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Coordination of New Norms of Life Post- Pandemic Covid-19 Towards Family Well- Being



Abstract: - Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the whole world, the public in most countries have had to adapt to the 'new norm' and at the same time adjusted to the sudden change in their way of life. The panic effect it has, caused major changes to people's daily lives quick and suddenly. Therefore, the process of coordinating life will usually trigger various challenges from various aspects such as economic, social, emotional and health. Although the COVID-19 virus is decreasing, there are still no signs that the COVID-19 virus will be completely eradicated, when the epidemic has already changed to an endemic one. It will continue to be in the community's immunity because of the vaccination initiative provided by the Malaysian government and pressure from the emergence of one new corona-virus variant after another. This paper observes some of the crucial steps that need to be done in the process of personal and family adjustment in a more orderly and systematic way with certain guides that are more strategic based on the trend reported by the Malaysia Family Well-Being (MyWI) Index Report. This study is a qualitative study using the method of analyzing documents, journals, and related articles. The study found that after reaching two years of post-pandemic, the country needs to re-examine the best methods as part of the National Recovery Plan (NRP). Malaysia should not delay in dealing with issues related to the new normal life because there is a need to act immediately and help the community especially those who have been severely affected by the pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Quarantine, Variant, New Norm

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the whole world has made living the new norm a global phenomenon including Malaysia. For example, parents having to work from home while monitoring their children's online learning, family or roommates suddenly isolating themselves in their room, wearing a mask when going out, limiting social activities due to social distancing, quarantine, and others. A new culture of life that was very foreign before the pandemic forced the world's population to adapt and adjust. The process of self-adjustment is not an easy thing with various new Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) introduced by the government. The reopening of economic activity operations in Phase 1 of the National Recovery Plan (PPN) in August 2021 is the beginning for the community to return to a normal lifestyle with new norms, balancing economic and public health aspects. Head of the School of Environmental Health and Safety, "Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Megat Azman Megat Mokhtar", said the culture of new norms in community life needs to be implemented through the opening of the economic sector, but the government needs to strengthen the risk aspect of communication to the community (Suzalina Halid, 2021). Therefore, the government needs to focus on the following general aspects: i) New norm lifestyle practices, ii) Economic and Social Disruption and iii) Psychological Well-Being. This paper looks at

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some of the main things that need to be done in the process of personal and family adjustment in a more orderly and systematic way with certain guides that are more strategic. Among them are the aspects that need to be focused on and maximize service to the entire community without marginalizing any group. With this, the government can better strategize and respond to future public health threats by streamlining physical and digital infrastructure and an adequate and efficient workforce.

METHODOLOGY

Analysing papers, journals, and related publications is the method used in this qualitative study. Using a library-based methodology, both primary and secondary data are employed. The "Malaysian Family Well-being Index (MyWI)" is a document from which the primary data are specifically gathered. The secondary data were gathered from journals, books, legal papers, publications, and online sources. Using the content analysis method, both primary and secondary data are reviewed and interpreted.

DISCUSSION

According to Corpuz (2021), the phrase "new norm" was first used to describe the tremendous economic, cultural, and social shift that resulted in uncertainty and social disorder and had an impact on people's perspectives and way of life during the 2008 financial crisis. The sudden impact and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic from an emotional aspect have been acknowledged by Cheng et al (2021) confirming that the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented health crisis in terms of its impact on human well-being. The sudden need to navigate this "new norm" has taken its toll on people's mental health. This method of coping flexibly, defined as the use of intelligent coping strategies to meet the demands of a particular situation, is suggested as an adaptive quality during this period of upheaval. This study has also identified four (4) types of anxiety which are i) worry about personal health, ii) other people's reactions, iii) community health and iv) economic problems.

A study conducted by Khalifa et. al. (2021) showed disruptions in various areas of life are caused by the restrictions imposed by the government and health authorities. As stated, aspects of health, education, community relations and the availability of food and employment have been affected by the restrictions imposed to limit the spread. Xu Lin et al (2021) in a study conducted in China found that there is unsustainability and weakness in the "new norm" lifestyle practices. A significant gap was observed in terms of the community's willingness to live life with "new norm" practices based on factors such as gender, urban-rural locality, Han and non-Han Chinese, and educational access.

There is evidence of economic and social disruption associated with COVID-19 or "new normal" practices. Taking the example from the experience of Indonesia's neighboring countries, according to Muhyiddin (2020) the results of the study found that there are many countries that have successfully dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic. There are several prerequisites for society to be productive with guaranteed safety from the dangers of Covid-19, namely: "1) The data and knowledge as a basis for decision-making 2) Gradual adaptation and attention to zones; 3) Implementation of strict health protocols; and 4) A review of the implementation of rigid restrictions when the community does not maintain discipline in carrying out daily activities". The family model in the post-pandemic era requires high resilience and survival. According to Black & Lobo (2008), family resilience is the success of all family members in overcoming adversity that allows them to continue to grow with warmth, support and unity. The increasingly important thing in the practice of nurturing in a family is to identify, improve and promote family resilience. The main factors of a family having high resilience include: positive thinking, spirituality, family member agreement, flexibility, family communication, financial management, family time, shared recreation, routines and rituals, and support networks. Family resilience orientation, based on the belief that all families have strength and potential to grow.

The Malaysian Family concept was discussed by Salmiwati Othman et. al. (2021) and understood as a symbol of inclusive togetherness in the face of the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The concept of the 'Malaysian Family' clearly shows the importance of family institutions in facing the challenging post-pandemic situation, where women have an important function in the context of the family and indirectly, the concept of the Malaysian family also recognizes the role of women as mothers as well as one of the pillars of harmony in a family. Obviously, the family is a complementary element to a society. Although it exists as a small element, it is able to

impact a country indirectly (Muhammad Talhah et al, 2019, see also: Enriqu et al., 2007; Che Hasniza, Fatimah, 2011). The results of the study found that there are differences and similarities in the term prosperous family from the perspective of Islam and the West.

Next, there are various methods that can be used as a guide for parents in trying to create a prosperous family (Muhammad Talhah et al, 2019). The main challenge to apply any ideology or concept in Malaysia is its multiracial society. The results of a study conducted by Lina Mastura Jusoh and Zaleha Embong (2021) found that the challenges in strengthening the superdiversity society in Malaysia include aspects of ethnicity, religion, culture, socioeconomic, politics and education. A wise approach and cooperation from all parties is required to face this challenge and further maintain social cohesion in this country. Whereas, according to Aminah Abdul Rahman and Ismahalil Ishak (2012), despite changes in the social structure, the family remains the most basic unit of society. Today's families need support to build resilience to face life's challenges. The success or failure of each family unit in facing the challenges of various tasks during development, will determine the future of the Malaysian family.

“According to Malaysia Family Well-Being (MyWI) Index Report, 2019, family well-being is a multidimensional concept that supports various aspects of an individual's and family's life (Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), 2023). The 2019 Malaysian Family Well-being Index score recorded in this study is 7.72 out of a maximum scale of 10. Of the eight (8) domains that have been identified, the Family Relationship Domain recorded the highest domain score of 8.35. This is followed by the Family Domain, Role of Religion and Spiritual Practices (8.25), Family Domain and Community Engagement (8.00), Family Safety Domain (7.86), Family Economy Domain (7.67), Family Health Domain (7.44), Housing and Environment Domain (7.35) and Family Domain and Communication Technology (6.82). Although the MyWI 2019 score is still at a moderate level, it has shown an increase of 0.39 points compared to 7.33 for the 2016 MyWI”.

The findings of the Noraini et al. (2014) study support the idea that family well-being is multidimensional and interconnected since they identify ten (10) main indicators that can predict family well-being, including "durability, security, savings, healthy lifestyle, time with family, work-family balance, religious importance, number of bedrooms in the house, debt, and child care". A model of family well-being was proposed in light of the findings. The Family Well-being Index was developed using this concept as a guide. To ascertain whether the model could be applied to the data, "confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)" was performed. Family ties, economic situations, "health and safety, community relationships, and religion/spirituality" were defined as the five (5) dimensions of family well-being. According to the Islamic scholar al-Farabi, a family's happiness or well-being depends on parents who can be relied upon to uphold their obligations (Nabilah & Norsaleha, 2019). He has also argued that decent behaviour and the practise of human values are necessary for a happy and tranquil life because these actions affect both this world's and the afterlife's happiness (Shahjahan 1985).

In Orem's (1985) perspective, a person's perspective on their life, "including from the point of social integration, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects", is referred to as their level of well-being. A state of harmony in every life achieved by experience, happiness, pleasure, spirituality, and joy can also be described as well-being. Lucas and Diener (2008) define well-being as an individual's assessment of the quality of their life which includes cognitive aspects and affective aspects.

“The Malaysian Well-being Index (MyWI) was developed to measure the level of well-being among Malaysians from an economic and social perspective. The Malaysian Well-being Index for 2021 was also affected due to the spread of COVID-19. According to Malaysian Well-Being Index Report, 2021 (Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), 2023), MyWI performance in 2021 increased by 1.3 percent to 119.2 points compared to 117.7 points in 2020. Both well-being sub-composites showed improvement in 2021. The economic well-being sub-composite recorded an increase of 1.0 percent in 2021 to 127.2 points and the social well-being sub-composite increased by 1.4 percent. to 114.7 points in the same period. The findings of the study show that in the sub-composite index of economic well-being, it was found that four components recorded an increase in 2021 contributed by income and distribution (2.4%), communication (1.3%), education (1.2%) and employment (1.1%). Meanwhile, the transport component decreased by 1.1%. Six components in the sub-composite index of social well-being increased, namely governance (6.8%), culture (6.4%), public safety (3.4%), environment (2.7%), family (1.2%) and housing (1.0).

%). On the other hand, the entertainment and recreation component decreased by 4.8%, followed by health (-1.8%) and social participation (-1.4%)”.

According to the Malaysian Family Well-being Index reported by the National Population and Family Development Board, research shows that families’ well-being in Malaysia is still at a moderate level (Nabilah & Norsaleha, 2019). In 2011, a family well-being study covering the domains of family relationships, family economy, family health, family safety, family and community, family and religion/spirituality as well as housing and environment reached a score of 7.55 (LPPKN, 2011). While the family well-being index in 2016 which includes the same domains with the addition of family domains and communication technology recorded a decrease compared to the index in 2011 with a score of 7.33 (LPPKN, 2016). This decline shows that the record of family well-being in Malaysia is deteriorating and it is feared that it will continue to decline in the future. According to Wan Mohd Yusuf et al (2017), a prosperous family needs to have a balance between internal and external aspects.

The works of Islamic scholars in their books can be used to understand the requirements for a prosperous family. In actuality, dangers to Muslim families today are so severe as to threaten moral, social, and economic collapse. A prosperous family is a family that can feel happy with each other and with their own lives and have clear and positive family building objectives (Al-Shahud, 2009). However, this definition differs from the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) which defines family well-being as the family situation in a country that is at a safe, healthy, comfortable, harmonious and peaceful level (National Population and Family Development Board, 2017).

RECOMMENDATION

In the face of the global crisis, Malaysia needs to plan improvements, adaptations, and methods to overcome future challenges with better preparation. Focus needs to be given to the aspect of dealing with the complex problems arising from the epidemic by increasing the survival rate, recovery and restructuring from various aspects. Former Senior Minister of Defense Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the three (3) main focuses of the Malaysian government before the country transitions to the endemic phase are: i) targeted control; ii) virus awareness and iii) community empowerment. Under this focus (targeted control), the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM) is in the process of drafting an alert system if there is a spike in cases, especially when the country moves to an endemic phase. The second focus (awareness of the virus) is important for society to understand and accept the fact that we must live with the COVID-19 virus. This demands that we all understand the risk of transmission and the importance of avoiding doing things that can increase the risk of infection (Firdaus Azil, 2021). Recognizing this fact, a model of a new normal life post-pandemic of COVID-19 based on the concept of a better and inclusive life can provide guidance and is very relevant at this time. The proposed construction of this model will be refined in more detail in the next writing. There is no guarantee that the pandemic will simply end and will not happen again in the future. If the country and the whole world must face this kind of situation again, the main question is whether Malaysia and all its people are ready to face it in a more stable and planned manner. In fact, this issue is also included in the scope of disaster management. Just as Japan is always prepared to face natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and floods based on experience, Malaysia should also take the same approach in facing any possibility in the future.

CONCLUSION

Malaysia should not delay in dealing with issues related to the new normal life because there is a need to act immediately and help the community especially those who have been severely affected by the pandemic. Even to this day, there are still many groups of people who are still trying to recover, especially the B40 group who were the worst affected one during the pandemic that hit the whole world. Now, having reached two years after the pandemic, the country needs to re-examine the best methods as part of the National Recovery Plan (NRP) even though there is still pressure from the emergence of one new corona-virus variant after another. The practice of the new norm of life in the context of the still contagious COVID-19 epidemic needs to be strengthened among the community and local communities with clearer guidelines.

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