

## Unemployment in Malaysia

Unemployed refers to the persons who cannot find a job although they have an interest to get employed. There are two types of unemployed, which is actively unemployed and inactively unemployed. Based on the statistics from Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM, 2020), the unemployment rate increased from 2.88% in 2014 to 3.10% in 2015. The rate remained above 3% throughout the years since 2015. The fact is, from year 2013 to 2016, the unemployment rate of fresh graduates even spiked from 30% to 34%. This shows that unemployment rate in our country is always an issue, especially for the fresh graduates. In addition, in 2020, the unemployment rate increased speedily from 3.9% to 5% from March to April. It became even worse in May which is 5.3%. Until September, the unemployment rate remained high, which it was not less than 4.6% although there was a little decrease in the months. The rate raised up to 4.7% again in October. Based on the news on Berita Harian (Parzi, 2 November 2020), 90,470 persons lost their job up till 28 October due to the pandemic and the unemployment rate is still worrying. The number of employed persons reduced especially in the sectors of food and beverages, accommodation, entertainment, tourism and arts. In the other hand, the sectors such as e-commerce, information and technology services as well as delivery services had increase in the number of employed persons. Nevertheless, many residents still lost their jobs and the fresh graduates cannot find a job during this crisis. High unemployment rate gives serious impact to residents and also the economy of country.

The unemployment of fresh graduates is always a non-negligible issue in many countries not only in Malaysia. Based on the finding (Zaliza Hanapi & Nordin, 2014), lack of technical skills and weak employability skills are one of the reasons of unemployment issue. Most of the fresh graduates cannot apply the knowledge and skills they learned in previous education level, and this cause them to be less competitive in the labour market. According to a journal (Razak, Syazana, Jaafar, & Talib, 2014), weak employability skills as well as poor English proficiency are factors of unemployment issue. Besides that, Zalina and Mohd Safarin also found that the quality of education also a main factor that led to the unemployment issue of fresh graduates. The quality of education includes the classroom climate, quality of curriculum and the educational facilities and infrastructures. Whether the syllabus of education is consistent with the requirement in the job market is very important to the fresh graduates. Or else, the graduates

without a quality education will lack of technical skills and also employability skills. Some fresh graduates also have bad attitude in the employment issue, they are picky on the jobs and not appreciate the job opportunities. Furthermore, the crisis of Covid-19 causes the situation more severe. They supposed to find a job after graduated but they can just stay at home during the shutdown of many sectors. They cannot get a formal job in some sectors such as tourism, construction sector and so on. Thus, this contributes to the higher unemployment rate in Malaysia.

The unemployment rate is very high in April of 2020 mainly due to the Movement Control Order. The government announced MCO (Movement Control Order) starting from 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 to prevent and control the spread of coronavirus. The country was locked down and many sectors are shut down. Residents were not allowed to go out without an essential need. The shops were not allowed to open except for the food stalls, supermarket and the other places that is necessary to maintain daily needs of residents. Residents could only stay at home and give full coordinate to overcome the spread of coronavirus together with the government. Due to the restriction on business and movement, many residents could not work for months and cause many of them to encounter financial crisis especially for the sectors like tourism, accommodation, factory and others. For the shops which are allowed to open, many employees still lost their jobs. This is because the number of customers declined as they are restricted to stay at home, there are no need for too much of workers to work in the shop. Besides that, the many the workers in the workplace, the higher the risk on the spread of coronavirus. The employer may cut off the number of workers during this crisis. This not only can ensure the safety of everyone in the workplace, also can decrease their expenditure for paying the salary of employees as they incomes also confronting a sharp fall. The loss of job opportunities generated the higher unemployment rate of residents in March of 2020.

Furthermore, the bad situation led to development of e-commerce. This is because residents need to stay at home, but they still have to purchase daily use products such as food, cleaning product and skin care products. Therefore, many sellers opened online business which the buyers can select the items they need and sellers will deliver items to them. In the duration of

MCO, online business in our country grew rapidly. Online business not only undergone through famous platform like Lazada and Shopee, but also through Facebook, Instagram and so on. For example, some creative sellers also sell things like fresh vegetables, fresh meats, groceries which the buyers can order by contacting sellers in the morning, and all the items ordered will be delivered in the afternoon. They advertise their business through the platforms to increase the orders. The develop of online business actually is good and helpful to the country because residents can stay at home and it help to revive the economy of our country. However, online business does not need much workforce. Only in sectors such as delivery services and e-commerce had a rise in job opportunities, while the other sectors encounter a serious fall and the job opportunities are still less in the society. The decrease of job opportunities in some sectors cannot against through online business such as factory, tourism, construction, transportation and accommodation. Thus, the unemployment rate in our country still remained high.

For the unemployment problem of fresh graduates, the first problem that need to be against is the ethics of the graduates, they should appreciate every job opportunity given. They also should not be picky on the jobs due to a little mismatch of job content with their profession. quality of education should be improved. Beyond that, the quality of education should be improved by the institution. Research should be carried out to investigate the requirement of knowledge, technical skills and employability skills in the job market so that the students can cultivate their skills during their studies. This may help them to be more professional and competitive. This also help to increase the quality of human resource in our country. The weak technical skills also can be enhanced through internship programme. English proficiency also should be given a high priority in the institution. English language is very important in specific profession, especially in the science subjects or business involve international collaboration and cooperation.

To overcome the high unemployment rates in 2020, the government introduced few packages to overcome the bad situation in economy of the country. For example, the government implemented PRIHATIN Economic Stimulus Package, National Economic Recovery Plan (PENJANA) and KITA PRIHATIN Economic Stimulus Package (Prime Minister's Office of

Malaysia , 2020). These packages are introduced to decrease the burden of people on financial issues in this crisis. Besides that, the other package, PRIHATIN Perindustrian Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS), also help 2.4 million people to be employed, support almost 300,000 companies and lessen the burden of 11million people which directly decrease the unemployment rate in Malaysia (Mutalib, 20 July 2020). These are effective ways to solve the issue done by our government. On top of this, the government also start to reopen almost all economics sectors and businesses in May 2020 which is restricted with conditions to revive the economy. Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) is pursued instead of Movement Control Order (MCO). However, this increase the risk of spreading of Coronavirus although it is really helpful for the people.

Throughout the investigation on the unemployment issue in Malaysia, I realized that as a student, we should constructively improve ourselves on technical skills and employability skills so that we can have higher possibilities to be employed. I did not realize the unemployment rate of fresh graduates is such high in our country so this remind me to get better so that I can be more competitive in the future. Besides that, I feel pleased to be a Malaysian because we have a responsive and responsible government which support and help the people in many aspects in such terrible condition. Online business and delivery services develop rapidly in our country really facilitate the people and brings benefit to the economy. We seem to get more closer towards the Industry Revolution 4.0 after MCO because we are more reliable on the use of online application not only in education, also in transportation, food and beverage, and also shopping. In short, I wish the Covid-19 outbreak can over as soon as possible under the lead of the government and the development of economy can be continued so that the unemployment issue can be ameliorated.

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