

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER ON RURAL HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN MALAYSIA

Khairul Hisyam KAMARUDIN¹, Asan Ali Golam HASSAN², Mohamad Fadhli RASHID¹

¹Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying, 81310 Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia, Phones/Faxes: +60322031350, +60135156005; E-mails: khisyam.kl@utm.my, m.fadhli@utm.my

²Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Azman Hashim International Business School, 54100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Phone/Fax: +60124176614; E-mail: asanali@utm.my

Corresponding author: m.fadhli@utm.my

Abstract

From the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 until now, the Malaysian government has implemented various steps in curbing the spread of the virus in order to reduce the infection risk in all regions as well as among rural communities. The implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) by the government; designed to control intra- and inter-state and/or district movements and travels has been accepted and accustomed as the new norm in curbing the transmission of infection. This is especially among the vulnerable community groups i.e., elderly people and people with chronic diseases. Although MCO is crucial to curb the virus, this restriction of movement has also inhibited the activities of many important economic sectors especially on transportation of goods and other services. With a consideration that there is a dearth of studies, specifically about the impact of COVID-19 on the socioeconomic condition of the rural communities in specific context; a comprehensive study has been conducted involving 39 selected rural settlements for the whole Peninsular Malaysia. A total of 504 respondents/head of households had participated in the questionnaire survey. Research findings have shown the majority of respondents experienced socioeconomic impacts from MCO and the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly between 50% to 75% income reductions. This is contributed by two main factors: the MCO which hindered them to go out for work and carry out business activities as well as declining sales of produce or livestock. The research findings also reveal that 15% to 25% of the rural communities experienced food supply disruption. This is categorised as low to moderate level. It is important to note that since majority of the respondents are having low income, they are highly vulnerable to this volatile situation. Outcomes of this research could offer meaningful information regarding the current socioeconomic condition of rural communities in relation to the MCO and prolongation of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the way forward, there should be a more inclusive Build Back Better (BBB) strategies for creating a future more resilient rural community to pandemic.

Key words: socioeconomic impact, COVID-19, rural communities, vulnerability, Movement Control Order

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus (COVID-19) which struck in 2020 has placed enormous pressure on the healthcare industry as well as to many other health and socioeconomically related sectors. Proper management of the risk of infection while ensuring public security and health remain strong and intact to endure this global crisis is a major challenge for the Malaysian government [8]. The rapid and widespread transmission of the virus has effectively crippled the entire world. This has caused the sudden closure of state borders as well as prohibitions on interstate or international flight and travel. Such a drastic action had to

be taken by the government to reduce the risk of the virus' transmission, alongside ensuring the continued operation of health facilities within their carrying capacities [13].

As a result, the travel restrictions and the simultaneous freezing of economic activities and employee movements in various sectors have shrunk the economic and business performances. Affected workers on the other hands, now need to face the risk of retrenchment and/or salary reductions [1][4][12]. The public as a whole have to adapt their lives to the new normal filled with uncertainties i.e., with two big questions lingering in the background: when will this pandemic be over and will the people be able

to rebuilt their live and become resilient after pandemic?

With the consideration that there is a dearth of studies specifically about assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the socioeconomic condition and the situations of the rural communities, a nationwide study has been carried out involving 39 selected rural settlements in Peninsular Malaysia. In total, 504 respondents/head of households have participated in series of field surveys and interviews from June to December 2021.

This article has two parts: first part is the literature review on the COVID-19 pandemic, Movement Control Order (MCO) as well as potential socioeconomic impact on the community livelihoods. The second part of this article shall present the analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on socioeconomic aspects on rural communities in conjunction with the enforcement of MCO by the authority and the conclusion.

Movement Control Order for Public Safety during Pandemic COVID-19

In early 2020, both the government and the people of Malaysia are facing double-barrels challenges, namely weaker economic performance and domestic political instability after March 2020 political turmoil which demanded for an appointment of the new prime minister. The new government must also quickly manage the infectious COVID-19 under global economic uncertainties, lower crude oil prices and decline in tourism sector [8] [9].

The Malaysian government has then enforced the first Movement Control Order (MCO), from 18th March 2020 until 12th May 2020. Under the first phase of the MCO, almost all major economic sectors were shut down — with the exception of essential services and resource/food-based sectors. Citizens are ordered to stay home. The restrictions of surrounding outdoor activities and inter-district and state travels then followed suit [9][10].

The first MCO was considered very rigid and adhere to strict measures. As a result, number of daily cases remain under control and within the existing healthcare facility capacities to

manage and deliver effective treatment for COVID-19 patients. With the public compliance to the new normal and infection cases that were under control, the government loosened the MCO by implementing the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) [3]. Under CMCO phase, which lasted until 9 June 2020, more economic sectors were allowed to open and limited movements for the public under strict health and safety procedures. The implemented efforts in halting the spread of the virus were received positively by the public and recognized by international bodies, including in conducting tests, close contact detection, quarantine, treatment, and channelling the right information to the frontline works and the public as a whole [2] [7].

With the positive outcomes (and efficacy) shown via the MCO/CMCO and mass vaccination status high percentage of more than 88.0% adult population with completed two doses, the government then launch the National Recovery Plan (NRP) on 15 June 2021 as the nation are to be ready for the endemic stage [5]. Under NRP, all social and economic sectors shall be opened, interstate travel and international movements are allowed. However, the basic ‘3C principles’ must be practiced at all times, which are to avoid: (a) Crowded places, (b) Close conversation and (c) Confined spaces.

The Impact of the COVID-19 on Rural Livelihood

COVID-19 in Malaysia has a broad impact on the livelihoods of people in urban and rural areas. With the adoption of new normal as well as strict compliance to SOP and health standards and procedures, the public have experienced both behavioural and lifestyle changes. This in turn has greatly impacted their socioeconomic well-being. Based on the report by the Department of Statistics Malaysia [6], the impact of MCO as well as COVID-19 pandemic can be determined and/or categorised into several societal aspects, which are: (a) Job and business, (b) Education, (c) Health, (d) Security, (e) Welfare, (f) Religion, (g) Social relationship (Table 1).

Table 1. Societal aspects impacted by MCO and COVID-19 pandemic based on literature review

Societal aspect	Affected group	Strength	Weakness
Job and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers Government, private sector workers Business owners Farmers, fishermen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing disciplined workers Exploring new knowledge Increasing the usage of e-commerce Product marketing assistance Premise rental fee exemption for small and medium enterprises Wage subsidies to obtain workers Additional allowance payment to retain jobs New e-business platforms (example: e-bazaar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of job and income Decline in demand and sales from wholesalers, business owners Disturbance while working Forced closure of business or premise Wage cuts/salary reduction
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School students Higher education students Teachers, lecturers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing computer literacy Learning sessions at home Bringing students and parents closer together Improving skills at online teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited reference materials Limited verbal communications Limited internet access Amendment of school, exam sessions
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working citizens Senior citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate rest Healthy diet Reduction in COVID-19 transmission Payment exemption for foreigners who have done their COVID-19 screening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental and emotional stress Obesity due to uncontrolled eating habits Limited supply of food and medicine Food source being cut off/ disruption of food supply chain
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline in crime rate Decline in road accidents rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rise in online scammers Domestic violence and abuse Homelessness Malaysians stranded overseas
Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-off, periodic cash assistance Food basket assistance Rent assistance(moratorium) Donation Identifiability of homeless folk Subsidized utilities rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late arrival of assistance in rural areas
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The citizen, according to religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More praying sessions with family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places of worship become empty and without any activities/visitors
Social relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More family bonding time Unity within the community Free internet packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication via the digital realm Rise in number of births

Source: Adopted from [6][8].

The literature review process however, identified the lack of existing studies that have been carried out to determine impacts of MCO and COVID-19 pandemic specifically on the livelihoods of rural communities in Malaysia. Even though relevant agencies such as the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Health provided recent and updated data but overall the data is still general in nature and bias to the urban setting as compared to rural situation.

Several published and referenced studies focus on the rural with regards to impacts of COVID-19 pandemic were obtained. However, the studies only covered sub-components such as a study by Musa & Abdul Rashid [11] on the impact of COVID-19 on the life of a group of small-scale farmers and few other studies which focusing on specific group of a rural community.

The lack of comprehensive study that evaluates the socioeconomic impact of MCO and COVID-19 pandemic on the rural livelihoods has justified this study to be carried out by the authors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Areas

The study area covers only Peninsular Malaysia, specifically 39 selected rural settlements ranges from the main four categories of rural namely traditional villages, structured settlements, estate quarters and Orang Asli villages (Fig. 1). Selection of different types of rural settlements should enable the researchers to conduct detailed investigation and simple comparative analysis.

The design of this study involves a mixed method i.e., a qualitative research based on the case study (descriptive and field observation study), as well as quantitative based on the questionnaire-guided interview. The primary data is gathered through the household survey, using questionnaires involving the heads of households (HoHs) in the research areas. The sampling frame was determined based on the population data provided by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM), with additional

information by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) Service Circular Number 1/2016 (related to the payment of teachers' allowances stationed in various categories of rural areas). The respondent distribution is based on the enumeration block and housing plot, where each enumeration block consists of 80–120 housing plots. The total population of selected villages were obtained from the DoSM. To get the number of households in each location, data of total population is divided with average household sizes in each state involved. The number of HHs in each location will be used as a weight to calculate the number of samples needed at the village level.

From the total number of households of the rural communities of 229,411, the calculated sample size was 384 HHs (95% confidence level and 5 confidence interval). Taking into account the 30% non-response rate, the minimum sample size was 504 samples.

Based on the identified 504 samples (HoHs) from 39 semi-rural, rural and remote areas in Peninsular Malaysia, a stratified sampling and distribution of samples have been identified namely: 234 HoHs from 17 traditional village locations, 131 HoHs from six structured residence locations, 83 HoHs from five locations of estate quarters, and 56 HoHs from 13 Orang Asli villages.

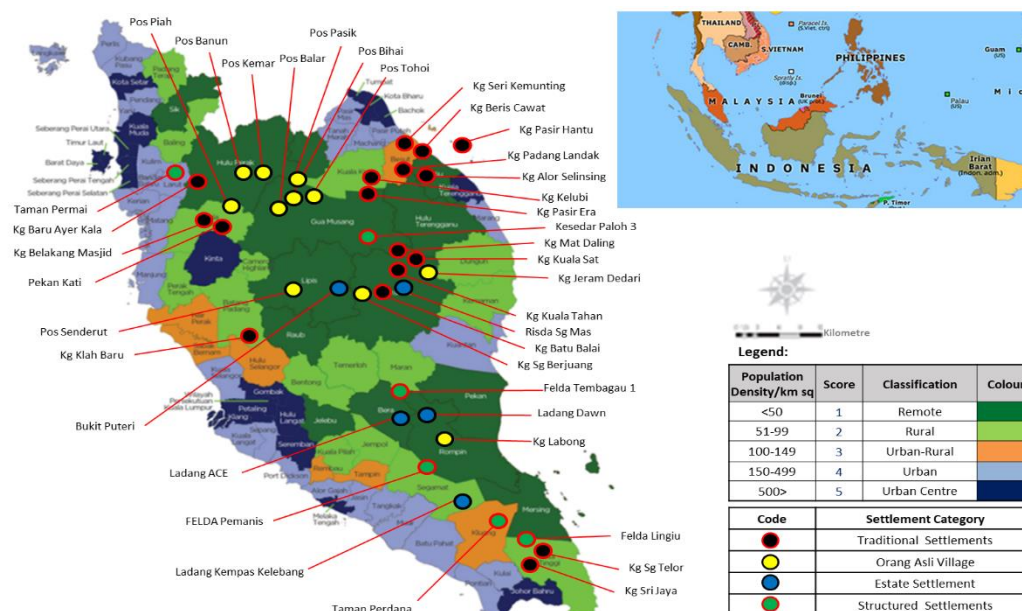


Fig. 1. Distribution of study areas in Peninsular Malaysia based on settlement category. Source: Research fieldwork [13].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of Respondents

As shown in Table 2, 56 respondents from the traditional village work as businessmen (23.9%). In the structured residence, most of them work as rubber and palm oil smallholders at 50 (38.2%). All respondents from the estate quarters work in the private sector which is the estate workers. 14 of the Orang Asli respondents are unemployed (25%), 13 are rubber or oil palm smallholders (23.2%) and 11 work in private sectors (19.6%). The mean travelling distance of respondents in rural areas to their workplace

is between 7.4km to 10.9km. The minimum distance was 0.5km as stated by respondents from Estate Quarters and Orang Asli Village, while the maximum distance was 102km in Orang Asli Village. The findings also shows that 272 (67.2%) of respondents travel less than 5 km from their house to the workplace. All categories reported that the majority of the respondents have less than 5km distance to their workplace, with 124 respondents from the Traditional Village (68.6%), 64 respondents from the structured residence (61%), 59 from the estate quarters (71.1%) and 29 respondents from the Orang Asli village (69.1%). A total of 244 respondents

(60.2%) use bicycles and/or motorcycles as major transportation modes to their workplace. This consist of 83 respondents from traditional villages (47.4%), followed by 69 respondents from structured residence (65.7%), 67 respondents from estate quarters (80.7%) and 25 Orang Asli (59.5%).

Table 2. Respondents' profile according to categories of rural settlements (n=504)

	Traditional village		Structured residences		Estate quarters		Orang Asli village		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Occupation										
Rubber or Palm Oil smallholders	51	21.8	50	38.2	0	0.0	13	23.2	114	22.6
Public sector	20	8.5	6	4.6	0	0.0	5	8.9	31	6.2
Private sector	40	17.1	32	24.4	83	10.0	11	19.6	166	32.9
Farmers	7	3.0	2	1.5	0	0.0	6	10.7	15	3.0
Small business operators	56	23.9	14	10.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	70	13.9
Pensioner	5	2.1	3	2.3	0	0.0	1	1.8	9	1.8
Non-timber forest gatherer	1	0.4	1	0.8	0	0.0	6	10.7	8	1.6
Unemployed	54	23.1	23	17.6	0	0.0	14	25.0	91	18.1
Distance to workplace (in kilometre)										
<5	124	68.6	64	61.0	59	71.1	29	69.1	272	67.2
6-25	41	23.5	31	29.5	21	25.3	7	16.7	100	24.7
25-45	10	5.8	8	7.7	3	3.6	3	7.2	24	5.9
>45	4	2.3	2	2.0	0	0.0	3	7.2	9	2.2
Transportation to workplace										
Walking	39	22.3	4	3.8	2	2.4	16	38.1	61	15.1
Bicycle/Motorcycle	83	47.4	69	65.7	67	80.7	25	59.5	244	60.2
Car/Lorry/Bus/Boat	53	30.3	32	30.5	14	16.9	1	2.4	100	24.7
Monthly Gross Income (MYR)										
<1,200.00	164	70.1	39	29.8	27	32.5	41	73.2	271	53.8
1,201.00-2,000.00	44	18.8	51	39.0	36	43.4	11	19.6	142	28.2
>2,000.00	26	11.1	41	31.3	20	24.1	4	7.1	91	18.1
Monthly Gross Household Expenditure (MYR)										
<1,200.00	192	82.1	79	60.4	74	89.1	55	98.3	400	79.4
1,201.00-2,000.00	33	14.1	36	27.5	7	8.4	1	1.8	77	15.3
>2,000.00	9	3.8	16	12.2	2	2.4	0	0.0	27	5.4

Source: Research fieldwork [13].

Majority of the total respondents (53.7%) have below MYR1,200/month gross monthly income, followed by 142 total respondents (28.2%). Only 91 respondents (18.1%) earn monthly income above MYR2,000. Data by category shows that traditional village and Orang Asli village have the higher percentage of gross income below MYR1,200 with 70.1% and 73.2% respectively. For the Monthly Gross Expenditure, the majority of the remote community in the study areas spend less than MYR1,200 involving 400 respondents (79.4%), as compared to 20.6% with spending bigger than MYR1,200. Detail analysis shows that for Orang Asli village, majority of households (98.3%) spent less than MYR1,200/month. Similar pattern was also observed for estate quarters, majority of households (89.1%) spent less than MYR1,200/month, followed by traditional

village (82.1%) and structured residences (60.4%).

Analysis of Economic Effect of MCO and Pandemic COVID-19 on Household Income

Table 3 presents a comparative analysis on the effect of MCO and pandemic COVID-19 on household income performances which showing more than half of the respondents have experienced income decline (51.2%). This condition is critical particularly in traditional villages where 149 respondents (63.7%) experience an income decline, while 33 respondents (58.9%) are from the Orang Asli village. Estate Quarters has the lowest rate of income decline at only 15 respondents (18.1%). More than half of residents in traditional villages affected during the pandemic have their income reduced, ranging from 50% to 74% reduction. 85 respondents

from the traditional village (36.3%) are not affected by the pandemic and MCO.

Table 3. Effects of MCO and Pandemic COVID-19 (household income performances) (n=504)

	Traditional village		Structured residences		Estate quarters		Orang Asli village		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Experience income decline?										
Yes	149	63.7	61	46.6	15	18.1	33	58.9	258	51.2
No	85	36.3	70	53.4	68	81.9	23	41.1	246	48.8
Percentage of income decline										
1-24%	14	9.4	6	9.8	4	26.7	10	30.3	34	13.2
25-49%	13	8.7	13	21.3	6	40.0	5	15.2	37	14.3
50-74%	76	51.0	35	57.4	4	26.7	15	45.5	130	50.4
75-100%	46	30.9	7	11.5	1	6.7	3	9.1	57	22.1
Duration of income decline										
<3 months	18	12.1	3	4.9	3	20.0	14	42.4	38	14.7
3-6 months	20	13.4	10	16.4	3	20.0	9	27.3	42	16.3
6-9 months	27	18.1	29	47.5	1	6.7	4	12.1	61	23.6
9-12 months	4	2.7	0	0.0	1	6.7	0	0.0	5	1.9
>12 months	80	53.7	19	31.1	7	46.7	6	18.2	112	43.4
Reason for income decline										
Not able to go to work	122	81.9	37	60.7	10	66.7	18	32.1	187	72.5
Retrenchment	2	1.3	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.2
No job offers	3	2.0	3	4.9	0	0.0	1	1.8	7	2.7
Reduce production	6	4.0	10	16.4	2	13.3	9	16.1	27	10.5
Reduce non timber product	0	0.0	6	9.8	0	0.0	3	5.4	9	3.5
Others	16	10.7	4	6.6	3	20.0	2	3.6	25	9.7
Effort to increase/boost income										
Work part-time with private company	33	16.5	10	9.5	5	9.3	3	5.9	51	12.4
Work in own farm	24	12.0	7	6.7	2	3.7	16	31.4	49	12.0
Gather forest produce	10	5.0	3	2.9	0	0.0	14	27.5	27	6.6
No effort/no action taken	133	66.5	85	81.0	47	87.0	18	35.3	283	69.0

Source: Research fieldwork [13].

Similar situation was observed involving respondents in structured residences and Orang Asli villages with 35 respondents (57.4%) and 15 (45.5%) are affected with 50% to 74% income reduction, respectively. Average income reduction is estimated at 53.6% with the lowest decrease of 10% and 100% as the highest level. Comparative analysis also indicated that 112 respondents (43.4%) have had their income declining for more than 12 months since the beginning of the pandemic, followed by prolongation of MCO. On average, the income decline occurred over the past 10 months; the longest duration was 24 months and the shortest was one month. 14 Orang Asli respondents had their income declined for over 3 months (42.4%) followed by 9 respondents (27.3%) for income decline between 3 to 6 months, 6 (18.2%) in more than 12 months. In structured residence, 29 respondents (47.5%) had experienced this situation for about 6 to 9 months. There are various reasons for the

income decline among respondents. The COVID-19 pandemic and prolongation of MCO include travel restrictions to their workplace; they cannot continue business operation due to fear of COVID-19 infection (187 respondents or 72.5%). This is a common reason in all four types of rural and remote areas. On the other hand, 27 respondents (10.5%) stated they experienced decline in production (livestock and crop) and drop of sale values. Other reasons also given including retrenchment (1.2%), absence of job offer (2.7%), and decrease in non-timber forest product sales (3.5%). Respondents also requested to state efforts or strategies taken to boost their income during pandemic and MCO. As a result, 51 respondents (12.4%) mentioned they opted for part-time jobs in private companies. This is the highest effort in which 33 (16.5%) at the traditional village, 10 (9.5%) at the structured residence, and 5 (9.3%) at the estate quarters. Among Orang Asli, their efforts to improve income was derived

from few sources including working in farms (31.4%) and collecting non-timber forest products (27.5%). However, most of the respondents (69%) do not have any alternative measures or back-up strategies to boost their income, including 66.5% at the traditional village, 81% at the structured residence, 87% at the estate quarters, and 35.3% at Orang Asli village.

Impacts of Pandemic COVID-19 and MCO on Food Supply

Respondents were also asked questions regarding the situation of food supply during pandemic COVID-19 and MCO. As presented in Table 4, majority of respondents stated they did not experience any difficulties to get fresh/wet food during MCO and pandemic COVID-19 (76.4%) as compared to 23.6% that experienced shortage of fresh food throughout the pandemic.

Table 4. Food supply and duration of food shortage during COVID-19

	Fresh food		Staple food	
	Total		Total	
	n	%	N	%
Shortage of food				
Yes	119	23.6	75	14.9
No	385	76.4	429	85.1
Total	504	100.0	504	100.0
Availability of food				
Not available / scarce	265	52.6	289	57.3
Available / relatively easy to get	239	47.4	215	42.7
Total	504	100.0	504	100.0
Duration of shortage				
<1 week	64	53.8	39	52.0
Between 1-2 weeks	37	31.1	16	21.3
Between 2-3 weeks	11	9.2	18	24.0
Between 3-4 weeks	0	0.0	0	0.0
>4 weeks	7	5.9	2	2.7
No shortages (1-2 days)	385	76.4	429	85.1
Total	504	100.0	504	100.0

Source: Research fieldwork [13].

Detail analysis according to different types of villages indicated food supply issue is dire in Orang Asli village as 51.8% of them are affected, followed by 29.1% in traditional villages, 13.7% in structured residence, and only 4.8% in estate quarters.

On the other hand, 85.1% of respondents did not experience shortage of staple/dry food, as compared to 14.9% that experience otherwise. Among those that experience difficulty are in Orang Asli village (44.6%), followed by traditional village (15.8%), structured

residence (9.2%), and estate quarters is the lowest at only 1.2% (one person). Most of the fresh/wet food shortage is experienced for less than 1 week in all types of rural areas. Almost 6% of the shortage is prolonged for more than one month, especially in traditional villages (8.8%) and Orang Asli village (3.4%). For estate quarters, the period of fresh/wet food shortage is equally divided between less than one week and between 1 to 2 weeks. On average, days where they are experiencing fresh/wet food shortage is 8 while the minimum day is 1 (all types of residence) and the highest day is in Orang Asli village (74 days). Respondents also mentioned types of fresh/wet food that experience shortages are chicken (37.8%) and fish (34.5%), followed by meat (12.2%), vegetables (11.8%), and fresh fruits (3.8%).

On average, the days of experiencing dry food shortage are 8 while the least day is 1 and the maximum is 30 days. Most of the HoHs (52%) have this problem for less than 1 week in all types of housing areas. The average day in a traditional village is 10 where 40.5% experience it for less than 1 week and 35.1% for 2 to 3 weeks period. None of the interviewees have the problem for the period of 3 weeks to 1 months recorded. Notably, 5.4% from traditional villages have the dry food shortage problem for more than 1 month. Two major types of dry food shortage are rice and cooking oil at 38% and 16.7%, respectively. This is followed by condensed milk (16%), sugar (11.3%), and egg (8.7%). The least recorded types of dry food shortage are biscuit or bread (2.7%), canned sardine (4.7%), and others (2%). There is no shortage of tea and coffee recorded during the study. It is noted that types of dry food shortage in estate quarters are equally distributed between eggs and canned sardines.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explains the impact of COVID-19 and the MCO, on the socioeconomic of Malaysia's rural communities in general, and in all 39 selected study areas. This study also offered a more detail investigation of socioeconomic impacts based on different

category of rural settlements namely traditional village, structured residences, estate quarters and Orang Asli villages. Findings from data analysis indicated that MCO and pandemic COVID-19 have affected rural households including monthly income reductions (higher percentage have experienced up to 74%), income disruption (significant percentage of experience up to >12 months), movement restrictions to workplace and production decline contributing to income disruption etc. The prolongation of MCO and pandemic COVID-19 also disrupted the food supply to rural households. Based on data analysis, the level of food supply disruption can be considered as low to moderate (less than 25% of respondents experience disruption in fresh food and staple food supplies). However, due to high percentage of low-income group, making rural households become highly vulnerable to increase of cost for obtaining fresh and staple food during and after pandemic. There must be more information gathered to lead the establishment of strategies, in order for Build Back Better programmes of rural and vulnerable communities. since the country are now entering the endemic stage where we have to adapt and live together with COVID-19. There is a need for new paradigm in planning and development of rural areas which will reduce their socioeconomic vulnerability and enhance resilience towards pandemic recovery.

REFERENCES

[1]Aziz, A.R., 2020, Unemployment among the workforce during the COVID-19 outbreak (Pengangguran dalam kalangan tenaga kerja semasa wabak COVID-19), *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)* 5(11), 1–9.

[2]Berita Harian, 2020, COVID-19 Demand for Malaysian rubber gloves soars -Top Glove (COVID-19 Permintaan sarung tangan getah Malaysia melambung-Top Glove), <https://www.bharian.com.my/bisnes/korporat/2020/03/670616/covid-19-permintaan-sarung-tangan-getah-malaysia-melambung-top-glove>, Accessed on July 4, 2022.

[3]Bernama, 2020, Bernama Infographic – National Recovery Plan (Infografik Bernama – Pelan Pemulihan Negara),

<https://twitter.com/bernamadotcom/status/1404827107994181634/photo/2/>, Accessed on July 4, 2022 .

[4]Dorobantu, D.M., Marcuta, A., Tindecu, C., Stoian, M., Niculae, I., Marcuta, L., 2021, The effect of globalization on Romanian tourism, during the COVID-19 crisis, *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, Vol. 21(4): 193-202.

[5]Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2020a, Special Survey Analysis Report on the Impact of Covid-19 on Companies and Business Firms (Round 1) (Laporan Analisis Survei Khas Kesan Covid-19 Kepada Syarikat Dan Firma Perniagaan (Pusingan 1)). Putrajaya, Malaysia.

[6]Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2020b, Case Study on the Impact of the Movement Control Order on Malaysian Residents (Kajian Kes Impak Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan kepada Penduduk Malaysia), Newsletter DOSM/BPPD/1.2020/Siri 17, Putrajaya, Malaysia.

[7]Kamarudin, K.H., Golam Hassan, A.A., Mohamed, A., Yahya, A.S., Rashid, M.F., 2022, Stay-at-home: impact of pandemic covid-19 on the use of indoor space in Malaysian households, paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Urban Design and Planning 2022, online conference 11 June 2022.

[8]Kamarudin, K.H., Golam Hassan, A.A., Rashid, M.F., Loganathan, N., 2021, Impact of COVID-19 towards socioeconomic sustainability of remote community in Malaysia: Case study of Segamat district, Johor (Impak COVID-19 terhadap kelestarian sosioekonomi masyarakat pedalaman di Malaysia: Kajian kes daerah Segamat Johor), *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 18(3) (Dec), 336-343.

[9]Lin, L.L., 2020, The socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 in Malaysia: Policy review and guidance for protecting the most vulnerable and supporting enterprises, International Labour Organization (ILO) Report, 1-99.

[10]Mohamad Lehan, N.F.A., Razak, K.A., Kamarudin, K.H., 2020, The New Normal in Business Continuity Plan for Real Estate Firms in Malaysia, *International Journal of Real Estate Studies (INTREST)*, 14: S2 (2020), 137–144.

[11]Musa, A.S., Abdul Rashid, S.M.R., 2021, The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Economy of Aromatic Micro Growers in Paya Kelubi, Perlis, EBangi (Impak Pandemik COVID-19 terhadap Ekonomi Pekebun Mikro Harumanis di Paya Kelubi, Perlis, EBangi) *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 18(5) 2021, 138–156.

[12]Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020, Flattening the COVID-19 peak: Containment and mitigation policies, OECD Publishing.

[13]World Health Organisation, 2022, Final report: Survey on Health Impact of COVID-19 on Remote Communities in Peninsular Malaysia, UniTechnologies, Unpublished consultation report.