I am Not Okay! Mental Health Among Universities Students Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. Mental health is one of the crucial psychological well-being traits of the society nowadays. Due to pandemic of Novel Coronavirus 2019, many industries and sectors were forced to shift their service delivery, and that including educational institutions. The sudden closing of educational institutions forced academician, management, and students to move into digital interaction via various platform. Many parents' loss their job, and subsequently those factors also affecting the life of their children. Covid-19 pandemic has created an illusion of harmonious interaction on the surface; however, in reality many students are facing a psychological breakdown. Thus, to cater for the problem this study seeks to investigate the issues of mental health well-being among the students at a selected universities in Malaysia. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 was used in this study's quantitative design to collect numerical data on Malaysian students' mental health.

Keywords: Mental Health, Well-Being, Pandemic, Contextual.

Introduction

The pandemic of Novel Coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) has caused sudden transformation of organization throughout the world [1-3]. The total lost of business due to Covid-19 pandemic has rise to a staggering USD 600 millions over the course of the pandemic [4-5]. Due to pandemic of Covid-19, the problem of mental illness or mental well-being are becoming to rise throughout the entire world [6]. In truth, mental illness or mental well-being can affect an individual greatly [7]. Moreover, mental illness or mental well-being can also affect individual health condition, leading to several health problem such as tension, stress, headache, high blood pressure, as well as heart attack [8].

Thus, in the academic setting the importance of managing stress and heavy workload is very crucial in preserving the mental health of a students. Recent studies indicate that students and lecturers are doing more work during the online interaction, compared to traditional classroom [9-10]. Interestingly, students need to perform this additional workload with less facilities especially those who have poor access to the basic facilities such as Internet and electronic devices. Studies also shows that some parents had to share devices with the children due to lack of devices to participate in the online learning [11].

Therefore, to look upon this alarming problem, this study look to access the problem of mental wellbeing among universities student at a selected universities in Malaysia. The subsequent sections are organized as follows: First, we explained about the research model of the study, adopted from the previous study of [12], [13], [14], and [15]. Second, the method of the study is discussed, followed by explanation of the findings. The study is wrap-up with discussion and conclusion of the study.

Research Model

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the study, adopted from previous study of [12], [13], [14], and [15]. There is a total of four independent variables: namely social relationship, perceived performance, learning contextual, and social contextual. The dependent variable of the study is conceptualized as individual state of mental wellbeing.
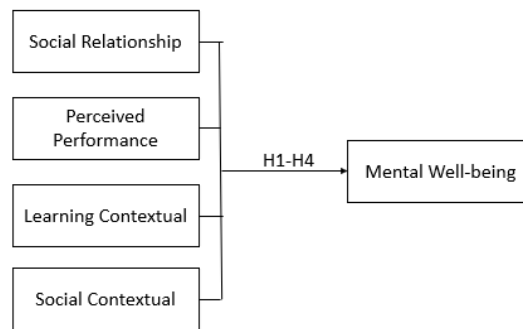
Fig. 1. Research Model.

Social relationship is the extent of individual interaction with their immediate family, colleagues, friends, and immediate subordinate. In comparing pre and post Covid-19 pandemic, the post Covid-19 pandemic has led into social isolation whereby students are forced to work in their own. Working alone increase the probability of having a mental breakdown. On the other hand, constant group interaction enables students to shift some responsibilities to their team members and allow discussion as well as sharing of ideas. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: Social relationship has a positive and significant relationship to Mental Well-Being.

Performance is the extent of quality of work produce by an individual. For a students, their performance is assess via several activities such as test, individual assignment, group assignment, industrial practices, and presentation. Each student also will be graded at the end of the semester via certain measurement such as Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and Grade Point Average (GPA). In order to obtain good grade students must work hard on each of their courses; thus, problem usually arises whenever there is a courses that give similar deadline to each other. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H2: Perceived Performance has a positive and significant relationship to Mental Well-Being.

On the other hand, learning contextual is the surrounding environment that conducive for an individual learning experience. As known, students have diverse background and family history. This student with adequate family support may have a conducive learning environment, while student without adequate family support may need to share devices, has inadequate access to the Internet, as well as the need to work in order to support their family. This matter may affect the emotional well-being as they need to focus on multiple things a t one time. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H3: Learning Contextual has a positive and significant relationship to Mental Well-Being.

Social Contextual is the extent of social support to the individual that engage them in a positive learning experience. During the pandemic universities and Non-Government Agencies (NGOs) are working together to ensure that all students received adequate support to further their study. As known, lack of support from the communities may lead into several academics' problem such as procrastination, lack of commitment on study, absence, and other negative behavior. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H4: Social Contextual has a positive and significant relationship to Mental Well-Being.

Method

The conduct of this study is quantitative study using questionnaire as the research instrument. The items of the instrument were adopted from the previous study of [12], [13], [14], and [15]. The instrument was pre-test before pilot study was conducted. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was conducted. Table 1 shows the result of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The result shows a value between 0.71 to 0.78, indicating a value surpassing 0.7 as suggested by [16].

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Source
Social Relationship	3	0.74	
Perceived Performance	3	0.77	[12], [13], [14], [15]
Learning Contextual	3	0.78	
Social Contextual	3	0.71	
Mental Well-Being	4	0.75	

Findings

The following subsection highlights the finding of the study in relation to demographic, correlation, and multiple regression.

Demographic

Table 2 shows the demographic analysis of the respondents. Based on the table, the results of our questionnaire were mostly answered by female students (N=142 or 69.3%). As a total of 205 respondents were involved in this study, most of them, the questionnaire was answered according to the age of students from 18-21 years. The results also showed that 70.2% were from the age of 18-21 years, 27.8% for people aged 22-25 years and the latter was 2.0% for respondents aged 26 to 29 years.

Table 2. Demographic

Item	Sub-Items	Frequency	%
Age	18-21	144	70.2
	22-25	57	27.8
	26-29	4	2.0
Gender	Female	142	69.3
	Male	63	30.7

Correlation

Next is Pearson's Correlation analysis. The test was conducted on five variables: social relationship, perceived performance, learning contextual, social contextual, and mental well-being. The results of the Pearson's Correlation of this study are interpreted as follow: (1) there is a positive and strong correlation between social relationship and mental well-being ($r = 0.424$, $n = 205$, $p = 0.00$), (2) there is a positive and moderate correlation between perceived performance metal well-being ($r = 0.130$, $n = 205$, $p = 0.00$), (3) there is a positive and moderate correlation between learning contextual and mental well-being ($r = 0.418$, $n = 205$, $p = 0.00$), and (4) there is a positive and moderate correlation between social contextual and mental well-being ($r = 0.442$, $n = 205$, $p = 0.00$).

Multiple Regression

Table 3 shows the result of Multiple Regression of the study. The purpose of multiple regression analysis is to determine the predictive power of the independent variables (social relationship, perceived performance, learning contextual, social contextual) on the dependent variable (mental well-being). The adjusted R Square of 0.288 indicating that the combine effect of the independent variables is capable to explained 29% of the variances. Moreover, three hypotheses of the study were also supported. Social relationship, learning contextual, and social contextual were found significant whilst perceived performance was found insignificant to mental well-being.

Table 3. Multiple Regression

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Social Relationship → Mental Well-Being	0.226	3.301	< 0.01	Supported
H2	Perceived Performance → Mental Well-Being	-0.025	-0.878	> 0.01	Not Supported
H3	Learning Contextual → Mental Well-Being	0.233	3.378	< 0.01	Supported
H4	Social Contextual → Mental Well-Being	0.263	3.799	< 0.01	Supported

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of our research, it can be deduced that universities students were profoundly affected during the lockdown, which resulted in decreased mental states. Most students are unfamiliar with the concept of remote learning and the needs to adapt into a new learning style. These contributed to anxiety, stress, and poor mental well-being. As a result, it also led to decreased performance as a result of poor mental well-being. Besides, our study also indicated that social interaction and control of the contextual factors may help to ease the burden on students' mental well-being, and in the end will contributed towards better performance and positive learning experience.

Even though the study has meet it objective, however, few limitations should be addressed. First, the study collected data from a single source of respondent. Future study may look into diverse background to further validated the research model. Second, future study should look into other factors that encourage mental well-being such as organizational support, information quality, systems quality, service quality, perceived usefulness, etc. Third, future study may look into grouping of variables into dimension for higher order conceptualization of the research model.

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