

## Covid19: The Impact of Movement Control Order (MCO) Enforcement on Socio-emotional Well-being among University Students

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### Abstract

The main objective of this article is to examine the impact of the enforcement of movement control orders (MCOs) in the government's efforts to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on the socio-emotional well-being of students. The data were obtained from 426 students that have been quarantined at UiTM Terengganu Branch campus. The data analysis was done using descriptive analysis and t-test. The findings of the study showed that students had a high level of awareness on issues related to COVID-19 and the implementation of MCO by the government. The respondents also showed a high level of satisfaction with the facilities and support provided by the university, especially those related to student welfare and accommodation facilities. The results also revealed that the lowest level of satisfaction is in the library services. Studies also show that the main problem faced by male students is the freedom of movement, while female students are more affected by feelings of longing and anxiety for their families. The analysis of the entire sample also indicated that feelings of homesickness and anxiety in the family were the most significant problems, followed by several issues related to freedom of movement, learning, relationships with the university, boredom and university rules. The implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) taken as an action to curb the spread of COVID-19 on a large scale, although it shows some positive effects in the context of our country, however, this measure has the potential to cause psychological, social and emotional effects that can affect the well-being of community members. common in the long run. Thus, if there is no help or related support system provided, it is feared that more and more individuals in society will be threatened by symptoms such as stress or extreme stress, depression, depression and so on.

**Keywords:** Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Movement Control Order, Standard Operation Procedure, Socio-Emotional Well-being, Students.

**Introduction**

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that started in Wuhan, China in December 2019 (Li et al., 2020) is now the most serious health crisis worldwide. According to statistics (WHO, 2021), as of September 3, 2021, a total of 218,205,951 people had been infected with the virus, which caused the deaths of 4,526,583 people. In Malaysia, the first case was identified on January 25, 2020 when three Chinese tourists were tested positive for the virus. The first local case involving a Malaysian citizen was detected on 4 February 2020. For the same period, Malaysia has recorded a total of 1,765,016 million cases and killed more than 16,942 people. To this day, the epidemic has continued to spread with several new, more dangerous variants with higher infection rates. As a measure to prevent the spread of the virus, the government has implemented proactive measures through the implementation of the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), including the use of masks, face shields, hygiene and physical imprisonment. For the purpose of curbing the spread of the virus, on March 18, 2020, the government implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO). There are six directives contained in the MCO namely: (i) a total ban on public movements and gatherings including religious, sports, social and cultural activities; (ii) a comprehensive restriction on all travel by Malaysians abroad; (iii) restrictions on the entry of all tourists and foreign visitors into the country; (iv) the closure of all kindergartens, government and private schools and other primary, secondary and pre-university educational institutions; (v) the closure of all Public and Private Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTs) as well as Skills Training Institutes throughout the country; and (vi) closure of all government and private premises except those involved with essential state services (National Security Council, 2020). The government has implemented stricter controls through the enforcement of the Tightened Movement Control Order in areas that have been identified as having many cases and high infection rates.

The outbreak of COVID-19 does not only have a direct impact on global health issues but also has a detrimental effect on the socio-economy of the countries involved. The limitations of movement and the need to comply with the imposed SOPs have had various negative impacts on the psychology of the people. Anxiety, depression, fear of infection, and restlessness are among the significant impacts on the minds of those involved (Ganu & Thomas, 2020). The implementation of the MCO as a measure to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic also has a direct impact on students who were quarantined on campus when the MCO was enforced. They have to adopt new norms, out of the ordinary of the campus life environment. Their inability to take in the problems they face will have a long-term negative impact on their socio-emotional well-being (Elias et al., 2011). A study through social media by Berkshire Media (2020) on 223,897 respondents, found that at the initial stage of MCO enforcement, the anger of Malaysians was at 48.67% in addition to the level of sadness (17.47%) and fear (16.65%). However, the level of mental stress has decreased to 16.08% (anger), 17.47% (sadness) and 16.65% (fear) after five days of MCO enforcement. The findings of the study concluded that MCO has a more significant impact on mental health as compared to the physical impact of COVID-19. This study conducted by Berkshire Media only made an analysis based on the situation in the early stages of MCO implementation and not after a long period of time.

A study by Irfan et al (2020) on 958 students from 16 universities in Malaysia also showed 12.4% experienced normal anxiety, moderate anxiety (30.5%) and severe anxiety (26.1%).

Based on the development of the epidemic, the lives of the people continue to be controlled with SOPs for prevention purposes and the COVID-19 continues to be a major cause of confusion in human life. In this regard, further research needs to be done to identify the impact of MCO enforcement on community psychology. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is

- to examine the impact of the implementation of MCO on the socio-emotional well-being of students, as well as to assess the level of awareness of students about the COVID-19 and their satisfaction with the facilities provided.

The findings of the study will be able to help the government and university management to use them as a model to improve efficiency in disaster management as happened during the implementation of the MCO in combating COVID-19.

### **Literature Review**

Schacter, et al (2011), define emotion as a positive or negative experience associated with a particular pattern of physiological activity as well as the effects of responses to important internal and external events that in turn produce different physiological, behavioural and cognitive changes. Whereas emotional well-being is defined as a person's ability to control and manage oneself and others in terms of feelings, emotions and behaviour (Goleman, 2006). According to Jerrold (2002), the socio-emotional problems that occur are due to psychological disorders experienced by a person. According to Lazarus and Folkman, (1984), stress is defined as a person's relationship with the environment. These stress symptoms can be caused by something that bothers the mind and causes a person to feel frustrated, angry, or agitated. Stress can have negative effects such as depression, physical illness, mental disorders and emotional disorders (MacGeorge et al., 2005). Problems arising from the effects of stress will not only affect students mentally and physically but will also have an impact on their academic performance and achievement (Yassin et al., 2021). Stress may also have a positive impact on students (Taylor et al., 2020), if they see what is happening as a motivation for self-improvement, which in turn will have an impact on their potential for academic achievement. The impact of stress on students' socio-emotional well-being depends on how they respond to the problems they face. Emotional management skills are essential to deal with every issue that can cause stress. In the context of psychological management, students need to quickly adapt to the current needs to address all the problems that stem from COVID-19. Their failure to take in all the problems that result from COVID-19 will have a greater impact on their socio-emotional well-being especially from the aspects of mental, physical, and learning stress.

Life as a student has its own uniqueness because the university is a place where it requires students to make adjustments to balance every action and decision taken. The learning process in initial stage as students can easily lead to stress. (Conley et. al., 2013; Towbes & Cohen, 1996). They are exposed to various possibilities that cause stress in themselves (Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012). A study conducted by Kaparounaki et al (2020); Yassin et al. al (2020) Patsali et al (2020); Irfan et al (2020) clearly indicate that COVID-19 has a negative impact on the psychology of university students. The stress, anxiety and depression during MCOs do not only affect their academic performance but also trigger greater risks up to the point of limb injury and suicide attempts (Irfan et al., 2020). A study by Sprang and Silman, (2013) reveal that the level of stress among students after going through a quarantine period

is four times higher than normal. This is mainly due to their inability to communicate face-to-face with parents, friends, and teachers (Wang et al., 2020) as well as discomfort with the environment and concern about COVID-19 infection (Yassin et al., 2020). Based on the literature review, in summary, there are three main factors that cause stress among students, namely learning (academic), personal (intrapersonal and interpersonal), and the environment (Shannon et al., 1999).

### **Academic**

There are many studies (Chandra, 2020; Beiter et al., 2015; Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015; Dalia & Adel, 2015; Khan et al., 2013; Habibah et al., 2011; Mohsin et al., 2010; and Hanina et al., 2010) that link the cause of stress among students is related to learning factors. The life in a university is very different from what they have experienced while in school. The learning approach at the university is more self-oriented and no longer depends on others in making a decision. Failure to adapt to the learning situation at the university level puts them at a greater risk of experiencing psychological stress. Usually, academic stress occurs due to several factors including, their failure to achieve the expected academic goals (Mastura et al. 2007), excessive workload (Shannon et al., 1999; Agolla & Ongori, 2009; Asmawati, 2006), stress while facing examinations (Misra & McKean, 2009), and lack of learning needs such as reference materials (Mastura et al., 2007). During COVID-19, lectures are no longer made face-to-face (F2f) but are conducted online (Open and Distance Learning) such as using Google Meet, Microsoft Team and Cisco Webex, as learning mechanisms. Some of the issues that debate the effectiveness of ODL teaching methods over face-to-face learning (Yassin et al., 2021), include technological facilities (Gewin, 2020) such as computers, smartphones and limited internet access as well as lecturers' and students' abilities to use technology as a learning media (Gewin, 2020; Xie & Yang 2020). Students from low-income families find this situation stressful. During the implementation of the MCO, it is also found that various learning support facilities such as library services in providing reference materials, computer facilities for learning purposes as well as various daily needs are quite limited. All these factors are seen to affect the students' learning process and in turn increase the level of risk of stress that will affect their academic performance.

### **Personal**

Personal problems of an intrapersonal or interpersonal nature are also seen as an important factor contributing to the stress on students' psychology (Shannon et al., 1999). This problem occurs when an individual fail to take care of themselves when dealing with personal-related issues. There are many studies (Hanina et al., 2010; Muhamad Wafi and Sharifah Rohayah, 2020; Khan et al., 2013; and Dubai et al., 2011) that link personal factors as a cause of stress among students. According to the findings of the study, those who have personal conflicts with themselves or others, such as family problems, future job opportunities, self-confidence, emotional stress, friendship relationships, financial problems, health, and others have a negative impact on their academic performance (Hanina et al., 2010; Habibah et al., 2011). The enforcement of MCO in curbing the spread of COVID-19, is also seen to contribute to the increase in the level of mental stress among students. According to Sahu (2020), COVID-19 has caused significant stress on college students and it is higher among international students due to extreme worries about the threat of the epidemic on their families. Curfew orders imposed with the need to adapt to the new norm out of the ordinary make the lives of students more vulnerable to the risk of stress that leads to the problem of psychological

conflict. Adherence to SOPs such as personal hygiene, mask wearing, social incarceration, and movement control that need to be cultivated as part of the practice of the new norm is an important factor in the increase in stress rates among students.

### **Environmental**

Life as a student has a clear difference from what it was like before they entered university. Their failure to adapt and observe the new environment may expose them to the risk of being burdened with mental problems (Kaplan, 1983) and this in turn will have an impact on their academic performance. Among the studies that link stress with environmental factors include those conducted by (Ramachandiran and Dhanapal, 2018; Bulo and Sanchez, 2014; Khan et al., 2013, Shannon et al., 1999; Mastura et al., 2007). Among the issues associated with the environment faced by students include college rules, dormitory conditions, nutrition, lecture rooms, health, recreational and sports facilities, reference resource facilities, meeting basic needs, internet access and others. The findings of the study conclude that an unsuitable environment such as strict rules, food that does not meet the taste, restrictions on leisure activities, as well as noisy dormitory conditions, and various other needs that cannot be met will make students' life more taxing. The enforcement of MCOs and SOP compliance requirements to curb the spread of COVID-19 on campus have had an impact on the students' environment on campus thereby increasing stress rates among students (Zhang et al., 2020). They are not only allowed to leave the campus but also their freedom of movement within the campus is also restricted. Stricter regulations such as the wearing of nose and mouth masks, physical imprisonment, freedom of movement, health checks and barriers to sports as outlined by the National Security Council (NSC) need to be adhered to in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. Students who live in the MCO period become more tense since they have to comply with the new norm and this will bring more impact on their socio-emotional well-being in terms of anxiety, emotional stress, and depression (Liang et al., 2020). The increased level of psychological stress during the quarantine period affects the mind as well as the learning curve of students (Sahu, 2020).

### **Methodology**

#### *Sample*

The study population involved 655 students who were quarantined in UiTM Terengganu Branch campus during the MCO enforcement. Simple sampling methods were used for data collection purposes. The questionnaire form provided through google form is used as a research instrument to obtain research information. A total of 426 respondents (65.04%) responded to the questionnaires sent to them. The majority of the respondents were male student, a total of 272 students (63.8%) compared to 154 males' student's (36.2%). All the respondents were undergraduate students. Of the total, 61.7% were students in social sciences (business and hospitality management) and only 38.3% were from science and technology (engineering and computer science). The majority (45.1%) of them were in semester two in addition to semester four (36.4%). They come from all over Malaysia. A total of seven per cent among the respondents explained that they did not intend to return to their homes during the MCO period despite being given permission by the NSC. The main reason given is because of the ease of internet access on campus as well as a more conducive environment to review lessons and complete assignments.

## Measurement

### *Student Awareness of COVID-19*

The knowledge and level of awareness of students on the issue of COVID-19 and the implementation of MCO is very important for them to make an assessment of the impact of the epidemic on their socio-emotional well-being. The awareness level assessment of this study was based on eight items, including understanding why MCO was implemented, following the development of COVID-19, always obtaining information, complying with instructions issued, views on whether MCO enforcement is the right move, opinion on the need to continue MCO, and confidence in MCO in dealing with COVID-19. Measurements for this variable were made based on a five-point Likert scale with a frequency of "1 = strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree".

### *Problems Encountered*

The problems are related to issues faced by students while they are in the MCO enforcement period on campus. There are 12 problem items involved in the study, which are in terms of finances, anxiety, self-confidence, boredom, freedom of movement, feelings of longing and anxiety in family, relationship with roommates, learning, relationship with the university, meeting basic daily needs, rules that are charged by the university and internet access. Respondents were asked to state the level of effect of MCO on them for each of the problems based on a five-point Likert scale with a frequency between "1 = very impressed" to "5 = very unimpressed".

### *Facilities Provided by the University*

Facilities refer to the facilities and support provided by the university management to students while they are in the quarantine period at the time of the MCO's enactment. There are 9 items used in evaluating the facilities provided in terms of food, shelter, counseling guidance, buying basic daily necessities, treatment/health monitoring, current information distribution, moral support, library cooperation and student welfare. Based on a five-point Likert scale with a frequency of "1 = very unsatisfactory" to "5 = very satisfactory" respondents were required to state their level of satisfaction for all items of facilities/support listed. Based on the instrument reliability test in Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha value for the three variables used is more than the minimum value (0.7) as stated by Nunnally (1978). This explains the reliability of the data to be analysed.

Table 1

### *Variable reliability analysis*

Construct	No of Item	Cronbach's Coefficient ( $\alpha$ )	Alpha
Student Awareness of the COVID-19 Pandemic	8	0.845	
Facilities and support provided by the university	12	0.910	
Problems encountered during the enforcement of the MCO	9	0.822	

Source: Based on sample survey, (n = 426)

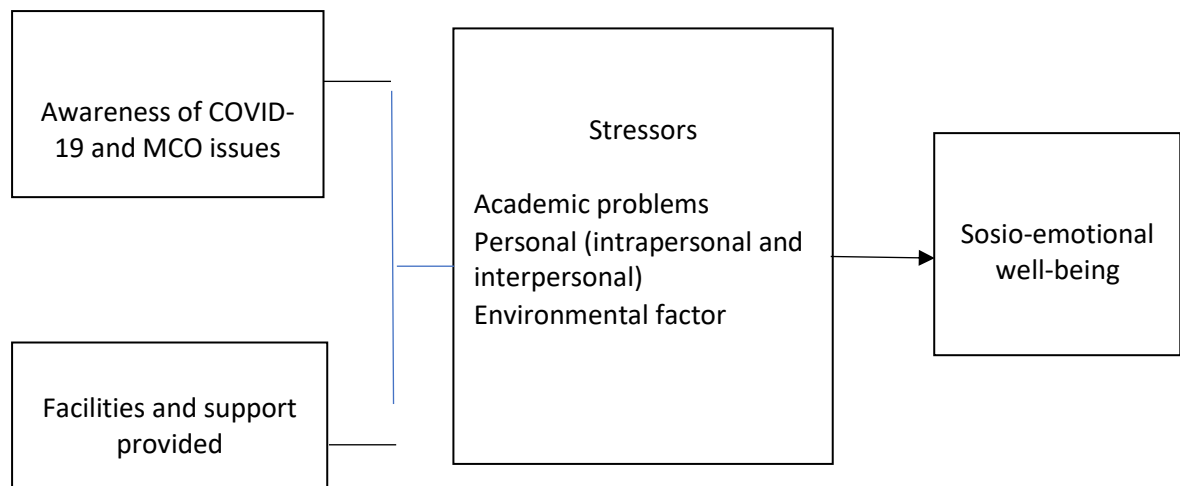


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of MCO and socio-emotional well-being

## Findings

### *Student Awareness of COVID-19*

The findings of the study in Table 2 show the level of awareness of students on several issues related to the COVID-19 outbreak and MCO enforcement. In comparison, the male students showed a higher level of awareness on the issue of the spread of the epidemic compared to the female students. They have a higher level of awareness in all aspects of the assessment used. The highest level of awareness (4.643) among male students involved the item "Enforcement of MCO is the right step". Meanwhile, the female students indicated the highest level of awareness (4.566) in items related to "MCO confidence in dealing with the problem of COVID-19". However, both male and female students revealed the lowest concern over issues related to their concern over the development of COVID-19 statistics taking place. This explains that they have confidence in the measures taken by the NSC, especially the Ministry of Health in dealing with the spread of the epidemic from continuing to threaten human lives.

Overall, the study proved that students have a high level of awareness on issues related to the COVID-19 and the implementation of MCO by the government. The high level of understanding among students on the issue is due to the availability of their facilities to access information from the internet as well as the actions by the ministry of health which continuously channels information regarding the pandemic development. At the same time, the presentation of information on developments related to COVID-19 by the university through the State Natural Disaster Committee (NDC) also has an impact on students' understanding of the phenomenon. They fully understand the objectives of the MCO quarantine and enforcement measures, keep abreast of developments, adhere to the set SOPs and have confidence in the MCO implementation policy in curbing the spread of the COVID-19. The highest awareness item was confidence in the implementation of the MCO in curbing the epidemic. This explains that students have confidence in the MCO's move which is an appropriate decision taken by the government in its efforts to break the chain and curb the spread of the epidemic. While the lowest level of awareness (3.498) involved the aspects of their concern related to the development of COVID-19 statistics.

Table 2

*Level of student awareness on COVID-19 issues*

Construct	Mean <sup>a</sup>		
	MALE (n = 154)	FEMALE (n = 272)	OVERALL (n =426)
Understand clearly why the MCO is enforced	4.610	4.463	4.516
Always follow the development of COVID-19	4.312	4.279	4.291
Always get the latest information on MCO from the university	4.156	4.044	4.085
The statistical development of COVID-19 is a great concern	3.675	3.397	3.498
Always fully comply with MCO instructions	4.526	4.489	4.502
Enforcement of the MCO is the right move	4.643	4.485	4.542
The MCO should be continued as long as the COVID-19 problem is not resolved	4.533	4.375	4.432
I am confident MCO can handle the COVID-19 problem	4.617	4.566	4.585

<sup>a</sup> With a 5-point scale

Source: Based on a study sample

### Facility

At the time of the MCO's enforcement, the government had issued instructions for the university management to provide various assistance and support to stranded students to ensure their comfort. The findings of the study on the level of satisfaction with the facilities provided are shown in Table 3. Descriptive analysis was made based on the determination of the level of satisfaction according to the mean score of low (1.00-2.50), medium (2.51- 3.99) and high (4.00- 5.00). From the male students' point of view, there were five facilities that achieve a high level of satisfaction: accommodation, student welfare, food provided, current information distribution, as well as treatment and health monitoring by the university. In addition, there are four facilities that show a moderate level of satisfaction, namely counselling guidance, convenience of purchasing basic daily necessities, moral support and library services. Female students indicated a high level of satisfaction with two facilities, namely the welfare of students and the comfort of living. While the other seven facilities, namely the distribution of current information, treatment and health monitoring, food, moral support, counselling guidance, facilities to purchase basic daily necessities, and library services, were at a moderate level of satisfaction. In comparison, male students displayed a higher level of satisfaction with the eight facilities and support provided by the management compared to one facility (the library service) described by the female students. The analysis of the entire sample revealed that there were two facilities that achieved a high level of satisfaction, namely student welfare and comfort of residence. In addition, there were seven facilities that exhibited moderate levels of satisfaction and the lowest were related to library services. No items were marked as unsatisfactory.



Table 3

*Facilities and support provided by the university*

Facility	Male (n = 154)		Female (n = 272)		Overall (n =426)	
	Std Deviation	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Std Deviation	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Std Deviation	Mean <sup>a</sup>
Food	0.791	4.17	0.911	3.79	0.887	3.93
Residence	0.719	4.25	0.763	4.11	0.750	4.16
Counseling guidance	0.934	3.81	0.850	3.73	0.881	3.76
Buying basic daily necessities	0.929	3.86	0.885	3.71	0.902	3.77
Health treatment/monitoring	0.852	4.08	0.799	3.88	0.821	3.95
Current information distribution	0.835	4.09	0.792	3.94	0.810	3.99
Moral support	0.923	3.93	0.903	3.79	0.912	3.84
Library collaboration	1.074	3.22	0.858	3.25	0.941	3.24
Student's welfare	0.802	4.22	0.798	4.19	0.799	4.20

\* With a five -point scale

Source: Based on a study sample

### Relative Analysis of Problems Encountered

Enforcement of MCO is aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19, which has had a very significant impact on human behaviour and, in turn, also affected the socio-emotional well-being of students. They are not only allowed to leave the campus but have to comply with the SOP of movement within the campus. This not only affects their emotions and social environment but also influences the learning process that has changed from face-to-face lectures (F2F) to ODL methods. Based on the findings, the study summarises the problems faced by students which can be categorised into social (living and learning environment) and emotion that affect the personal aspects (interpersonal and intrapersonal) of a person. Table 4 shows the list of problems encountered during the enforcement of MCO sorted by level of severity based on the mean values resulting from the respondents' feedback. The analysis related to the problem was done according to gender and the overall sample. For male students, the most affected problems were freedom of movement followed by feelings of longing and anxiety about family, learning, and boredom and relationships with the university. However, other factors such as finances, relationships with roommates and self-confidence are less affected. For female students, the three most affected problems were homesickness and anxiety about family, freedom of movement and learning. In comparison, internet access, relationships with roommates, and self –confidence are less affected. The analysis of the entire sample also indicated that feelings of homesickness and anxiety in the family were the most impacted by these issues, followed by several issues related to freedom of movement, learning, relationships with the university and boredom. The issues that were less problematic while they were in the MCO period involved finances, internet access, confidence, and relationships with roommates.

Table 4

*Problems encountered during MCO enforcement*

With a five -point scale

MALE (n = 154)			FEMALE (n = 272)			OVERALL (n =426)		
Ran k	Problem	Mean a	Ran k	Problem	Mean a	Ran k	Problem	Mean a
1	Freedom of	3.714	1	Noticing	3.967	1	longing and	3.836
2	movement	3.604		longing and			anxiety in	
3	longing and		2	anxiety in	3.648	2	the family	3.695
3	anxiety in	3.584	3	the family	3.474	3	Freedom of	3.514
4	the family	3.578	4	Freedom of	3.397	4	movement	3.429
5	Learning	3.474		movement			Learning	
6	Boredom		5	Learning	3.325	5	Relationship	3.340
6	Relationship	3.416	6	Relationship	3.206	6	with the	3.270
7	with the	3.416	7	with the	3.125	7	university	3.230
8	university	3.331	8	university	2.996	8	Boredom	3.115
9	Anxiety	3.143	9	University	2.946	9	University	2.979
10	Meet basic	2.948	10	rules	2.706	10	rules	2.864
11	daily needs	2.507	11	Boredom	2.272	11	Meet basic	2.310
12	University	2.299		Meet basic		12	daily needs	2.282
	rules		12	daily needs	2.199		Anxiety	
	Internet			Financial			Financial	
	access			Anxiety			Internet	
	Financial			Internet			access	
	Self-			access			Self-	
	confidence			Relationship			confidence	
	Relationship			s with			Relationship	
	s with			roommates			s with	
	roommates			Self-			roommates	
				confidence				

Source: Based on a study sample

**Comparison of Problems Faced by Gender**

Overall, the comparative analysis of the problems encountered during the enforcement of MCO on campus involved 12 issues as shown in Table 5. Based on the five -point measurement scale, problems among male students revealed that there were nine issues affected during the MCO period (more than 3) and only three problems showed less impact (less than 3). For the female student's, there were seven problems that had a high level of effect while the other five problems did not show any significant effect.

Table 5

*Comparison of problems encountered during MCO by gender*

Problem	Male (n =154)		Female (n =272)		t-stat
	Std Deviation	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Std Deviation	Mean <sup>a</sup>	
Financial	1.089	2.948	1.061	2.996	0.447
Anxiety	1.099	3.416	1.006	2.946	4.493***
Self-confidence	1.339	2.507	1.174	2.199	2.471**
Boredom	1.047	3.578	0.950	3.206	3.742***
Freedom of movement	1.159	3.714	1.091	3.684	0.271
longing and anxiety in the family	1.050	3.604	1.098	3.967	3.330***
Relationships with roommates	1.284	2.299	1.272	2.272	0.212
Learning	1.136	3.584	1.146	3.474	0.956
Relationship with the university	1.030	3.474	0.997	3.397	0.757
Meet basic daily needs	1.033	3.416	1.083	3.125	2.705***
University rules	1.067	3.331	0.955	3.235	0.954
Internet access	1.129	3.143	1.179	2.706	3.733***
Overall problem	0.374	3.251	0.351	3.101	4.151***

Notes: significant at: \*\* 0.05 and \*\*\* 0.001, with a five -point scale

Source: Based on the sample survey

By comparison, the problems faced by male students were more affected by 10 issues compared to only two problems (feelings of homesickness and anxiety about family and finances) among female students. Comparative analysis by gender through t-test exhibited six issues with significant differences in terms of problems encountered. The most significant differences were problems related to anxiety ( $t = 4.493$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by boredom ( $t = 3.742$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), internet access ( $t = 3.733$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), homesickness and anxiety in the family ( $t = 3.330$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), meeting basic daily needs ( $t = 2.705$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and self -confidence ( $t = 2.471$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While the other six items, namely financial problems, freedom of movement, relationship with roommates, learning, relationship with the university, and the rules imposed by the university, did not show significant differences. The analysis of the study also indicated that the mean value of the overall problem for male students (3.251) was higher than the overall mean of the problem for female students (3.101). Based on the t-test ( $t = 4.151$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), it is clear that there are significant differences in terms of problems faced between the male and female students.

## Discussion

The main objective of this article is to analyse the problems faced by university students during MCO enforcement as well as to access the level of awareness of COVID-19 and their satisfaction with the facilities provided by the university during MCO enforcement on campus. The study data were obtained from a sample of a study conducted on 426 students on UiTM Terengganu Branch campus, who were involved in the enforcement of MCO in dealing with the COVID-19. Overall, the analysis of the study revealed that the students' level of awareness on issues related to COVID-19 and MCO enforcement is very high. They fully understand the

problems related to Covid-19 and its implications on society as well as the need for the implementation of MCO to curb the spread of the epidemic. Based on the analysis of the facilities and support provided by the university management, male students indicated a higher level of satisfaction compared to female students. Of the nine facilities and supports involved in the study, male students displayed a higher level of satisfaction in eight items compared to female students who showed their high level of satisfaction on only one item (library services). Male students are usually not so fussy with all the facilities provided compared to female students. At the same time, statistics from the library show that more female students visit and borrow reading materials provided by the library each semester compared to male students. That's why female students are more impressed when library services can't operate normally. Based on the mean value, the study concluded that students were satisfied with the facilities and support provided throughout their stay in the MCO enforcement period. This explains that the university management has provided facilities in accordance with the SOPs set by the NSC and subsequently the students involved are highly satisfied.

In terms of the relative problems faced, the study found that during the period of MCO enforcement on campus, male students felt more burdened with the issue of freedom of movement. Meanwhile, the female students are more stressed with feelings of longing and anxiety for the family. Overall, the problem of longing and anxiety for the family is the main burden they had to face during the enforcement of the MCO, in addition to problems of freedom of movement, learning, relationship with the university, boredom and stress with university rules and anxiety. There were six problems that showed significant differences in terms of the burden of problems faced by gender, namely anxiety, boredom, longing and anxiety about the family, internet access, meeting basic daily needs, and confidence. Comparative analysis disclosed that male students faced higher stress in 10 problems compared to only two problems for female students. Based on the overall mean value for male students (3.251) and female students (3.101) clearly indicated the level of problem stress among male students is higher (65.02%) compared to female students (62.0%). This explains that during the period of MCO enforcement on campus, male students were more affected in terms of their socio-emotional well-being compared to female students. In a normal environment, female students are more stressed with various socio-emotional problems (Jia & Loo, 2018; Kumar & Bukar, 2013; Hamsan et.al, 2010), but in the MCO period involving strict SOPs, male students are more receptive to the impact, in particular the effects of movement control and compliance with SOPs imposed on them.

### **Conclusion**

The socio-emotional effects that occur during COVID-19 are clearly consistent with what has been explained by Transactional Theory, which links environmental factors to a person's psychology (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If the changing environment poses a threat to psychology, they need to develop a strategy to deal with the stresses that occur as a result of the new environment. For the purpose of improvement in disaster management, as is the case of the enforcement of MCO on campus imposed on students, several steps need to be taken. This is important to provide comfort throughout the MCO period and, in turn, reduce the students' socio-emotional stress that is likely to exist within them. Management should: 1) hold various activities on campus, such as entrepreneurial and volunteer activities, 2) allow leisure activities on campus that do not involve large numbers, 3) make full use of digital

applications such as google meet for learning purposes, motivational program information distribution, and services counseling, 4) ensure that lecturers and students have skills in using digital technology to increase the effectiveness of learning through ODL methods and 5) provide online book loan services and send the borrowed books to colleges where students are placed to facilitate and reduce their movements. All these measures are done based on SOPs set by the authorities. This can reduce the stress on the minds of the students involved. Most previous studies examined academic factors and not many focused on environmental factors as a cause of stress among university students. COVID-19 has caused significant changes to the lives of students, especially in their social and learning environments. Subsequent studies should focus on environmental aspects, including in terms of health, finance, economic problems and lack of facilities (Cherian & Charian, 1998) and the impact on student psychology in line with changes that occur during the COVID-19 period.

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