

THE ISSUES OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE THREE MAIN DISTRICTS IN THE STATE OF PERAK DARUL RIDZUAN: THE CASE STUDIES IN THE DISTRICTS OF KINTA, MANJUNG AND KUALA KANGSAR

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Abstract

Unemployment is a severe scenario which will affect various situations both social and economic development of a nation. Unemployment is one of the macroeconomic problems that signal the inefficient use of capital resource in the market. It is a stress condition faced by the community especially the unemployed people which will result in self destruction and low self-esteem. The paper discussed on the unemployment issues in the Districts of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar in the state of Perak. Kruppe et al. (2007), defined unemployed as a person searching for employment through various channel such as advertisement agencies, sending out resume, or placing or answering advertisements and capable to work. In addition, the person also considered as unemployed if they are waiting response from any work agencies (Bradbury, 2007). A survey of 203 respondents were conducted randomly to identify the current socio-economic condition and the issues faced by the unemployed person in the three district of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar in Perak. The result of the survey indicated that 35% of respondents were female, aged between 21- 25 years old (36.4%) and unemployed for more than 6 months. In addition, majority of respondents (57.1%) used newspaper as the medium to search for jobs rather than online internet search and did not know about the existence of local employment agencies i.e. PEKA located in Ipoh (13.8%). Issues identified such as mismatched between the residents of respondents and their preferred location of work and the availability of workers with their education level and the favored of company toward employing foreign worker in the local labor market. The study also identified issues related to communication and writing skills in English among the unemployed respondents in English. 83.8% of respondents claimed that unemployment caused stress and anxiety due to a job loss, low self-esteem (77.8%) and decrease in purchasing power (71.9%). In addition, they also claimed that unemployment affect income of the family (68.4%) and caused the inadequate and low housing quality (62.4%). Hence, several recommendations proposed to overcome the issues of unemployment in the study.

Keywords: Unemployment issues; macroeconomic problems; Perak

Introduction

Over the past decades, unemployment in Malaysia shows fluctuations from early 1980's to 2010. In the year of 2010 onwards, Malaysia can be considered to experienced full employment whereby the country has achieved a minimum 4% of unemployment level which is considered as full employment status in which labour force and other economic resources of a country are utilized to their maximum. Recent economic development in 2010, Malaysia had set a target to achieve a high income nation through inclusivity and sustainability by year 2020. This programme was translated from Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) in which a high income nation can be achieved via three vital principles. The principles are high income nation, inclusiveness and sustainability. Unfortunately, unemployment is still considered as crucial scenario faced by developing country especially with saturation of population due to lack of vacancies offered, huge influx of foreign worker, mismatch

skills and the job selection, spatial job location offered, higher demand on semi-skilled workers and others. Thus, it will result in wastages of human labour towards nation especially in local labour. Unemployment is a stress condition that gives crucial impact to the society and national development.

Unemployed person is defined as an individual without having a job within substantial amount of time until four weeks although the person is capable to earn money. Among the factor that influences unemployment situation are mismatch spatial location of work that only concentrated in urban areas, influx of foreign worker into local labor market, conflict of demand and supply of working and crisis of economic worsened during Asian Financial Crisis 1997-1998. Therefore, issues and problems of unemployment founded based on the gap between wages and levels of education, availability of jobs types and the level of education the unemployed person have, the spatial mismatch of job opportunities and location of workers, mismatch skill and job experienced by unemployed people, as well as lack of communication and writing skills in Malay and English languages. Furthermore, the issues of unemployment can further create adverse effects to the community achievements as whole. Durjadin and Goffette-Nagot (2007) stated unemployment may reduce one's self-esteem by affecting the individual performance in terms of social, physical and economical. The negative impact for instance increase anxiety and depression, lead to lower self-esteem, and produce adverse health consequences, affected physical symptoms like, as loss appetite, sleep, sexual interest and lead to depression. The effects of unemployment rely on certain factors which are social problems that supported by Firmansyah et al. (2012). Other than that unemployment also created wastage in the labour force, increase government tax and increase government spending due to social support to the welfare of unemployed people. Other social impact includes children received stress impact from their parents due to financial constraints, thus destruct the family institution.

Based on the above identified issues found in literature review, the research proposed to study the issues of unemployment in the districts of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar in the state of Perak. The objectives of the study are to identify the issues and problems of unemployment in these three districts, to identify the possible factors caused unemployment in the related districts and finally to suggest recommendations as mitigations pertaining to unemployment issues and problems.

Definition of Unemployment

The meaning of unemployment can be seen through three major aspects which are physical, social and economic. Shore & Tashchian, (201, p. 983-984) investigate the definition of physically unemployment affect physical and mental health of unemployed. Physical unemployment can be defined as affected by physical health condition of not being employed or physical defects like physically handicapped, impaired hearing, hearing and visionary impaired, respiratory system tend to have longer duration of unemployment as compared to physically unimpaired persons (Diehl, 1935). On the other hand, unemployment in terms of social is related with emotions of shame on being unemployed. Starrin, (2002, p.1) studied factor of unemployment with emotion of embarrassed may lead to the poverty. Unemployment of economic perspective from Zhao (2012, p. 586) defined unemployment represents as unutilized labor resource. It can be argued that an increase in unemployment rate, *ceteris paribus*, causes additional efficiency losses. Based on Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011, unemployment rate can be elaborated as:

$$\text{Unemployment rate} = \frac{\text{The number of persons unemployment in the specified category}}{\text{The number of person in the labour force in the same category}} \times 100$$

Types of Unemployment

There are five types of unemployment according to Hussainat, Ghnimat and Al-dlaeen (2013, p. 157). The types of unemployment are as follows:

- i. *Fricative Employment*
It is when one part of economy goes towards progress and the other goes towards getting down which leads to demanding special jobs and works.
- ii. *Hierarchical Unemployment*
It is the change in the ways of production by having new technology to replace the man power.
- iii. *Seasonal Unemployment*
This is resulted from the setback of economic and weather conditions in some seasons which lead to an inactive work.
- iv. *Cynical Unemployment*
It includes all sectors of economic activity which resulted from some conditions as wars, general inactive economy.
- v. *Disguised Unemployment*
It is the increasing of workers in the institution in which each one has a sub work does not offer him his basic needs.

Factors of Unemployment

Previous researchers claimed that causes of unemployment can be due to economic growth and social development. Johnson (1967) points out the tariff affect economic growth as cited by Bhattacharyya & Biswas (1987, p.4) where the factor of unemployment in caused by tariff leading to discourage exports and create the situation of welfare loss. As Borat, (2007) cited by (Eita & Ashipala, 2010, p. 94) "economic theory states that higher education level will increase the likelihood of getting an employment. In many middle and low income countries there is a shortage of highly educated individual and this resulted in high unemployment. However, far too little attention has been paid to previous research findings of economic perspective been carried out by Blanchard & Wolfers, (2000) cited by (Walter & Xie, 2008, p. 2) where adverse economic shocks, adverse labor market institutions and the relation between the two factors. However, only the relation of adverse economic shocks and adverse labor market institutions can be examined. On the other hand, psychological and emotion problems such as depression and low self-esteem existed among the unemployed, based on the recent studies conducted by Hussainant, Ghnimat, and Al-dlaeen (2012, p. 157). In the same way, depression due to unemployment lead towards excluding themselves from actual community activities, which create negative behavior and psychological disorder in the unemployed person character. Furthermore, conflict between inner self increase issues of unhappiness with life, unsatisfied, disabled and did not able to sustain their own living condition either physical, sociologically and financially. Moreover, depression illness is found to be correlate with low self-esteem due to not having confidence to face local community as well as hopelessness for being unemployed.

Issues and Problems of Unemployment

Issues and problems of unemployment that have been identified form previous literature review are the issue of gap between wages and the levels of education, as clarified by Beaudry & Green (2000, p.1-8), where the researchers concluded that the level of education has significantly affected the wages received by workers. Next, emergence of huge numbers of foreign workers has increase the rate of unemployment in Malaysia in late 1990s. The situations of flooded foreign workers have worsened the condition of local human capital in order to search for job, according to study done by Ramendran & Yacob (2012, p. 531-534). Other rising issue of unemployment is derived by spatial mismatch of job opportunities and location of worker. This issue is highlighted by Sahin et al. (2013, p. 1-8) whereby job location was not correlate with the physical distribution of locations based on

manufacturing and economic sectors. Another issues of skills and jobs based on the Barnard et al. (2001) cited by Rahmah Ismail, Ishak Yussof & Sieng, 2011, p. 6) where jobs and skills mismatches occurred when the right skills was not meets by the suitable job and this situation has directly affected the wages, productivity and probability to get a job. This statement is supported by Sahin et al. (2013, p. 6) which stated that “only quantifies the number of job-seekers searching in the wrong sector, but not how such misallocation lowers the job-findings rate and raises unemployment”.

Impact of Unemployment

According to Eita & Ashipala (2010, p. 92) research, the impact of unemployment are closely related to poverty, homelessness and family cohesion affects. All these negative impacts will lead to serious crime situations such as crime, burglary, robbery, violence, the falling or break-up of the family institution. Furthermore, the negative social impact that arises from unemployment are increase in alcoholism and prostitution. Unemployment could lead to negative lifestyle and cause depression with the demand of current lifestyle and high cost of living. Unemployment and stress are much related as findings from study carried out by Linn, Sandifier & Stein (1985, p. 502) where “unemployment might be expected to increase anxiety and depression, lead to lower self-esteem, and produce adverse health consequences, particularly when efforts to locate work are met with failure over a long period of time”. On the health issues, researchers found that psychological function of unemployed person could increase the manifestation of physical symptoms such as loss appetite, loss of sleep, and decrease in sexual interest and interaction with the surrounding people which will lead to depression. This study was supported by Kessler, Turner & House (1998, p. 75) which claims that impact of unemployment may leads to health problems by the variations of stress and strains. Physical and emotional factors were affected due to tendency toward drinking, drug use, or even suicidal.

However, researcher also found positive attitude increase due to psychological distress especially in the motivation to find employment in order to support their life. The unemployed will experience distress, but at the same time, will be more active in their job search. Thomas, McCabe & Berry (1980) also found positive impact due to unemployment where the time of being unemployed may replace the loss of quality time being with family while working before. Social impact has been further elaborated by Jones (1988, p. 200-201) as unemployment could affect family members especially the children. Head of family is obliged with responsibility to earn money; however, if unemployment occurs to the breadwinner, the children within these families, may suffer from having good education provision, and can received stress impact from their parent due to the financial constraints.

Methodology

Research methodology that assist this research consists of few phases of states which includes formulation of subject matter , theoretical study, data collection, data analysis and synthesis and last but not least the recommendation and conclusions. Methodology is essential in order to examine the sets of data that is suit with the research objectives and research questions. The data collection for the research were from Primary Data collection using face to face questionnaire survey and Secondary Data of literature review. Primary data was gained through distribution of questionnaires and interviews upon the target group. Surveys and interviews from primary data will be translated into Social Science (SPSS) data and analyses were generated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and few analyses of relationships were tested. Sections of analysis will be based on Profile Respondent and Socio-demographic Data, Employment and Unemployment Data, Job Interview, Skill, Training Background, Issues of Unemployment in Malaysia and Impact of Unemployment in Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar Districts. A few methods of analyzing the data were used for this study such as Cross Tabulation, Correlation Coefficient (Pearson Correlation and Spearman's Rho) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

3.1. Method of Data Collection

Method of data collection is based on conveniently random sampling method whereby all of unemployed people have the chances to answer the questionnaires. Sampling of population of unemployment in three districts of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar is 203 numbers of respondents. Data of unemployment are hard to get since the focused group will be based on unemployed people only. Thus, the sets of questionnaires had been distributed into few types of land uses activities such as housing, commercial and recreational area. Enumerators approached the unemployed group of people or individual and have a direct conversation with the respondents instead gave the questionnaires to be answered. Housing area such as villages, organized planned of housing area at the town centre as well as outskirts area are selected as area for data collection. Next land uses is commercial area like shopping malls, bazaar and food courts. And lastly, the area of questionnaire distributed at recreational area like square, recreational field and others. Those types of land uses are well distributed over the districts of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar area. On the other hand, secondary data are collected from various reports and authorize publications with regard to economic situation and employment report for the state of Perak .

Analyses and Descriptive Analysis

Based on the analyses, the unemployed respondents in area of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar were dominance by Male 58.9% as compared to Female 41.1% with more than 50% was Malay followed by Chinese 12.9% and India 6.4%. Majority of unemployment respondents (78%) were youth and young people aged between 21 years old to 30 years old as compared to any other age groups. In addition to that, more than half of the respondents (66.7%) was secondary school leaver, followed by respondents with tertiary education 23.4% and primary school education with only 5.7%. There were cases of respondents who did not have any education (1%).

In terms of marital status, 62.4% were unmarried respondents as compared to married (30%), divorced (5%) and widowed (2.6%). Household income of the unemployed respondents with their last employment were below than RM 1000 with 37.6%. This leads to the small percentage of financial assistance receiver due to high cost of living. Among the schemes for financial aid that offered assistance are “*Bantuan Sara Hidup*”, Financial Assistance Scheme for Single Mother and Zakat Assistance.

Meanwhile, approximately 80 % of unemployed people have working experiences and been worked around one until 5 years period. Based on the study, majority of the respondents have worked before and not fresh into the job market. Some of them (40%) have experienced working between 2 to 5 years. In term of salary scale while they were still working (before unemployed), the range of salaries received were different. For this part, most of respondents claimed that they earned average of RM 1,000 with 48.2% respondents stated that this was the reason why they resigned from the previous employment i.e due to low wages.

In terms of unemployment history, 51.1% of respondents have duration of being unemployed with less than 6 month and most of the respondents were still actively looking for a job with 84.2%. Less than 20% of respondents felt it was hard to find new employment within short period of time as well as faced other problems such as financial constraint and family matters (taking care of sick family members).

In term of method of finding jobs, the most popular methods was via family and friends with 68.1% agreed to use this kind of medium as compared to other medium. The least preferred method used by respondents is Job Fair with only 10.6%. The other alternative ways for search the job was through local employment agencies as 50.4% of respondents had registered with the local employment agencies. The most selected local employment agencies were Public Service Commission of Malaysia with percentage of 40.4%.

Finally, in terms of skills, majority of the respondents stated that they were able to speak and write in Malay language with 50.4% and 44.0%. On the other hand, the ability to speak and write in

English language seems moderate with 41.1% and 36.2%. Majority have the ability to use computer software with 79.4% as well as ability to use computer keyboard 73.8%.

Inferential analysis and findings

Inferential analysis is an analysis that focuses on the developed hypotheses in order to test the relationship of selected variables. Pearson Correlation Analysis been used when there is ordinal and scale data need to be tested out as one of the variables relationship. It is capable in determining whether the relationship has the strong or weak relationship based on the value of correlation (r). The strong and weak correlation can be determined based on the positive and negative relationship among the tested variables.

Besides that, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) also been used as an analysis for mean comparison between the groups when there is differences of two or more interval and ratio scale data.

Hypothesis Testing 1:

H_0 = There is no significant between educational background and individual impact of unemployment

H_1 = There is significant between educational background and individual impact of unemployment

Table 3. Pearson Correlation of level of Educational Background towards Individual Impact of Unemployment

Skills	Correlation coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)	No. of respondents	Hypothesis
Low self-esteem	-0.235**	0.005	141	Rejected
Stress and anxiety of job loss	0.016	0.849	141	Failed to reject
Loss of identity	-0.030	0.728	141	Failed to reject
Feeling isolation	-0.017	0.840	141	Failed to reject
Increased alcohol uses	0.059	0.487	141	Failed to reject
Easily influenced in self-destructive habits such as smoking, drug use, alcohol use	-0.036	0.673	141	Failed to reject
Decreased in purchasing power	-0.039	0.647	141	Failed to reject
Increase in leisure activity	-0.034	0.686	141	Failed to reject

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
2012

Source: Fieldwork Survey,

Based on the Table Pearson Correlation of Educational Background towards Individual Impact of Unemployment, the result shows a very weak relationship of education background with low self-esteem through significance level of 0.005 due to $r = -0.235$. The null hypothesis (H_0) can be rejected

and conclude that there is significant relationship between level of education and low self-esteem. As the result showed negative relationship, the analysis can be concluded that the lower the level of education, the lower the self-esteem of the respondents. There is significant between educational background and individual impact of unemployment.

Hypothesis Testing 2:

H_0 = There is no significant differences mean between working experience and spatial mismatch of job opportunities.

H_1 = There is significant differences means between working experience and spatial mismatch of job opportunities.

Table 4. ANOVA Test of Working Experience with Issues and Problems of Unemployment in Malaysia

Issues		Mean square	Sig.	Hy
Increase of foreign worker in the market	Between groups	4.262	0.328	Fail
	Within Groups	3.789		
Low-wage	Between groups	6.136	0.224	Fail
	Within Groups	4.050		
Mismatch of jobs and skills	Between groups	10.520	0.060	Fail
	Within Groups	3.657		
Spatial mismatch (jobs opportunities and location of worker)	Between groups	15.951	0.005	Re
	Within Groups	2.926		
Disability to communicate well and include oral and written communication	Between groups	6.731	1.505	Fail
	Within Groups	4.233		
The courses or/and subjects that the applicable to the industry	Between groups	1.532	0.602	Fail
	Within Groups	3.007		
Not prepared to re-locate to smaller towns	Between groups	6.410	0.145	Fail
	Within Groups	3.274		

Based on the Table above, there are significance differences in the mean for the working experience and issues of unemployment in Malaysia through spatial mismatch of jobs opportunities and location of worker with 0.005 level of significant where $p = <0.05$. Thus, null hypothesis (H_0) can be rejected and concluded that there is significant differences in the mean between working experience and spatial mismatch of job opportunities.

Discussion

Research objectives of the unemployment study are achieved based on the literature review and extensive data finding and analysis. This objective is achievable based on the literature review study from previous researchers, dissertations, journals and papers in order to picture the actual factor caused unemployment. Among the factor of unemployment are imbalances economic performance within certain time, information of job is hardly to reach community especially in rural area and psychological factor for being unemployed in longer duration. Nevertheless, the issues of unemployment in Malaysia are increasing due to the foreign worker in the market, spatial mismatch (jobs opportunities and location of worker), low-wage, mismatch of jobs and skills, disability to communicate well and include oral and written communication, not prepared to re-locate to smaller towns and the courses or/and subjects that the graduates studied are not relevant and not applicable to the industry. Thus, the objective one and two are achieved through the method of analysis selected in order to identify which are the higher issues listed. In addition, among impacts identified in the related districts are low self-esteem, decrease in purchasing power, feeling isolation, loss of identity, increase leisure activity, restricted access to service and public transportation, increased alcohol use, easily influence in self-destructive habits, hence achieved objective three. Finally, objective four is achieved through suggestions and recommendations provided.

Recommendations

Improvement in the location of jobs opportunities based on development action plans and strategies

Economic development strategies play a vital role in order to maximize the economic performance of one area. Economic development plans have to synchronize from national level down to the local level. The location of production and manufacturing should be based on the economic strategies plans and directions as to produce more job vacancies especially in the rural areas. Placement of sectors in the rural areas should be based on the potential of existing resources which may help to revive the economic development in that area. Focus development area have to precise especially in outskirts as to cater the needs and demands of local labor.

Minimum wage, introductions of skills and trainings provided.

Low wage issue is among the concerned matter that increased the rate of unemployment in Malaysia. Thus, pertaining to these issues some of the recommendation could be by reducing the working hours of employed people and substitutes with the skills and trainings provided by the employers. Skill and training may help workers to be more focused and specialized towards the related field as well as enhance worker's abilities. With the skills and training provided, perhaps, when shifting to other job, these could be as their selling point to get a new job.

Skills required as one of the needs to have a place in a local labor market. Mismatch of jobs and skills can be reduced if employee identified their interest at the early stage while studying. Skills need to be empowered before it can be sells and it is considered as one of the advantages

required by the potential workers. Confusion of interest need to clarify at the early stage as to help workers to identify which direction and needs of their interest. However, if the initial interest could not help to get any of desired job, perhaps, potential workers could quickly suits themselves with the new jobs and skills. New skills always can be learned and exercised if willingness to learn is higher as to fill the vacancies. Nowadays the labor market trend on the local labor force is very competitive.

Production manufacturing and services that support Malaysia economic performance usually placed in the outskirts areas. Existing resources were identified in those outskirts area and created the job opportunities. The relocation of the manufacturing and services to urban areas require cost of moving and transportation. In order to reduce the cost, production need to run nearby the resource area as to produce more productivity rather than faced a high cost of moving. This is also in line with the economic strategy development plan in order to enhance economic performances in outskirt area. As the potential employees, certainties of having relocate to the outskirts area is higher due to manufacturing and services spur a lot in rural area. One's mental and physical should be prepared together willingly to be transferred in order to secure the job offers.

Training in language and oral skills

Communication towards one person or one organization or more is crucially important. Thus, the gap of communication should be reduced especially ability to speak and write in other languages. Nowadays, language barrier can be solved by learning of other language. For example, make English or Mandarin as second and third language. This can be huge advantages if the potential worker can meet this requirement. Writing also need to be improvised as the working not only relies towards medium of communication only. Like communication, writing in other languages is also can be as good opportunities to have a job offered. In addition, writing skills is useful skills can be broadening for research and reports purposes.

Control number of foreign worker in the local market

Based on the interview among the unemployed respondents, one of their major concerned is the issue of foreign worker in the local market. Most of the respondents considered this matter as a major threat to the local people. Based on this concerned, the researcher felt that the admission of foreign workers need to be look carefully by the government, as this issue was considered as a threat that affects local labor especially to the local graduates and youth. The job vacancies should prioritized and given to Malaysian first, especially to local university graduates, school leavers, unemployed and poverty group (Mohamed, Ramendran & Yacob, 2012). On the other hand, policies to control immigrants and foreign workers should be formed as to relieve public stress due to flooding of foreign workers. Profile of foreign workers registered under responsible foreign worker agent need to be audited regularly by the Immigration Office and the Police Department. Investigation on the profiling should cover the worker basic information as well as finger print need to be taken for record purposes. From this record, new admission of foreign worker can be traced to avoid the same worker re-entered the local labor with different identities and passports.

Conclusion

Unemployment may cause a lot of problems in society in terms of economic, social and physical aspect of a country. Hence, the direction of recreating the economic development is closely related as well as one of an effective strategy is needed to tackle unemployment directly, towards achieving sustainable development and living environment as it clearly define in the development plan of Perak

State Structure Plan. Thus, the overall study on unemployment issues and problems in the district of Kinta, Manjung and Kuala Kangsar has successfully achieved all developed objectives.

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