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## **AKH-I Model and Psychosocial Issues during Covid-19 Pandemic<sup>\*</sup>**

**Noor Azlan Mohd Noor<sup>\*</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This article addresses **Azlan KH-I Model (AKH-I Model)** and its role in managing psychosocial issues during Covid-19 pandemic. The **AKH-I Model** emphasises on five (5) main principles namely, (1) *Khalifah* or Caliph (2) Anthropological Imagination (3) *Syariah* compliance (4) Noble and righteous deeds (*'amal soleh*) and (5) spiritual guidance and help in the guise of *ibadah*. As a *khalifah*, holistic understanding of psychosocial issues faced by our community is imperative. It is best achieved through participant-observation and community-engagement approaches to gather any comprehensible inputs of psychosocial needs within the community. Three (3) main issues were explored using **AKH-I Model**, namely family well-being and children adjustment, community-engagement and sector-based focusing on workplace. Several strategies were initiated by the university including devising modules and creating new referral-system that could be capitalised by the university authorities' to overcome impasses to change. The University's mission should adopt *khalifah* vision which construe volunteerism concept as *'amal soleh* which is solely meant to secure unceasing rewards in the guise of *ibadah* from Allah s.w.t. Finally, this article emphasizes the importance of harmonising the theoretical and practical dimensions of community-engagement efforts using the **AKH-I Model**.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 pandemic, psychosocial, community-engagement, modules, anthropological imagination.

### **Introduction: Scenario 1: Marcus Rashford**

On Sunday morning October 25<sup>th</sup>. 2020, the author was inspired by *The Guardian* newspaper's headline on "Food poverty/Top children's doctors attack Tories over free school meals". It was reported that;

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<sup>\*</sup> This article was adapted from the author's keynote address which was presented in International Webinar on The Roles of University in Responding to Psychosocial Issues in the Community 2020 (ISRUPIC 2020) held on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. The conference was organised by the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IIUM) and Psikologi Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia.

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Thousands of Britain's top health specialists have joined forces to condemn the government for its refusal to fund free meals for disadvantaged children in England over the school holidays, amid a spreading grassroots campaign on the issue led by England and Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford. With a growing number of councils and businesses this weekend offering to provide free meals, more than 2,000 paediatricians across the UK have signed a letter expressing their shock at the decision. They state that ensuring children have enough to eat is one of the "most basic human responsibilities".<sup>1</sup>

In United Kingdom (UK), more than 4 million children live in poverty and free school meals serves around one-third of these. When the UK government decided to scrap the free school meals for the disadvantaged children, many people from different stripes began to rationalise the unfathomable reasons for the decision. The Covid-19 pandemic has entrenched and exacerbated this reality. The precarious economy, rising unemployment and neighbouring deprivation due to Covid-19 pandemic have led many families around UK who were previously managing are now struggling to make ends meet.

It is appalling to acknowledge the fact that Marcus Rashford came to the rescue and began to launch Free School Meals campaign for the poor. Marcus Rashford<sup>2</sup> is just an English professional footballer for Premier League club Manchester United and the England national team.

### **Scenario 2: Ustaz Ebit Lew**

It was reported in *The Sun Daily* local newspaper dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020, Ustaz Ebit Lew donated 100 fans and 50 air-conditions to the frontliner during Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, the number kept increasing as more people took notice of his contributions and wanted to be part of it. Ustaz Ebit Lew received 3,000 names seeking for help in a day. Majority

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<sup>1</sup> The Guardian, "Children's doctors attack Tories over free school meals." *The Guardian* 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2020/oct/25>.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Rashford MBE (born 31 October 1997) is an English professional footballer who plays as a forward for Premier League club Manchester United and the England national team. Rashford also publicly campaigns on the issues of homelessness and child food poverty in the United Kingdom, and has been praised for using his platform to be a political activist and drive societal change. For his efforts, he was recognised and honoured with MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 2020 by Queen Elizabeth II for his service rendered to vulnerable children during COVID 19 pandemic.

of them came to know through his “Door to door Ebit Lew” programme on Astro. According to Ebit Lew, he did not expect that many people he met were living alone in bad condition, poor and surprisingly there were houses without water supply in an urban centre like Kuala Lumpur. In another instance, Ustaz Ebit Lew narrated;

What inspired him to help the needy was due to his tough life back then. He slept on the cold, hard cement floor with little food to survive through the day. One day, a stranger came and offered him a blanket to sleep on. Till today the blanket is still with him. He felt indebted to that person to this day. That person’s kindness motivated him to help others in need. Today, on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2020, he helped a family of 15 living in a dilapidated hut in Alor Setar, Kedah. Ustaz Ebit Lew said it was one of the most agonising moments in his life to see a stroke patient living in such squalid conditions. The house was dirty and smelly. He found a new home for the family, the rental for which he would pay for as long as he lives. He could remember his mother’s words, “When people help us when we are in need, we should help others when we are able to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

Ustaz Ebit Lew<sup>2</sup> is just a motivational speaker, entrepreneur and religious preacher. What inspires the author from the above two (2) scenarios is, the campaign hosted and message delivered throughout the campaign launched. This triggers inspiration for us all to take up the role to play in disseminating ideas for *ummatic* vision. Life is not to be perceived and experienced as happenstance. Life management could be otherwise if we are truly committed within ourselves to the spirit laid down and adopted in *Surah al-Ra’d* verse 11, Allah s.w.t. says:<sup>3</sup> Truly God alters not what is in people

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<sup>1</sup> The Sun Daily, “Ustaz Ebit Lew - Inspired to help others by stranger’s caring act.” *The Sun Daily* 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2020, <https://www.thesundaily.my/images/ustaz-ebit-lew-inspired-to-help-others-by-stranger-s-caring-act-IB2322318>.

<sup>2</sup> Ustaz Ebit Lew full name is Ebit Irawan bin Ibrahim Lew. He was born in Muadzam Shah, Pahang on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1984 as Lew Yun Pau before embracing Islam at the age of 12. Graduated from University of Putra Malaysia (UPM). What sets Lew apart from preachers who merely lecture from the pulpit is the fact that he is prepared to reach out to the underprivileged on the streets. Currently, he is freelance motivational speaker, entrepreneur, *ustaz* and preacher.

<sup>3</sup> In this article, the author intentionally decided not to write down verses of the Quran on paper to ensure the sanctity of those verses cited for fear this paper could be used or disposed indiscriminately considered *non-syariah* compliance.

until they alter what is in themselves. And when God desires evil for a people, there is no repelling it; and apart from Him they have no protector.<sup>1</sup>

The verse above described God will not alter the positive or negative consequences of people until they themselves bring about changes in their actions and lives. The verse continued saying that *when God desires evil for a people* refers to when He wishes to punish them on account of their altering the blessings that He has given them. In other words, none of us will be spared from the wrath of God. In relation to this, it is pertinent that strategic thinking and planning should be laid down to lead the way for future undertakings. The rationale is only for better future of mankind.

This leads the author to unveil five (5) main principles of **Azlan KH-I Model (AKH-I Model)** in this article entitled “AKH-I Model and Psychosocial Issues during Covid-19 Pandemic”. There are;

1. *Khalīfah* or Caliph.
2. Anthropological Imagination.
3. *Sharī‘ah* compliance.
4. Noble and righteous deeds (‘*amal ṣāliḥ*’)
5. Spiritual guidance and help in the guise of ‘*ibādah*’.

### **Azlan KH-I Model (AKH-I Model)**

What follows below are the five (5) key principles for **AKH-I Model**

1. *Khalīfah* or Caliph. This connotation is well represented in *Surah al-Baqarah* verse 30<sup>2</sup> in relation to our role as His vicegerent on earth.
2. Anthropological Imagination. A concept advocated based on the idea derived from *Surah al-Hujurat* verse 13.<sup>3</sup> This concept advocates the

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<sup>1</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017, p. 618.

<sup>2</sup> And when thy Lord said to the angels, “I am placing a vicegerent upon the earth,” they said, “Wilt Thou place therein one who will work corruption therein, and shed blood, while we hymn Thy praise and call Thee Holy?” He said, “Truly I know what you know not.” The story narrated in this verse was about the creation of Adam. After Adam’s body was created from clay, it remained a lifeless form for about 40 years, during which Iblis taunted it by flying in and out of it, saying, “You are nothing! If I come to power over you, I will destroy you, and if you come to power over me, I will defy you.” Then, it was said to those angels including iblis that they should prostrate before Adam. The iblis refused for they were better in creation compared to Adam. Adam was created from clay, whereas the iblis claimed they were created from fire. See further Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017, p. 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> In this verse 13 of the surah, Allah says “O mankind! Truly We created you from a male and a female, and We made you peoples and tribes that you may come to know one another. Surely the most noble of you before God are the most reverent of you. Truly God is



principle that emphasises on our clear conscience and awareness that we are living in a society of the *other*.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Sharī'ah* compliance. Performance of duty in upholding Islam as the religion and our commitment in rendering services for *ummatic* vision. Principle laid down in *Surah al-Kāfirūn* verses 1-6.<sup>2</sup>

4. Noble and righteous deeds<sup>3</sup> (*amal sālih*). Undertaking noble and righteous deeds in the guise of *ibadah* and to seek pleasure from Allah s.w.t. It was mentioned in one of the verses of the Quran that those who believe and perform righteous deeds, it is they who are the best of creation. Human beings can be both *the best of creation* and *the worst of creation*. Allah says in *Surah al-Tīn* verses 4-6;

Truly We created in the most beautiful stature, then We cast him to the lowest of the low, save those who believe and perform righteous deed; for their shall be a reward unceasing.<sup>4</sup>

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Knowing, Aware.” See Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017, p. 1262.

<sup>1</sup> Anthropology is defined by many anthropologists as “the study of the “Other”. For further discussion relating to the “Other”, please refer to Sarukkai, Sundar, “The ‘Other’ in anthropology and philosophy.” *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 32 No. 24 (Jun. 14-20) (1997): 1406-1409. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4405512>, Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Allah says in this verse, “Say, “O disbelievers! I worship not what you worship; nor are you worshippers of what I worship; nor am I a worshipper of what you worship; nor are you worshippers of what I worship, Unto you your religion, unto me my religion.” In this context, according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2017), religion can be taken either to mean the religion of Islam with all of its rites and creeds or to imply, “You shall have the reward of your religion, and I shall have the reward of my religion,” indicating that the end of each will not be the same. Insofar, as *din*, here translated religion can also mean “judgment,” this verse can also indicate, “You will have your judgment, and I shall have mine.” See Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017, p. 1572.

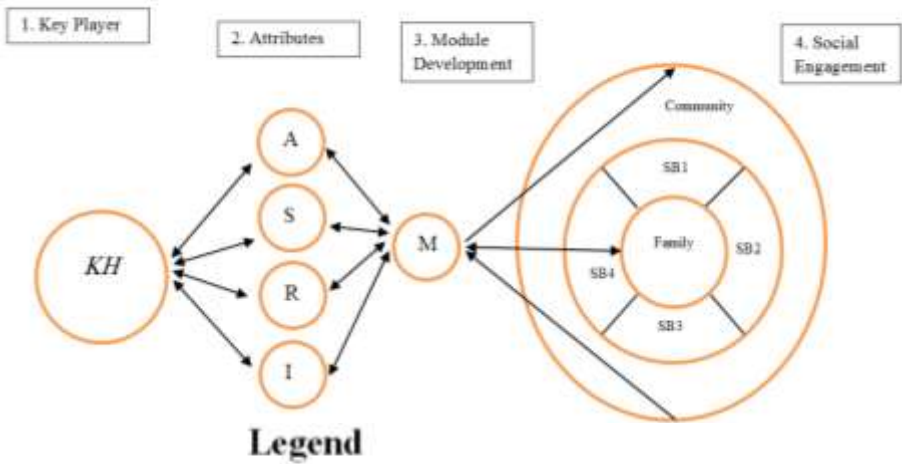
<sup>3</sup> The significance of noble and righteous deeds (*amal soleh*) was highlighted in several chapters (*surah*) of the Qur’an. (1) *Surah al-Imran* verse 114 narrates “They believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin right and forbid wrong, and hasten unto good deeds. And they are among the righteous.” (2) *Surah al-Inshiqaq* verse 25 says “save those who believe and perform righteous deeds; theirs shall be a reward unceasing.” (3) *Surah al-Bayyinah* verse 7, Allah says “Truly those who believe and perform righteous deeds, it is they who are the best creation.” (4) *Surah al-‘Asr* verse 3, Allah says “save those who believe, perform righteous deeds, exhort one another to truth, and exhort one another to patience.” These verses, to list down a few, elucidated several important tenets that could be adopted in performing noble or righteous deeds. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017, p. 1533.

5. Spiritual guidance and help in the guise of *‘ibādah*. Finally, the commitment shown by individuals for community-engagement should be geared towards seeking pleasure from Allah s.w.t. Our agenda should remain focus on this, and will never veer off this course. Our code of reference for this principle will be from *Surah al-Fātiḥah* verses 5-6.<sup>1</sup>

These five (5) key principles of **AKH-I Model** can be translated and simplified in the following diagram in Figure 1 below;

Figure 1: Azlan KH-I Model (AKH-I Model)



KH	<i>Khalifah</i>
A	Anthropological Imagination
S	<i>Syari'ah</i> Compliance
R	Noble and Righteous Deeds
I	Spiritual Guidance and Help ( <i>Ibadah</i> )
M	Module
SB	Sector-Based

<sup>1</sup> Allah says, “Thee we worship and from Thee we seek help. Guide us upon the straight path.” Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary*. USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017, p. 5. In other words, the verse implies that to you God we submit ourselves or prostrating ourselves in the guise of *ibadah* and seek for guidance and help.

This is where the author would like to begin. The foregoing five principles highlighted above were basically derived from the following chapters (surah) of the Qur`ān namely, (1) *Surah al-Baqarah* verse 30 (2) *Surah al-Hujurat* verse 13 (3) *Surah al-Kāfirūn* verses 1-6 (4) *Surah Āli-Imrān* verse 114; *Surah al-Inshiqāq* verse 25; *Surah al-Bayyinah* verse 7 and *Surah al-‘Aşr* verse 3 and (5) *Surah al-Fātiḥah* verses 5-6.

Those principles should be incorporated in the university’s curriculum educating our great ambassadors for the future. The author emphasises the need for us to wrap our arms as a society around those psychosocial identified or individuals in need or those most in need. Keeping this in mind of those five (5) principles above, what follows below are the *AKH-I Model* and its role in managing psychosocial issues during Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Covid-19 Pandemic and the Role of University**

Covid-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup> is a menace to many international communities across the globe<sup>2</sup>. It creates mass fear of Covid-19, rightly termed as *coronaphobia* due to various psychological vulnerability factors such as the intolerance of

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<sup>1</sup> Covid-19 pandemic began with a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown cause reported in Wuhan, Hubei, China on the December 31, 2019. This unprecedented Covid-19 outbreak had led to the declaration of Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) as an epidemic on January 2020 by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The main clinical manifestations of Covid-19 observed were fever, cough and dyspnea, and respiratory symptoms. The only treatment offered and administered today is mainly supportive and symptomatic. Thus, for protective measures of viral control, people are advised to wash their hands regularly and wear contact isolation gear such as masks, gowns, and gloves. See De Vos, Jonas, “The effect of COVID-19 and subsequent social distancing on travel behavior”. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives* Vol. 5 (2020): 100121.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590198220300324>, Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> June 2020; Jiang, F. and Deng, L. et. al. “Review of the clinical characteristics of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 35 (2020): 1545-1549. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11606-020-05762-w.pdf>, Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) spread rapidly to many countries across the globe including South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Italy, Iran, Spain, United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK) and was classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a pandemic on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020. As of the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020, it was reported that there were a total of 2,230,439 cases of Covid-19; 150,810 cases of deaths and 564,210 recovered cases had been reported throughout the world. In addition, the reported cases kept escalating exponentially in USA, Italy, Spain, UK, Turkey, and Russia. See Noor Azlan Mohd Noor, “COVID 19 and social distancing: A sociological concept”. Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020, <https://flagship.iiu.edu.my/eps/covid-19-and-social-distancing-a-sociological-concept/> (2020); Elengoe, Asita, “COVID-19 Outbreak in Malaysia.” *Osong Public Health Research Perspectives* 11(3) (2020):93-100. <https://ophrp.org/upload/pdf/ophrp-11-93.pdf>, Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

uncertainty, perceived vulnerability to disease, and anxiety proneness<sup>1</sup>. As a result, a wide fragment of world's population movement in the majority of the Covid-19 hit countries was restricted due to nationwide lockdown and home-confinement strategies implemented. The rationale is to protect people from contracting this unpredictable and fast spreading deadly virus infection of Covid-19. Once contracted, the psychological impact may vary from immediate effects, like irritability, fear of contracting and spreading infection to family members, anger, confusion, frustration, loneliness, denial, anxiety, depression, insomnia, despair, and to extreme of consequences, including suicide.<sup>2</sup>

In the past we had experienced several pandemic outbreaks such as Ebola virus disease (EVD) (2013–2016; Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), Zika virus (2015–2016; North, Central and South America, Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia) and cholera (2017; Yemen), *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome* (SARS), *Japanese Encephalitis* (JE), *influenza A H1N1*.<sup>3</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic however, is an unprecedented global health fiasco ever had and faced by worldwide international communities. Various strategic action plans designed by many countries across the globe such as Movement Control Order (MCO), lockdown, partial lockdown, zoning concept, self-isolation for 14 days, quarantine, mass Covid-19 testing including routine practices of wearing face-masks, hand-sanitisers, and social distancing of one metre apart, are meant to deprive the 'chain reaction' of the Covid-19 virus from spreading into the community.

The blueprint of this grand design however, did not pay much heed to the importance of spiritual quotient awareness amongst the community members particularly the healthcare frontliners.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is considerably

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<sup>1</sup> See Asmundson, Gordon J.G. & Taylor, Steven, "Coronaphobia: Fear and the 2019-nCov outbreak." *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* Vol. 70 (2020): 102196.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7134790/>, Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Dubey, Souvik et al. "Psychosocial impact of COVID-19." *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research & Reviews* 14 (2020): 779-788.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341574989\\_Psychosocial\\_impact\\_of\\_COVID-19](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341574989_Psychosocial_impact_of_COVID-19)  
Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Bakar, A.Y.A. and Ramli, S. "Psychosocial support for healthcare frontliners during Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia." *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* 54 (2020): 1-2. doi: 10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102272; Stellmach, Darryl et al. "Anthropology in public health emergencies: What is anthropology good for? *BMJ Global Health* 3 (2018): 1-7. <https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/3/2/e000534.full.pdf>, Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Bakar, A.Y.A. and Ramli, S. "Psychosocial support for healthcare frontliners during Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia." *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* 54 (2020): 1-2. doi: 10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102272.

beneficial if a psychoeducational training module could be an option for the university to initiate. This is to widen the horizon scope of the existing academic curriculum in emphasising the importance of harmonising the theoretical and practical dimensions of community-engagement efforts by students for the society at large. The dimensions observed must adopt a holistic approach of both ‘hardware’ elements involving skills and knowledge to be utilised in job routine as well as the ‘soft-skills’ in terms of self-psychological management. The utilisation of specialised hotlines and integrated psychosocial service systems through numerous social media platforms particularly telephone or internet-based counselling for people in need can be further incorporated in the module crafted. Such innovative idea and approach are eminent particularly in assessing the accuracy of information disclosed, enhancing social support systems, eliminating stigma associated with the pandemic or epidemic, and maintaining a normal life under safe conditions for society at large in battling pandemic health crises. This psychosocial support training helps to promote and prepare the community at large in many ways or the other, to manage their mental, emotional, social, and spiritual capacities prior to entering the uncertain conditions of any other pandemic health crises in the future.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 and 2 below show us the details of Covid-19 pandemic cases in Malaysia and across the globe as of 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2020.

**Table 1: Covid-19 Pandemic Cases in Malaysia**

Cases	New	Total
Recovered/Discharged	972	22,220
Infections	957	32,505
Active	0	10,036
Death	0	249

(Source: Ministry of Health as of 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2020).

<sup>1</sup> Ibid; Yanping, B., et al. “2019-nCoV epidemic: address mental health care to empower society.” *Lancet* 396 (2020): 37-38.

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930309-3>

Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

**Table 2: Covid-19 Pandemic Worldwide Cases**

Cases	Total
Recovered/Discharged	30.9M
Infections	46.2M
Active	10,036
Death	1.2M

(**Source:** Ministry of Health as of 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2020).

Looking at the above statistics, the next step is how to go about it? What approaches are we thinking? Following the **AKH-I Model**, the first step as a *khalifah* is, the need of holistic understanding of psychosocial issues faced by our community.

This holistic understanding is best achieved through field studies. The field studies through participant-observation and community-engagement approaches are imperative to gather any comprehensible inputs of the societal needs. In this case, it is important to address issues relating to psychosocial needs within the community. At this juncture, the magnitude of university’s engagement in addressing psychosocial needs of any given community can easily be measured through roles played simultaneously, i.e., as a member and observer of the community or group. For the purpose of this article, the author wishes to adopt **AKH-I Model** and explore three (3) main issues; family well-being and children adjustment, community-engagement and sector-based. This will be discussed in turn below.

**Family Well-Being and Children Adjustment**

Covid-19 pandemic may have short and long-term perceived threats to family well-being and children adjustment. Family well-being is conceptualized by three overarching processes: (a) communication particularly the family coping strategy (b) organization involving adaptability and resources and (c) belief systems including meanings and spirituality. These are sources of resilience in many families that can be disrupted in the context of pandemic<sup>1</sup>. According to

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<sup>1</sup> Prime, Heather et al. “Risk and resilience in family well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic.” *American Psychologists*, Vol.75 (5) (2020): pp. 631-643.

Walsh, resilience refers to the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges. Resilience requires mutual support, collaborative strategy and efforts in order to sustain and prioritising needs to weather troubled times together. The paradox of resilience is that the worst of times can also bring out our best. A crisis can yield learning, transformation, and growth in unforeseen directions.<sup>1</sup> What matters most in dealing with Covid-19 pandemic in relation to family resilience are the contextual risks and its psychosocial impact. The contextual risks could be cumulative bringing cascading effects to the family. Family is fraught with dilemmas. Dilemmas such as losing a job, financial insecurity, school closures, recalibrate relationship in the family, reorganise patterns of interaction within neighbourhood, to list down a few, to fit into new normal of Covid-19 pandemic.

In other words, those requirements necessitate a boundary shift of social relationships and roles negotiating within the family and societal members at large. In relation to this, the university has social and moral obligations for family resilience through supportive social and institutional approach policies. The success of the intervention depends on how much the university could tap family resources and other resources within the neighbourhood in developing action-oriented modules. Such orientation is imperative in creating new referral-system and possibilities or avenues that could be capitalised by the university authorities' concerted efforts to overcome impasses to change.

It is also important to acknowledge the fact that social distancing during Covid-19 pandemic can contribute to acute risk of loneliness, a subjective feeling of being socially isolated. It increases depressive symptoms particularly among the elderly groups. In discussing the geriatric health issue, the most important part of this global Covid-19 pandemic is the pervasive impact of increased loneliness, decline in physical and mental health, and social isolation. In many instances, they were being separated from family members, relatives and close others on the pretext of precautionary measures to protect them from pandemic. This has logistical implications as social distancing may limit access to caregivers and other

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<https://doi.apa.org/fulltext/2020-34995-001.pdf>, Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Walsh, F. "Family Resilience: A Framework for Clinical Practice." *Family Process* 42 (1) (2003):1-18. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10801193\\_Family\\_Resilience\\_A\\_Framework\\_for\\_Clinical\\_Practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10801193_Family_Resilience_A_Framework_for_Clinical_Practice), Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020; "A Family Resilience Framework: Innovative Practice Applications." *Family Relations* 51 (2002): pp. 130-137. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3700198.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A13d4d5a8c1b81052f1a35087a8c05888>, Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

needed resources.<sup>1</sup> However, Sundstrom, in their study in Sweden, refers loneliness to a subjective distressing feeling of alienation. They made a clear distinction between social isolation and loneliness.

A person can be socially isolated without feeling lonely or vice versa. What matter in this context, is the perceived loneliness that had adverse effect to one's health status, including increased risk of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stress, development of all-cause dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The loneliness can increase the risk of developing all-cause dementia and is not just prodromal feature of dementia especially Alzheimer's disease. At certain extent, based on the findings observed in their study, they claimed that loneliness is a symptom of dementia instead of a risk factor for dementia. Thus, it is important to devise potential or possible interventions that may reduce perceived loneliness among the elderly adults in society.<sup>2</sup> Arthur Kleinman, in *The Hazard Gazette* narrated his experienced looking after his wife Joan, suffering from a very particular kind of Alzheimer's disease that affects her occipital lobes. As a result, she became blind and had dementia. In relation to this, Kleinman reiterated the importance of family and the responsibility one has for each other, the interpersonal strengths one has to develop to be sensitive to others and moral commitments.

The concept of care and caregiver are two different concepts to be understood. Caring implies learning how to take care of ourselves and our local worlds. Caregiving on the other hand, involves providing physical acts of help (such as bathing, feeding and exercising), emotional insight and support, and moral solidarity. Patients might suffer similar symptoms, but each patient's reality is different in which what makes caregiving both exhausting and engrossing. In actual fact, it is all about human engagement.<sup>3</sup> Again, family resilience framework is important to be adopted in addressing psychosocial issues in the family. It offers a valuable conceptual map for prevention and intervention

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<sup>1</sup> Tyrrell, Caitlin J. & Williams, K.N. "The paradox of social distancing: Implications for older adults in the context of Covid-19." *American Psychological Association Journal* Vol.12 (1) (2020): S214-S216. <https://doi.apa.org/fulltext/2020-41455-001.pdf> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Sundstrom, Anna et al. "Loneliness increases the risk of all-cause dementia and Alzheimer's Disease." *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, Volume 75 (5) (2020): 919–926. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbz139> Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Kleinman, Arthur, "How a doctor learned to become a caregiver." *The Harvard Gazette* (2019a). <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/10/after-his-wife-was-diagnosed-with-alzheimers-arthur-kleinman-shares-what-he-learned/>, Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020; "How I learned to be a better doctor from my wife's struggle with Alzheimer's." *Time Magazine* (2019b). <https://time.com/5680723/doctor-wifes-alzheimers/>, Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.



efforts to support and strengthen vulnerable family in crisis. A family resilience framework offers several advantages.

First, it focuses on strengths under stress, in the midst of crisis and in overcoming adversity. Second, it is assumed that no single model fits all families or their situations. Functioning is assessed in context i.e., relative to each family's values, structure, resources, and life challenges. Third, processes for optimal functioning and the well-being of members are seen to vary over time, as challenges unfold and families evolve across the life-cycle. It is evident that a family resilience perspective is grounded in a deep conviction in the potential for family recovery and growth out of adversity.<sup>1</sup> Having said all these, it is important for the university and **AKH-I Model** in particular, to emphasise on human engagement modules relating to family stresses, resources, and navigating new challenges in new norms due to Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Community-Engagement**

Covid-19 is a social disease that requires social remedies.<sup>2</sup> Social medicine means understanding health and delivering care around an understanding of our deep sociality.<sup>3</sup> Social medicine recommends at least three things: integrating health, social, and economic responses; bringing care to the points of greatest need; and focusing on broad equity driven reforms in the pandemic's wake. First, the integrative response between social care and health care is a key for successful family and community's health intervention programmes. The best delivery platform of "social medicine" is to bring the Covid-19 pandemic testing and care to accessible community settings. The social, economic, and biological determinants of health should be addressed in unity for effective response to health and at the same time, facilitating the effective transfer of information across health and social sectors. Second, bringing care to the points of greatest need. The nature of Covid-19 is infectious. Infections move through social network, i.e., within families,

<sup>1</sup> Walsh, F. "Family Resilience: A Framework for Clinical Practice." *Family Process* 42 (1) (2003):1-18. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10801193\\_Family\\_Resilience\\_A\\_Frameworkfor\\_Clinical\\_Practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10801193_Family_Resilience_A_Frameworkfor_Clinical_Practice), Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, p.5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Trout, Lucas J. & Kleinman, Arthur, "Covid-19 requires a social medicine response." Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.579991> (2020).

<sup>3</sup> Trout, Lucas J. et al. "Social medicine in practice: Realizing the American Indian and Alaska native right to health." *Health and Human Rights* 20 (2) (2018): 19-30. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329440663\\_Social\\_Medicine\\_in\\_Practice\\_Realizing\\_the\\_American\\_Indian\\_and\\_Alaska\\_Native\\_Right\\_to\\_Health](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329440663_Social_Medicine_in_Practice_Realizing_the_American_Indian_and_Alaska_Native_Right_to_Health), Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

through communities and beyond. Thus, communal efforts and care are pertinent in ensuring the delivering of resources within the community for the poor, marginalised, and those in need and inaccessible to care. Otherwise, the infectious-risks affect the health of all. Third, focusing on equity in the pandemic's wake. The issue here is about health disparities within the community especially on accessibility to care. Government's policy must ensure affordable health care for all.<sup>1</sup>

Several sections of society will be affected due to Covid-19 pandemic. First, children. It is evident that learned experiences through social environment plays a significant role for early childhood cognitive, emotional and psychosocial skill development especially toddlers and adolescents. The psychosocial impact on them due to Covid-19 is extensive and worrying. The closing of schools, parks, playgrounds, limited contacts with friends, classmates and teachers, and lack of space at home have potentially promote distress, hostility, confusion and prolonged adverse mental consequences among children. Such negative effects on health are likely to be much worse when children are confined to their homes without outdoor activities and interaction with same aged friends during the outbreak.<sup>2</sup> In Japan, *jishuku*<sup>3</sup> or voluntary restraint was the initial response to Covid-19 pandemic. It is a practice of voluntary restraint from fun, luxury and celebration. In other words, it is about

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<sup>1</sup> Trout, Lucas J. & Kleinman, Arthur. "Covid-19 requires a social medicine response." Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.579991> (2020).

<sup>2</sup> Dubey, Souvik et al. "Psychosocial impact of COVID-19." *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research & Reviews* 14 (2020): 779-788. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341574989\\_Psychosocial\\_impact\\_of\\_COVID-19](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341574989_Psychosocial_impact_of_COVID-19), Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2020; Wang, Guanghai et al. "Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak." *The Lancet* Vol. 395 Issue 10228 (2020): 945-947. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30547-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X), Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

<sup>3</sup> *Jishuku* was widely practised in January 1989 after the death of the Showa emperor. Moreover, it was practised in March 2011 as a form of collective mourning over the loss of life caused by the massive Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. When Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for a national response to Covid-19 on 26 February 2020, he suggested that the nation should re-engage in *jishuku*. Though the context was different from previous event, everyone understood what to do i.e., stop moving around for a while and endure the ensuing economic downturn. See Nishi, Makato, "*Jishuku*, social distancing and care in the time of Covid-19 in Japan." *Social Anthropology* 28 (2) (2020): 331-332. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1469-8676.12853> Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2020, p.331; Ida, A.K. et al. "*Jishuku*, altruism, and expatriate emotion." *Contexts* Vol. 14 (2) (2015): 28-33. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1536504215585771>, Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

“stop moving around for a while and endure the ensuing economic downturn.” However, the *jishuku* has brought uneven effect of social distancing within Japanese society especially for the disabled children. The author reported how the autistic children were confused by the sudden disruption of their daily routines when the local special-needs school was closed down.<sup>1</sup>

The role of university then is to provide guidelines and principles in effective online learning including mobilising resources to design psychosocial support programmes for the vulnerable social groups in the community. This requires professional expertise and real resources to create. Modules such as good parenting skills, healthy lifestyle at home, innovative motivational courses for children, creative physical activities within limited space at home, good personal hygiene, to list down a few. University should not remain within its cocoon enjoying exclusivity of space and “detached concern<sup>2</sup>” in managing psychosocial issues in the community.

### **Sector-Based Engagement: Workplace**

Safety and healthy working conditions are fundamental at workplace environment.<sup>3</sup> Today, due to Covid-19 pandemic the new normal working arrangements and conditions have brought new psychosocial challenges at work. Increased workloads, longer working hours without rest, worrying for being infected at work and passing the virus to family, social distancing, working from home, losing jobs, furlough scheme introduced, are examples of work-related psychosocial risks. These psychosocial factors and risks need to be identified and mitigated to ensure the physical and mental well-being of the workers. Several strategic actions by management leadership need to be taken into account in mitigating those psychosocial factors and risks involving environment and equipment, working schedule, workload, violence and harassment, work-life balance, job security, social and

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<sup>1</sup> Nishi, Makato, “*Jishuku*, social distancing and care in the time of Covid-19 in Japan.” *Social Anthropology* 28 (2) (2020): 331-332. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1469-8676.12853>. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> “Detached concern” refers to interested distance of which allowing a one-way exploration of one’s intimate features which may be relevant to his/her current problem. It is similar to what physicians call “listening to the patient” and “taking the history” are medicalised tasks directed not at the patient’s life world, but at diagnostic evidence (Robert A. Hahn and Arthur Kleinman 1983).

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), “Managing work-related psychosocial risks during the COVID-19 pandemic”. Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_748638.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_748638.pdf)

psychological supports, and coping behaviours. Otherwise, workers will be physically exhausted, demotivated, anxiety, depression and to a certain extent, leading to suicidal thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

Health care providers for instance, are at high-risk and vulnerable for their risk of exposure to virus and to the psychosocial consequences due to lack of resources and heavy workload. Lack of resources includes material and human resources. The fear is high percentage of professionals are getting infected for not having adequate personal protection equipment (PPE) and performing excessive tasks during working hours due to lack of human resources. This involves qualitative overload particularly in relation to coping strategy that demands their cognitive and emotional skills. As a result, many of them are prone to suffer Burnout Syndrome (BS) declared by World Health Organization (WHO) as a labour risk affecting person's life quality, compromising individual's physical and mental well-being. The BS is left untreated would eventually lead to chronic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore important for Psychosocial Needs Assessment (PNA) to identify and determine the possible intervention programmes to deal with it. Medical anthropologists Mary-Jo, Byron Good and his team members from Harvard University were entrusted to deal with psychosocial impact due to conflict and tsunami experiences in Aceh. They described the requirement for psychosocial needs assessment (PNA) is critical for any traumatic events or experiences suffered by Aceh community dealing with tsunami and violence experiences in Acehnese villages. For this, the Department of Social Medicine from Harvard Medical School of Harvard University was invited to participate as consultant in humanitarian intervention and outreach programmes to resolve the psychosocial domain or needs involving mental health well-being of the community.

The strategic intervention and outreach programmes initiated allowed the gathering of first-hand information in the fields. It opens

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> PTSD is a disorder characterized by 1) flashbacks or nightmares about the traumatic event which produce terror and strong physiological reactions, 2) avoidance of memories or thoughts related to the event, or to avoid activities, situations or persons related to, and 3) a lasting perception of a current noticeable threat. If any individuals develop post-traumatic stress, as a self-protection strategy either being aware or unaware, they may not want to return to where it was produced. See Rodriguez, Barbara Otonin & Sanchez, T.L. "The psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on health care workers." *International Brazilian Journal of Urology* Vol. 46 (Suppl 1) (2020): 195-200. <https://www.scielo.br/pdf/ibju/v46s1/1677-6119-ibju-46-s01-0195.pdf> Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020, p. 198.

ways of understanding the popular concept of trauma as a natural response to such disaster. Eventually, it helps the Department of Social Medicine committee to develop new initiatives in “psychosocial and mental health” interventions in dealing with tsunami and violence in Acehese villages.<sup>1</sup> The PNA approach in dealing with post-conflict and tsunami experiences in Aceh can be adopted in addressing PNA Covid-19 pandemic across the sectors involved.

## Conclusion

The foregoing discussions highlighted several important *social facts* in understanding psychosocial issues and social sufferings of the community in diverse contexts during the Covid-19 pandemic. The understanding of contextual and perceived risks in any given community is significant as prior knowledge to the development of action-oriented or applied modules.

The university’s curriculum has to go beyond class-based oriented study, which is considerably theoretical into empirical-based which is applied knowledge. In other words, the existing curriculum needs to be critically revised and contextualised to meet the individuals actual needs or those most in need. The mission of the university should be able to produce not just volunteers for community-engagement intervention programmes, but to have more *khalīfah* for ummatic vision. Thus, the principles laid down in **AKH-I Model** should be incorporated in the university’s curriculum to motivate and educating our students for *ummatic* vision through noble and righteous deeds (*‘amal ṣālih*).

The *khalīfah* vision and mission is to construe volunteerism concept as *‘amal ṣālih* which is solely meant to secure unceasing rewards in the guise of *ibadah* from Allah s.w.t. In relation to this, the real assessment is the ability of the university to innovate modules for application purposes of which to be accomplished through strategic community-engagement intervention programmes. The message is, ameliorating social sufferings is the larger goal of both scholars and humanitarians. Such message is eminent to gauge the university’s role in executing their commitment for *ummatic* vision. Excellence as Aristotle used to say;

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather

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<sup>1</sup> Good, Mary-Jo D., et al. “Complex engagement: Responding to violence in postconflict Aceh”. Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272510218\\_Complex\\_Engagements\\_Responding\\_to\\_Violence\\_in\\_Postconflict\\_Aceh](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272510218_Complex_Engagements_Responding_to_Violence_in_Postconflict_Aceh), 2010.

have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”<sup>1</sup>

This concept of excellence could be observed further in a famous Hadith, narrated from Sayyidatinā Aisyah Radhiyallahu ‘anhā that Prophet Muhammad SAW said; “O mankind! Take up good deeds only as much as you are able, for Allah loves those who love to do good deeds indeed, and that the most beloved deeds to Allah are the most regular and consistent even though they were small”.

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