the buddy system so that there is an additional friend who can keep them company in times of aloneness, and also for them to be able to keep in touch with someone who cares. The buddy system may also offer them a conversation partner who may be able to talk with them, guide them, enable them to be strong mentally, and to be able to overcome their loneliness and frustration. Alternatively, the universities concerned may introduce books or articles which the undergraduates could have access to and read, not just for knowledge, but also as a hobby. Relevant NGOs could be introduced and links can be added to enable these undergraduates to access such NGOs not just as a community service, but also for the young students to learn more about the deeds and mission of such NGOs so that there is a purpose in life, to be of service to others.

It may also be the duty of the respective universities to ensure that the diet and food intake of these confined, confused, uncertain undergraduates are well taken care of. The universities concerned need to put up reminders to encourage these students to eat and drink carefully, to have the mechanism or strategies to de-stress, to practise their exercises regularly, to diminish stressors, to practice unwinding their frustrations, to find someone to converse with, to look for information from dependable sources, and to maintain an individual schedule every day. During the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), these students must be reminded to maintain a safe correspondence with friends and family, companions and interpersonal organizations through the existing web-based life channels. Doing so would alleviate their forlornness and psychosocial separation. They may also remain connected through emails, WhatsApp, WeChat, Skype, Messenger, Instagram, video meetings, phones and others. They may also be involved with other recreations such as playing carom, chess, repackaged games and others. The World

Health Organization (WHO) had noted the issue of Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic Outbreak, and there has also been various reports on the same topic. Thus, this issue on mental health and wellbeing is of utmost importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS CASE STUDY.

The nationwide closure imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) has impacted more than *1.5 billion people throughout the world. Of these, over 90% of the student population across the world, including schools and universities are equally affected. The recommendations proposed for the government through this case study, is that universities need to design and implement a plan on how to reduce the level of mental health issues suffered by students who are staying in the residential colleges within the university campus during the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) crisis. As has been described, undergraduate students of between 18 to 24 years old are still young and inexperienced, to some extent, with very little exposure to being confined within the homes or within their current place of stay, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them experienced stress caused by financial problems, others face stress of not having enough to eat or wear, and others still are stressed by having to deal with online learning and teaching and assignments.*

Despite the fact that every person reacts to stress differently, the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) has caused a lot of worries, anxieties, fear, pain, hunger, uncertainty, pending death, confusion and chaos. This condition can cause people to become crazy due to the many psychological impact caused by the many issues. Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 pandemic can be overwhelming; they cause strong emotions in an individual. These feelings are reasonable, given the outbreak, but they need to be adequately and aptly addressed.

Most universities are playing their roles to support the students who are living in residential colleges within the university campuses. Some of the things performed by universities include providing food to these students, offering a high internet speed, and

some have gone that extra mile to provide mental health support too. The university needs to have a standard operating procedure (SOP) which should follow that given by the Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia so that the procedure is streamlined. It was observed that all Students have remained socially engaged in recent weeks, in part through the implementation of online awareness campaigns about the psychological and physical effects of the virus, including preventive measures, and also to only believe in authentic news that originate from the World Health Organization (WHO) or Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) only.

The universities concerned must have a plan to handle the students' level of mental health, hence the e-counselling service must be provided in the university's website so that students can set an appointment to talk to the counsellor about their concerns and problems. The universities must also offer a channel like the tele-counselling service for a period of time such as telephone counselling services from 8 am to 6 pm on a daily basis. The counsellor on duty can be reached through WhatsApp. Other online support groups may also be provided where students can discuss with the counsellor on duty for any problem via Google Meet. Thus far, the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia has provided the shared hotline numbers provided by the Ministry of Health. This hotline is being coordinated with external service providers so that working together, students and other support group become socially engaged by delivering the essentials to the elderly population, or to distribute sanitizers, masks and other hygiene products to other vulnerable groups. In a way, this activity could alleviate students' negative feelings whilst also strengthening their mental wellbeing by doing good.

CONCLUSION

This study is about understanding the specific components that can cause discouragement, uneasiness, and worries among undergraduate students who had to be confined within their place of stay during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) enforcement. This paper has also discussed the occurrences and the

seriousness of the student's psychological wellbeing, and how this issue can be alleviated through the intervention of the university's innovative methods. University students are the future of the country, hence finding ways to improve their mental health and wellbeing is important. By improving their current condition, and by supporting their mental prosperity, the country has taken steps to elevate their scholastic achievements, and accomplishments so that they can become better professionals. By focussing on their mental wellbeing, the country is also enabling them to become emotionally stronger so that they become more resilient adults who can take the stress of daily living in good stride. To date the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) enforcement had created a huge impact of immobility on many young people especially, thereby causing them to become stressed, edgy, anxious, worrisome, fearful, lonely, and many more negative feelings. Clinical specialists from Health Ministry and the Malaysian National Security Council have forewarned that data overload pressure may prompt psychological wellness issues, and yet every one of us responds or reacts differently to the negative and upsetting circumstances. It is often the individual's personal experience that would cause him or her react to accordingly, hence it affects how he/she deals with the circumstances. An undergraduate who has a sentiment of dread and uneasiness about COVID-19 pandemic can find him/herself being overpowered, and this can trigger compelling feelings of anxiety or fear. Another individual could likewise, experience nervousness and frenzy manifestations because of realities or the influence of juicy gossips and fake news could further exacerbate their anxiety. At the point when certain events occur, the investment of energy into the particular experience could cause an alternate mental effect on the individual, such that the response may be detrimental because the experience is a negative one. Alternatively, it may be one that incites a positive mental effect due to the feeling of social connectedness. Based on this, it is thus recommended that universities with students staying within the campus grounds develop a few mechanisms that can enable the undergraduates being studied to have an avenue to seek resolutions to their mental despair.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest that affects the issue of this paper because the names and organizations of the relevant persons were not mentioned in the paper.

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