

THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: BEFORE AND DURING THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE COVID-19 MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER (MCO)

Wan Hartini Wan Zainodin¹, Ireena Nasiha Ibnu², Nurul Iman Muhammad Dimiyati³,
Eliza Ezzauddin Hussein⁴, Ahmad Md Redzuan⁵, Muhammad Naim Muhamad Ali⁶

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, MALAYSIA

wanhartini@uitm.edu.my¹, ireena@uitm.edu.my², nuruliman89@uitm.edu.my³, elizaezzaudin@uitm⁴,
ahmad94@uitm⁵, kerja.naimra@gmail.com⁶

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to identify university students' reactions during the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) during COVID-19. As many of 486 students were involved as respondents throughout Malaysia to answer the survey for this study. The survey instrument was prepared in Likert Scale of 5 form to evaluate their responses. Descriptive statistics were interpreted in form of mean and standard deviation using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The data showed that students, both male and female recorded a relieved response towards the government's efforts and action to fight the virus, as much as they also fear of being infected with the virus. Nevertheless, they also reported a confusion towards instruction issued by government or authorities which were inconsistent. Along the study, researchers also found the student, both male and female are less worried when they are with the families but highly concerned about the internet facilities to attend to lectures at universities via online platforms. At the same time, financial concerns arose in the study with a significant number during this challenging period of battling with the pandemic.

Keywords: *COVID-19, university students, reactions, gender differences, Movement Control Orders (MCO)*

1.0 Introduction

In December 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic exploded and slowly spread internationally from China, becoming an unparalleled traumatic event. This prompted the World Health Organisation (WHO) to announce it as an international health emergency and, as a result, government agencies have taken stringent steps to limit their people's movement in different countries, including Malaysia. When the Movement Control Order was announced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on 18th March 2020, the order was addressed by the media as “lockdown” or “partial lockdown” that had caused many worrying responses by Malaysians [1]

One of the enforcements in the MCO to contain the pandemic is to close all universities education institutions, public and private universities from operating as usual resulting the new norms of education through online platform were executed by the higher education sectors. The order had university students to be largely impacted causing the government to take numbers of actions to help remedy issues faced by students living in and out of campus [2].

Right after the MCO announced, numbers of universities had decided to halt their normal operation and instructed the students to vacant their hostels, causing them to have no options but swarm the bus stations around Malaysia. The decisions were seen as risking the students to the danger of COVID-19 making the Minister of Higher Education, Datuk Dr Noraini Ahmad to come forward and address the issue concerning their well-being and safety [2]. The enormous shock at the beginning of the MCO resulted in clashes and differences of orders from the education institutions, the ministry of education as well as the MCO announced by the Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin himself, that had raised confusions for the students and are widely criticized on social media.

After the students' movement issue was addressed on 3rd April 2020, around 100,000 of them were stranded in hostels and rental houses before the help to commute students who were not able to go back to their hometown was given. When help was given to the students to go back, it was reported that 15 percent of the numbers decided to stay at their colleges instead, due to varying reasons including the need for internet accessibility for their online learning that is not available at their hometown [3]. The fear of the pandemic, the confusions and the sacrifices made for their study needs could undoubtedly influence their emotional responses and psychological well-being especially when being far away from their family and hometown.

Emotion and communication are inherently intertwined as communicators symbolically experience, construct, and express feelings toward others and their environment [4]. Therefore, clashes and differences of orders communicated during the pandemic can impact students' emotions. When it comes to communicating confidentiality, calmness, and reputation, effective communication is unquestionably important. It oversees creating feelings that create meaning to help deal with the various crises that arise. If this is not the case, the target audience will experience a sense of distrust, confusion, and loss of credibility, which will have a significant impact on the students' emotions.

During the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) across Malaysia, many students had a difficult time caused by stress and anxiety. As students' movement are limited and constrained, many found themselves unable to cope with the difficulties during this challenging time as it was never addressed by any institutions nor the government. Due to these limitations, students have the tendency to spiral down to breakdowns or other health issues which could affect their mental wellbeing eventually their studies.

COVID-19 is not the first health scare that has shocked the world. Previously declared epidemic such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has proven its capacity to deliver psychological effects on individuals [5]. But unlike COVID-19, the magnitude is far different from

the current pandemic that the world is facing. Studies done during this pandemic shows that the global crisis, with the proliferation of cases and deaths and mass media coverage, added to the individual's fear of the virus, along with the fear of forced social transition in the future, are all factors that could contribute to the deterioration of mental well-being in people [6].

The abrupt closure of universities and other higher learning institutions, and the vast shift from classroom teaching to online learning may hit the students' mental well-being hard, especially those who are stranded in universities dormitory. With the MCO enforced and extended, students are stripped off their normal daily routines with limited social contact with others [7]. A study was conducted in China two weeks after the outbreak reported 14.4 percent of youth shows post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) [8]. Students who have more social media exposure attained information regarding the threat of the coronavirus and spiraled down to depression and anxiety [10]. During the period of MCO, students relied heavily on the digital ecosystem to receive information from official outlets including the government, educational institutions, and health authorities, as well as the media and other peer.

Moreover, during the peak of the infections in mid-March 2020, Malaysia had imposed the MCO and with the imposition, many students were stranded and separated from their families. The looming of uncertainty to see their families or being reunited became one of the major factors of student's stress and anxiety, albeit the imposition was done in timely manner [11]. According to Sundarasan et al [1], adding to the stress factors are financial constraints, remote online teaching and uncertainty relating to academic performance. Studies on the effects of quarantine during epidemics suggested that people tend to experience increased frustration and boredom during isolation, which, together with distress due to risk perception, inadequate supplies, and financial loss, may lead to confusion, anger, and post-traumatic stress symptoms [12].

Not only that, many studies have shown that there are gender differences when it comes to risk perception. Harris, Jenkins, & Glaser, [13] findings showed that women have a lower probability of engaging in risky activities in the wellness, leisure, and gambling realms. Their research presented that major gender disparities in expectations of the likelihood of detrimental outcomes of engaging in risky activities have emerged in all three areas, with women showing greater probabilities. Gender difference should be given a particular concern for studying psychological stress. A study suggests that gender variations in self-reported depression are further expressed in the increased need for clinical health resources, which is also more apparent in females. Therefore, attention should be given to gender disparities in stress, as the study suggest that the government should provide adequate psychological support services to strengthen the endurance of women and reduce their pain [14].

Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify university's students' reaction during the enforcement of MCO during COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia by comparing the demographic reaction to the restriction based on gender. During the time of crises, gender inequalities exert powerful gaps within cultures worldwide. Thus, this study also aims to identify university students' reactions depending on gender during the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) during COVID-19.

2.0 Literature Review

Back then, during the emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in China had caused the widespread of heightened emotional tensions and fears among the public especially students [15], hence, the same tensions could be experienced by the students in Malaysia too since the rapid spread of COVID-19 are widely known as lethal. However, not everyone could face the same degree of emotional responses such as anxiety, fear, tensions, and stress disorder as people's

copied strategies would differ where it could help individuals to manage and reduce negative emotions [16]. Wong, Gao, and Tam [17] in their study on anxiety level of students during the SARS outbreak have found that the students' emotional responses could also be influenced by stability on socio-economic background as well as knowledge on the pandemic.

According to Lazarus and Folkman [18] coping is defined as constant change in cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage certain external or/and internal capacity that are appraised as adaptive and maladaptive strategies. Adaptive mechanism includes positive reactions that includes problem solving and seeking support system to reduce the stress. Maladaptive mechanism includes avoidance, self-loathing and blaming, and substance abuse which are more common in young adults [20].

Coping strategies during the common life stressors are proven dissimilar with ones used during a pandemic as people have the tendency to skew towards being maladaptive in crises [21]. During the SARS outbreak, students were reported to use avoidance as a coping strategy to adapt to the crisis when dealing with uncontrollable stressors [22]. The study has proven that by avoiding the stressors related to SARS led to less psychological distress and delayed the negative effect on students' adjustment. Maladaptive mechanism has always been associated with low levels of life satisfaction with high levels of negative thinking that in stressful situations, negative thinking-prone tend to manifest a fight-or-flight reaction which suggested in the model of anxiety [23]. Mahmoud, Staten, Lennie, and Hall [24] highlighted reported that females have higher chance to use maladaptive strategies to help them with emotional reactions to stressors. In addition, study have shown that females tend to think negatively than males which increases their chances to use maladaptive strategies to cope with stressors [22].

In a more recent study, in a contextual perspective Chaplin [25] acknowledge that for adults, minor but important gender differences in emotional expressions have been identified, with women exhibiting greater emotional expressiveness, especially for positive emotions and internalizing negative emotions such as sadness. However, the context of the study was to look at when can these gender gaps arise, developmentally speaking, and what developmental and contextual variables impact their emergence. A study on the prevalence and predictors of post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) in China hardest-hit areas during COVID-19 outbreak has shown that gender differences matter. The study reported that women have significant higher PTSS in the domains of re-experiencing, negative alterations in cognition or mood, and hyper-arousal [26]. This finding is echoed by a study by Huang, Xu and Liu [16] where they found that women were more nervous and afraid than men. Urban participants displayed more anxiety and apprehension than rural participants, but rural participants showed more depression than urban participants. The closest the COVID-19 is to the respondents, the greater the fear and frustration.

Bandura and Bussey [27, 28] found that while gender identity and constancy have been posited as the variables regulating the development of gender, the processes by which they come into existence remain unclear and human functioning cannot be adequately understood exclusively in terms of sociostructurally or psychological causes. Therefore, a complete interpretation involves an interconnected context in which social forces work to create behavioral consequences through psychological processes.

Such as shown in the study by Leung, Lam, Ho et al. [29] where the findings indicate that the promotion of protective personal health habits to interrupt self-sustaining transmission of the SARS virus in the community must consider contextual perceptions of the general public's degree of insecurity and anxiety; and public education on preventive initiatives should be focused at identified

communities with low current precautionary measures. Individuals respond to the world after determining the significance and implications of a particular incident. A person's experiences with the environment contribute to physiological reactions, perceptual tests, psychological and motivational responses. If a person perceives a certain stimulus as a danger, he/she will step up his/her emotional response, which will produce state of stress.

A more recent study by Levkovich and Shinan-Altman [30] found there was a major gender gap in precautionary actions and emotional responses, with women reporting higher levels of each measure. However, there were no gender disparities in the degree of perceived vulnerability or the extent of perceived understanding of COVID-19 risk factors. This is consistent with previous research in which women registered higher levels of protective activity for COVID-19 relative to men [31]. Not only that, women were more worried about their loved ones and serious health problems, while men were more concerned about economic and social consequences [32]. Thus, in reference to the literature given, this study will firstly identify the emotional responses depending on gender of Malaysian universities students along the course of the COVID-19 2020 Movement Control Order.

For this study, the researchers used the emotional response theory as a framework to examine university students' emotional responses towards communication of COVID-19 2020 Movement Control Order matters from the government and learning institutions. Mottet, Frymier, and Beebe [33] proposed Emotional Response Theory (ERT) which predicts that instructor communication stimulates student emotional responses that direct their approach-avoidance behaviors and as a way of linking classroom communication to students' emotional reactions to learning. The theory is extensively used under the instructional communication field, an area of study rooted in the tripartite field of research conducted among educational psychology, pedagogy, and communication studies scholars [33, 34]. This three-part field is concerned with the learner (i.e., how students learn affectively, behaviorally, and cognitively), the instructor (i.e., the skills and strategies required for effective instruction), and the meaning exchanged in verbal, nonverbal, and mediated messages between and among instructors and students [35, 36].

ERT posits the following: instructor classroom communication influences students' emotional responses, which then lead to specific approach or avoidance behaviors such as cognitive learning, affective learning, and motivation [37]. According to researchers who used ERT as a theoretical context, students' emotional responses are favorably influenced by instructors practices such as consistency, confirmation, nonverbal immediacy, and communication competence, such as looking at how teacher contact habits are linked to positive or negative emotional valence, whether emotional reactions mediate relationships between teachers' communication and students' affect, and the interaction between students' reported feelings and self-reports of learning [37]. Titsworth et al., study in 2013 [37] further looked at the model and found that there is strong support for the model, meaning that emotional response theory's theoretical interpretation can be extended to include both the mechanisms and discrete feelings investigated in the analysis.

For this study, it looks at how orders from the education institutions, the Ministry of Education as well as the MCO announced by the Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin might trigger the students' emotion. It aims to identify university students' emotional responses depending on gender during the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) during COVID-19 based on emotional response theory.

3.0 Methodology

This study used descriptive quantitative method that involved field work survey. The survey collected is a full structured survey that uses Likert scale of 5 which was separated into three sections based on the research objective in the field work. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the instrument was analyzed using Cronbach alpha test during the pilot study that involved 30 students prior to going to the field work that involved 486 students across Malaysia.

Based on the Cronbach Alpha text result, the average reliability is 0.790 which means that the items tested were reliable. This reliability test for the instrument is an important step to ensure the quality of outcomes in every research conducted [38]. Since the research is a survey method and was not used to make generalization of the students' population, the non-probability sampling technique was used. The reason because researchers only focused on the public university students and private university students as the scope of study.

The data collected had undergone several phases of statistical analysis by using *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27* significant value was determined at ($p=0.05$) to avoid the risk of margin or errors as suggested by Cohen (1988). The Cronbach alpha indicator was classified as reliable as shown in Table 1. The data collected also used mean and standard deviation in the analysis to transcribe the date into descriptive as the study aimed.

TABLE 1
The Cronbach Alpha significant values.

Indicator	Cronbach Alpha Value
Very High	>0.90
High	0.70-0.89
Medium	0.30-0.69
Low	0.30

4.0 Findings

The total of 486 students were involved as respondents throughout Malaysia to answer the survey for this study. Most students are in the age categories 18 to 24 years old with a male female ratio of 1:2.

4.1 The Emotional Responses between Male and Female University Students **Before** the Enforcement of The Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO)

TABLE 2

Comparison of Emotional Responses between Male and Female University Students **Before** the Enforcement of The Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO)

No	Statement	Gender				Level of agreement
		Male		Female		
		Mean	Std Devia tion	Mean	Std Deviation	
1.	I was confused because the instructions received were variable.	3.55	1.174	3.73	1.216	Agree
2.	I am afraid of being infected with COVID-19.	4.26	0.981	4.39	0.820	Strongly agree
3.	I calm down and try to think of the actions I need to take during MCO.	4.29	0.770	4.10	0.771	Strongly agree
4.	I am not sure how I would feel if MCO happened.	3.03	1.165	3.31	1.056	Uncertain
5.	I am not satisfied with the different instructions from various parties regarding MCO COVID-19.	3.36	1.283	3.40	1.271	Uncertain (Male) Agree (Female)
6.	I am relieved that the government has taken appropriate action to prevent COVID-19 infection.	4.50	0.743	4.51	0.817	Strongly agree

The Table 2 above shows that the highest mean value is almost the same between male and female student respondents which are 4.51 (female) and 4.50 (male). Respondents of both sexes were relieved when the government took appropriate action to prevent COVID-19 infection and the answers given were strongly agreed which also meant they had a very high level of satisfaction.

Meanwhile, for the second highest mean it is quite different for both sexes where men (4.29) strongly agree with the statement “*I feel calm and try to think of actions I need to take during MCO*”, while women (4.39) strongly agree with the statement “*I fear of being infected with COVID-19*”.

Next, the third highest mean value for male respondents (4.26 is strongly agree on their fear of being infected with COVID-19 and female respondents (4.10) strongly agree with the statement that they will calm down and try to think of actions to be taken during MCO. The fourth highest mean value for respondents for both sexes is that they are confused because the instructions received vary. Both respondents agreed that the mean value for males was 3.55 and females 3.73. Next, the male respondent

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with a mean value of 3.36 gave an uncertain answer to the statement of dissatisfaction with the difference of instructions from various parties regarding MCO COVID-19 and the female respondent agreed with the statement. with a mean value of 3.40. The lowest mean value for both male respondents (3.03) and female (3.31) is a statement of the uncertainty of their feelings if MCO occurs and respondents of both sexes give uncertain answers. Significant differences in terms of mean value layout occur only in statements 2 and 3, the rest are the same. Moreover, statement 5 has different reactions from both sexes although the mean value layout is the same i.e., the fourth highest.

4.2 The Emotional Responses between Male and Female University Students During the Enforcement of The Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO)

TABLE 3

Comparison of Emotional Responses between Male and Female University Students **During** the Enforcement of The Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO).

No	Statement	Gender				Level of Agreement
		Male		Female		
		Mean	Std Deviation	Mean	Std Deviation	
1	I was depressed by the enforcement instructions of the COVID-19 movement control order.	2.75	1.254	2.63	1.194	Disagree
2	I was sad because I could not return to the village.	2.50	1.447	2.52	1.390	Disagree
3	I am relieved to be able to continue my studies on campus with the availability of internet facilities.	3.25	1.283	2.97	1.269	Uncertain
4	I was anxious to think about the implications when I had to be crowded to return to the village.	3.39	1.387	3.46	1.308	Uncertain (Male) Agree (Female)
5	I was worried because I had to stay away from my family at this critical time.	2.83	1.388	2.94	1.421	Uncertain
6	I do not worry because there are friends who were with me during MCO.	3.04	1.257	2.70	1.198	Uncertain
7	I panicked and could not do anything when I found out the MCO instructions.	2.23	1.159	2.41	1.119	Disagree
8	I am thankful for not having to go anywhere during MCO COVID-19.	3.69	1.212	3.78	1.165	Agree
9	I am worried about the unstable internet facilities in my house / rental house to complete the assignment.	3.72	1.336	3.99	1.297	Agree
10	I do not worry because there is a family with me during MCO.	4.02	1.202	4.07	1.184	Agree
11	I was worried about the insufficient financial situation during the MCO period.	3.91	1.202	3.78	1.189	Agree

In Table 3, the highest mean value for male and female respondents is statement 10 - about them not worrying because there is a family together during MCO. Both genders answered agree and the mean value for males was 4.02, while females were 4.07. For the second highest mean value, there is a difference in terms of statement selection, where male respondents chose the statement 11- which is worried about the insufficient financial situation during the MCO period with a mean value of 3.91 (agree). Female respondents chose the statement 9- worried about thinking of unstable internet facilities in the house / rental house to complete the assignment with a mean value of 3.99 (agree).

For the third highest mean value there is also a difference in terms of statement selection. Male respondents chose the statement 9- which is worried about thinking about unstable internet facilities in the house / rental house to complete the assignment (M = 3.72, agree), while the female respondents chose the statement 11- worried about insufficient financial situation during the MCO period (M = 3.78, agree) and 8- they are thankful for not having to go anywhere during MCO COVID-19 (M = 3.78, agree).

Next, the fourth highest mean value for male respondents is the statement 8- *I am thankful for not having to go anywhere during MCO COVID-19* (M = 3.69, agree). Female respondents chose the 4 statement- *I was anxious to think about the implications when I had to be crowded to return to hometown* (M = 3.46, agree). the fifth highest mean value, the male respondent answered uncertain when referring to statement 4, which was *I was anxious to think about the implications when having to be crowded to return to hometown* (M = 3.39). Female respondents, on the other hand, expressed uncertainty when it came to statement 3, which is that *I was relieved to be able to continue my studies on campus with internet facilities* (M = 2.97). For the sixth highest mean value, male respondents expressed uncertainty when referring to statement 3, i.e., they were relieved to be able to continue their studies on campus with internet facilities (M = 3.25). Female respondents were unsure when referring to statement 5, i.e., they were worried because they had to stay away from their families at this critical time (M = 2.83).

Next, the seventh highest mean value, male respondents chose to express uncertainty about statement 6, i.e., they were not worried because there were friends who were with them during MCO (M = 3.04). Female respondents were uncertain when referring to the statement 6 - they were not worried because there were friends who were with them during MCO (M = 2.70). The eighth highest mean value for male respondents was uncertain about the statement 6, *I was worried because I had to be away from my family at this critical moment* (M = 2.83). As for the female respondents, they did not agree with statement 1, which is that they felt depressed by the enforcement instructions of the COVID-19 movement control order (M = 2.63). For the ninth highest mean value, male respondents also disagreed with statement 1, i.e., they were depressed by the COVID-19 Movement Control Order enforcement instructions (M = 2.75). As for the female respondents, they did not agree with statement 2, which is that they were sad because they could not return to the village (M = 2.52).

Next, the tenth highest mean value, for men they do not agree with statement 2, that is they are sad because they cannot return to the village (M = 2.50). Female respondents, on the other hand, did not agree with statement C7, which is that I panicked and could not do anything when I found out the MCO instructions (M = 2.41). The lowest mean value (eleventh), for male respondents is to disagree with the statement 7, i.e. I panicked and could not do anything while getting to know the MCO instructions (M = 2.23).

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4.3 The Emotional response of students prior to the enforcement of the COVID-19 Before Movement Control Order (MCO)

In this section, 6 statements were ask to the respondents regarding the emotional responses of university students before the enforcement of the COVID-19 MCO. The findings regardless of gender holistically emphasized in the table below:

TABLE 4
The Mean and Standard Deviation of Students Response Prior to the Enforcement Of The COVID-19 Before Movement Control Order (MCO)

No	Statement	M	SD	Significant Scale
1.	I am relieved that the government has taken appropriate action to prevent COVID-19 infection.	4.51	.795	Strongly Agree
2.	I am afraid I will be infected with COVID-19.	4.35	.871	Strongly Agree
3.	I calm down and try to think of the actions I need to take during MCO.	4.16	.775	Agree
4.	I was confused because the instructions received were variable	3.68	1.206	Agree
5.	I am not satisfied with the different instructions from various parties regarding MCO COVID-19.	3.39	1.273	Uncertain
6.	I am not sure how I would feel if MCO happened.	3.23	1.095	Uncertain

Following the data obtained, respondents gave answers based on the Likert scale where 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (uncertain), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree). Table 4 shows the highest score on item 1 with a score of M = 4.51 where respondents strongly agree in feeling relieved the government took appropriate action to prevent COVID-19 infection followed by item 2 with a score of M = 4.35 where respondents strongly agreed they were afraid of being infected with COVID-19. The majority of respondents also agreed with statement 3 where they tried to calm down and try to think of actions to be taken during MCO with a score of M = 4.16 followed by statement 4 that respondents were confused by the changing instructions (M = 3.68). However, the majority of respondents are not sure with the statement of item 6 "I am not sure how I would feel if MCO happened" with a score of M = 3.23 and the statement of item 5 "I am not satisfied with the difference of instructions from various parties regarding MCO" with a score of M = 3.39.

The findings showed that the respondents agreed and were relieved that the government was efficient in dealing with COVID-19 even though they were very afraid of being infected with the pandemic. Respondents also agreed that they tried to calm down before acting during the MCO even though they were confused by the instructions received inconsistently.

4.4 The Emotional Responses of University Students During the Enforcement of the COVID-19 Movement Control Order.

In this section , 11 statements were asked to the respondents regarding the emotional responses of university students during the enforcement of the COVID-19 movement control order. The findings irrespective of gender overall emphasized in the table as follows:

TABLE 5

The Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Responses of Students During The Enforcement of The COVID-19 Movement Control Order

No	Statement	M	SD	Significant Scale
1.	I do not worry because there is a family with me during MCO.	4.06	1.188	Agree
2.	I am worried about the unstable internet facilities in my house / rental house to complete the assignment.	3.92	1.313	Agree
3.	I was worried about the insufficient financial situation during the MCO period.	3.82	1.193	Agree
4.	I am thankful for not having to go anywhere during MCO COVID-19.	3.75	1.178	Agree
5.	I was anxious to think about the implications when I had to be crowded to return to the village.	3.44	1.330	Agree
6.	I am relieved to be able to continue my studies on campus with the availability of internet facilities.	3.05	1.277	Uncertain
7.	I was worried because I had to stay away from my family at this critical time.	2.91	1.411	Uncertain
8.	I do not worry because there are friends who were with me during MCO.	2.80	1.224	Uncertain
9.	I was depressed by the COVID-19 movement control order enforcement instructions.	2.66	1.212	Uncertain
10.	I was sad because I could not return to the village.	2.51	1.405	Disagree
11.	I panicked and could not do anything when I found out the MCO instructions.	2.36	1.132	Disagree

The data obtained showed that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement of item 1 that they were not worried because there was a family together during MCO with a score of $M = 4.06$. The majority of respondents also agreed with the statement of item 2 that they were worried about the unstable internet facilities in the house / rental house to complete university assignments ($M = 3.92$), as well as the statement of item 3 that the majority of respondents were concerned about insufficient finances during the MCO period ($M = 3.75$).

In addition, respondents also agreed with the statement of item 4 that they were grateful not to have to go anywhere during MCO ($M = 3.75$) but agreed with the statement of item 5 that the majority felt anxious thinking about the implications when forced to return to the village ($M = 3.44$).

The data also showed that the respondents disagree to feeling sad because they did not return to the village on the statement of item 10 ($M = 2.51$) and also did not agree that they panicked and could not do anything while knowing the MCO instructions on the statement of item 11 ($M = 2.36$). Therefore, the majority of respondents described that they do not panic and do not grieve because they cannot return to the village. The remaining data found that respondents were not sure they could be relieved to continue their studies on campus with internet facilities, not sure if they were worried because they had to be away from family at this time, not sure that they were not worried because they were with friends during MCO and last one, it is uncertain if they are depressed by the COVID-19 movement control order enforcement instructions.

The findings show that the majority of respondents are not worried when they are with their families but are worried about the internet facilities for university online learning. Although grateful respondents do not need to go anywhere during the MCO, respondents are still worried about poor financial conditions. In addition, respondents remained worried about the COVID-19 infection if they had to return to the village.

5.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study which is to identify students' reaction during the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) during COVID-19 pandemic shows that students of both genders — male and female are relieved with the government action to prevent spreading of the virus infection. However, compared to female students, male students are recorded with high significant in remaining calm and try to think of the next course of action to be taken during MCO than fearing of being infected which recorded for female students based on the survey findings. Followed by high significant value for fear of being infected by the virus from male students and, trying to remain calm and think of action to be taken during MCO by female students. Nonetheless, both genders showed common agreeableness to feeling confused by the varied instructions issued or announced by the government.

Next, the male respondents were uncertain in their answer to dissatisfaction with varied instructions from various parties regarding MCO COVID-19 and the female respondent agreed with the statement. The least significant values for both male and female is the feeling of uncertainty if MCO occurs, and respondents of both sexes gave uncertain answers. In short, both male and female respondents agreed and were relieved that the government was efficient in managing and delegating to fight COVID-19 virus as much as they are afraid of being infected with the virus. Respondents also agreed that they tried to calm down before acting during the MCO although they were confused by the instructions that were received inconsistently.

In Section C of this study reported that the majority of respondents are not worried when they are with their families but are concerned about the internet facilities at hometowns to attend the university online learning. Albeit being grateful as they do not need to go out during the MCO, respondents are still worried about poor financial conditions during this challenging time. In addition, respondents remained worried about the COVID-19 infection if they had to return to the village.

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