



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS WHO LEAVE FAR FROM HOME**

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ABSTRACT

Leaving home to attend university is a significant and often challenging experience, especially if it's far away. This study aimed to investigate the psychological well-being of university students who study far from home, specifically those from Peninsular Malaysia studying in East Malaysia. Through a semi-structured interview, data was gathered from 8 UNIMAS students who originated from Peninsular Malaysia. The data was then voice recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Thematic Analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006). The findings highlight several key challenges these students encounter, including adjustment issues, cultural and language barriers, financial difficulties, and homesickness. This study provides valuable insights into the unique struggles faced by university students studying far from home, aiming to inform actions that can reduce these problems and enhance their overall psychological well-being.

Keywords: psychological well-being, far away from home, university students, challenges

ABSTRAK

Meninggalkan rumah untuk menghadiri universiti adalah pengalaman yang penting dan sering mencabar, terutamanya jika jauh dari rumah. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat kesejahteraan psikologi pelajar universiti yang belajar jauh dari rumah, khususnya mereka yang berasal dari Semenanjung Malaysia yang belajar di Malaysia Timur. Melalui temu bual separa berstruktur, data daripada 8 orang pelajar UNIMAS yang berasal dari Semenanjung Malaysia telah dikumpul. Data tersebut kemudiannya dirakam suara, ditranskripsikan, dan dianalisis menggunakan Analisis Tematik oleh Braun & Clarke (2006). Penemuan kajian ini menyoroti beberapa cabaran utama yang dihadapi oleh pelajar-pelajar ini, termasuk isu penyesuaian diri, perbezaan budaya dan bahasa, masalah kewangan, dan kerinduan terhadap kampung halaman. Kajian ini memberikan pandangan berharga tentang perjuangan unik yang dihadapi oleh pelajar universiti yang belajar jauh dari rumah, dengan tujuan untuk memberi maklumat supaya tindakan boleh diambil untuk mengurangkan masalah ini dan sekaligus meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologi mereka secara keseluruhan.

Kata kunci: kesejahteraan psikologi, jauh dari rumah, pelajar universiti, cabaran

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the background of the study, problem statement, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework, the significance of the study, the definition of terms, and the summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

At present, getting a higher education plays a crucial role in determining one's status and place in society. Furthering their studies at universities gives them the opportunity to meet and interact with new people, ideas, as well as help them begin their adult lives and improve their futures by earning higher education qualifications (Alharbi & Smith, 2019). According to the Ministry of Higher Education (2022), there is a total of 338,108 students enrolled in a Higher Education Institute in 2022. Getting into higher education is an achievement to most students. Despite the circumstances such as distance and cost, most students would feel lucky enough to have a place and opportunity to continue their higher education studies.

In the case of Malaysia, those who want to further their higher education in Public Universities, Polytechnics, Community College or 'Institut Latihan Kemahiran Awam (ILKA)' would need to apply to an online application called 'Unit Pengambilan Universiti (UPU)'. The UPU system is computer-generated and will run through your options one by one, beginning with your very first choice. If you are ineligible for your first choice or the competition is too fierce, the system will automatically move you down the list. There are many cases where those who applied did not get their desired courses or university, and some may not get any offers at all. Hence, those who received an offer from UPU will most likely continue

their studies, even if the universities they have chosen are far from the place they're currently living in.

However, those who live far from home, may have some challenges they face. Whether studying abroad or within their own country, students who leave home in order to pursue their higher education often experience negative impacts from being in a new environment (Moore, 2000). According to Alharbi & Smith (2019), transitioning away from home can lead to negative psychological and physical results, including difficulty adjusting to new surroundings, loss of social support networks, and difficulty coping with problems.

Hence, this study aims to investigate the psychological well-being of university students who leave far from home by looking at their experience, the factors that influence their decision to leave far from home, the difficulties they face, coping strategies and their support system. This topic is chosen due to the researcher's personal experiences with having to leave home to further her higher education studies far away from home. This study will also focus on students who originated from Peninsular who came to East Malaysia to further their studies in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

1.2 Problem Statement

People aspire to achieve optimal well-being, yet obstacles and insufficient societal support often hinder them from attaining a fulfilling and meaningful life (Kovich et al., 2023). While entering university is exciting and encouraging, the transition time, especially for those who are relocating, may be stressful (Harris, 2019).

There are a lot of studies on the psychological well-being or challenges faced by university students who decided to further their studies (Bewick et al., 2010; Downing, 2011; Pennington et al., 2017), but very few on the specific challenges on those who chose to study far away from their home. There is a lack of previous studies on this particular topic globally

(Medani et al., 2024), yet alone in Malaysia. Medani et al. (2024) conducted a study on the Challenges University Students Face while Studying away in Saudi Arabia. In this study, the researcher wants to look into the context in Malaysia.

Malaysia consists of 2 main regions, namely Peninsular Malaysia as well as Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia), which are separated by the South China Sea. (Yahya & Ali, 2012). Even though Malaysia is a small country with only 330,803 km² total land area, it has a diverse culture throughout the different states, especially within different regions. Additionally, the shift from one region to another may affect cultural, social, and environmental changes that could leave a substantial impact on these students' mental health. The financial and emotional costs of higher education are influenced by distance. Financial costs are associated with moving, transportation, or renting. Meanwhile, emotional costs come with distance from peers and family (Weßling & Bechler, 2019). Hence, in this study, the researcher wants to look into their psychological well-being by looking at the challenges that they might face while studying far from home in another region, such as acculturation, homesickness, financial issues, and more.

When it comes to studying far away from home, there are also quite a number of studies talking about students studying abroad, in comparison to the lack of literature about those who further their studies in the same country, but different regions (Psycharis et al., 2019; Santelli et al., 2020). Psycharis et al. (2019) have studied the factors and patterns of Interregional student migration in Greece where it looks at migration patterns and the determinants of interregional migration in Greece. Meanwhile, research by Santelli et al. (2020) talks about the determinants of student migration from an interregional perspective with a focus on the Campania region in Italy. These studies focus on interregional student migration in other countries like Italy and Greece, which are focused on the Western perspective. Meanwhile, this

paper will focus on the psychological well-being of university students who leave far from home in Malaysia.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

- To explore the psychological well-being of university students who leave far from home

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To investigate the factors that influence their decisions to study far away from home
- To explore the challenges faced by university students who leave far from home
- To explore how they adapt and cope with the challenges
- To identify the support system that helps them to keep their psychological well-being healthy

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does studying far from home affect university student's psychological well-being?
2. What are the factors that influence university students to study far away from home?
3. What are the possible challenges and struggles faced by university students who leave far from home?
4. How do the university students who leave far from home adapt and cope with the challenges?
5. Who are the support systems that help keep their psychological well-being healthy?

1.5 Conceptual Framework

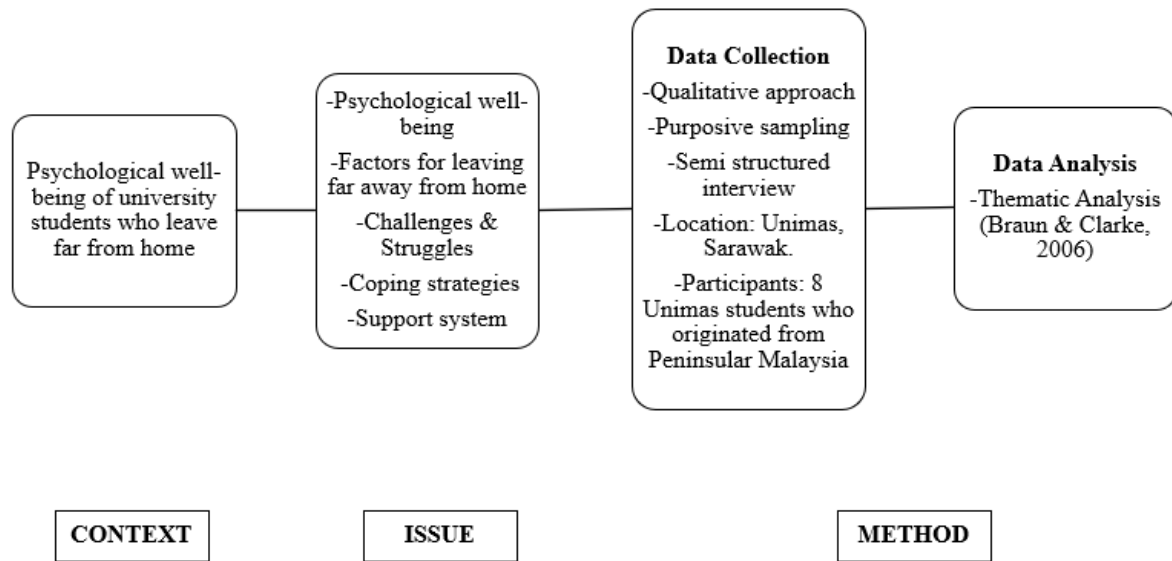


Figure 1.5 Conceptual framework of the study

1.6 Significance of Study

Firstly, the study covers a significant gap in the existing literature by focusing on the psychological well-being of university students who leave far from home in Malaysia. This research contributes to the limited knowledge available on the experiences and challenges faced by these students. The findings of this study can also be applied in future studies. As there is a lack of study on this topic in Malaysia, it would serve as a foundation for future in-depth inquiries regarding this topic.

The findings of the study will also help us to look into the challenges faced by the university students who leave far from home in Malaysia. Since it is a qualitative study, it is also hoped that the research can look deeper and to truly understand about the struggles that they face. By looking at the challenges they faced, an action can be taken to reduce the problems that they might have. The knowledge about the students' coping mechanisms for maintaining their psychological well-being can also help other students who are facing similar

obstacles or struggles. Not only that, but the study's findings may inspire community efforts or support networks to help students who are homesick, alone, or facing other psychological issues.

Other than that, by shedding light on the psychological well-being of university students who leave far from home in Malaysia, it is also hoped that the study can empower students to be more aware of their own well-being and encourage open discussions about mental health.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Psychological well-being

Conceptual Definition: Psychological well-being is the combination of feeling good and being able to function effectively, and is all about life going well (Hupper, 2009).

Operational Definition: In this research, psychological well-being refers to the exploration of the participant's mental health during their studies in East Malaysia, the challenges they faced and how they coped with it.

1.7.2 University students

Conceptual Definition: University students are individuals who are enrolled in a university or college and is pursuing higher education.

Operational Definition: Individuals who undergo undergraduate programs at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), are the students at the focus of this study.

1.7.3 Living far from home

Conceptual definition: The experience of residing a considerable distance away from one's place of origin.

Operational definition: The experience of UNIMAS students who are originally from Peninsular Malaysia who have relocated to the state of Sarawak to pursue their university education.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, the background of the study, problem statement, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework, the significance of the study and the definition of terms were explained.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses previous research findings related to participant's psychological well-being. In addition, the researcher will also discuss the theory of positive psychology (PERMA model) in this chapter.

2.1 Psychological well-being

Mental health and well-being among university students is a growing concern around the world (Hughes & Spanner, 2019). Nowadays, it is recognised that mental health includes not only the absence of mental illness, but also the existence of psychological well-being (Tang et al., 2019). According to Hupper (2009), psychological well-being refers to the combination of feeling good and being able to function effectively and is all about life going well. Meanwhile, Tang et al. (2019) argues that it is a complex concept and refers to the optimal psychological experience and functioning.

2.1.1 Theory: PERMA Model

PERMA Model is a theory developed by Martin Seligman that can be used to measure one's psychological well-being. The PERMA model combines five simple variables that Seligman (2011) believes are fundamental foundations of human health and demonstrates how giving these elements time, attention, and concentration can lead to a happier, more engaged, and satisfying life. There are five components to this theory which are Positive Emotion (P), Engagement (E), Relationships (R), Meaning (M) and Accomplishments/Achievements (A).

Positive Emotion (P):

Positive emotions are vital for one's well-being. It is more than just 'happiness'. These positive emotions include Joy, Gratitude, Hope, Pride, Amusement, Inspiration, Awe and Love.

Engagement (E):

When we are fully immersed in a situation, task, or project, we experience a state of flow, in which time seems to stand still, we lose our sense of ourselves, and we focus completely on the present. Engagement by Seligman (2011) means the psychological connection to activities or organisations where you feel absorbed, interested, and involved in life.

Relationships (R):

Human beings are designed to 'belong'. It is an essential component of being human to allow ourselves to feel sensations of closeness and connection, as well as emotional and physical contact with others (Hill, 2020). Relationship is defined with terms of feeling connected to, supporting, and being supported by others and is also linked to higher levels of life satisfaction, hope, thankfulness, and spirituality (Kern et al., 2015). It involves closeness and connection with family, friends, or colleagues.

Meaning (M):

Meaning is the belief that one's life is valuable and that one is related to something bigger than oneself (Seligman, 2011). For our lives to have meaning, we must believe that our acts are meaningful and significant, and that we are contributing to something larger than ourselves (Kern et al., 2015). It could be derived from religion, advocacy, or spirituality.

Accomplishments/Achievements (A):

Whenever we achieve something in life, we are bound to feel positive feelings such as joy, pride and accomplishments. Accomplishment entails making progress towards goals, feeling capable of performing daily tasks, and having a sense of accomplishment—which can take the form of academics, athletics, or career achievements (Seligman, 2011).

In a study done by Chisale & Phiri (2022), the PERMA model, specifically the components of Positive Emotion and Engagement was used on Fred, a patient of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). It was found that after using the PERMA model intervention, Fred has displayed increased interest in quizzes, polls, and TV watching, along with increased social engagement with peers in communal areas. He developed positive attitudes, attributing them to preventing boredom and reducing anxiety. These findings suggest that incorporating Seligman's PERMA Model elements of Positive Emotion and Meaning is beneficial in designing effective interventions for Generalized Anxiety Disorder patients to enhance their well-being.

The PERMA model of well-being has also been studied on undergraduate university students in a study conducted by Kovich et al. (2023). It was found that Accomplishment had shown the strongest link to well-being meanwhile Meaning demonstrated the weakest link to well-being.

2.2 Factors that influence University student's decision to study far away from home

One of the crucial moments in a life of a young adult is when they leave their parents' home (Jordyn & Byrd, 2003). This is where they learn to live on their own and be independent without depending too much on their family. Afterall, the decision to leave home indicates that the transition to being fully independent living is taking place (Sá et al., 2011).

There are a lot of factors on why University students chose to study far away from their home. According to Flanagan et al. (1993), living away from home at college is connected with increased independence, support, and mutual respect between parents and teenagers, but living with parents is associated with more conflict and avoidance. Meanwhile, Plante (2020) found that student's decision to study far away from home is for personal and academic progress, as well as for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for spiritual growth, development, and transformation.

Parents are seen as playing an important role in the home-leaving process (Mann-Feder et al., 2014). Growing up, most people depended a lot on their families, especially their parents. When they became an adult, most of them desired independence and privacy. Grigsby (2009) insists that students who live away from home while pursuing a college education are more likely to become more independent and responsible people in society. Some of the students who leave far from home might decide to leave their homes in order to learn being independent after living with their parents their whole life. When students live away from home, they learn how to deal with day-to-day activities that they would not have learned if they lived at home with their parents. Accordingly, Hillman (2015) in his study on why students in the United Kingdom study so far from home states that one of the reasons they are more prone to travel further out is to establish their independence. To support this, a study by Mann-Feder et al. (2014) found that the students in the study also chose to study away from home due to the desire for privacy and independence. Before leaving home, the young people in this study were focused with detachment from parents and the formation of a separate sense of self. The study related this phenomenon to Psychodynamic formulations of the separation/individuation process in which initially opposing desires function concurrently.

A study about how far does students go for an education found that students with a higher High School GPAs (HSGPA) and those whose parents have more education and income often attended colleges farther away (Mattern & Wyatt, 2009). This could be due to the opportunities that colleges outside of their origin place offer may be more than their current place. Students may also choose to attend higher education in their native region or to relocate to another region based on the accessibility of higher education institutions (Sá et al., 2011).

Other than that, the participants in the study by Hinh et al. (2021) mentioned several reasons on why they still chose to study far away from home despite the many difficulties. This includes financial security for the future, desire to be independent, choosing their desired college, for their family and also in hopes to make a better future. Meanwhile, Firmin et al. (2009) had done a qualitative study which includes the participant's reason for selection of college distant from home. The prominent reason being family member's previous attendance to the university of choice. Although the respondents had the last say on where to attend college, they all sought parental approval to confirm their decision. Their motivations included seeking acceptance from family members and financial support from their parents for college courses.

In conclusion, several reasons can be identified which are to learn to be independent, choice of family, for a better future, as well as to get into their desired university.

2.3 Reasons for Interregional Student Migration

In most of the studies done, the student migration was studied in an international context in which students migrated to another country to continue their studies. And most studies are done about migration in general, and not about student migration. Distinguishing between international and interregional migration is crucial as they differ not just in distance but also in underlying factors like destination selection (Faggian et al., 2017). Hence, this part of literature

review will also be centered on Interregional student mobility since this study will be done on UNIMAS students from Peninsular Malaysia, who moved to another region, East Malaysia.

Leaving a familiar social environment comes with social, emotional and even financial costs (Turley, 2010; Spiess & Wrohlich, 2010; Weßling & Bechler, 2019). Knowing that, why do some students still choose to leave their home and further their studies far away from home? Most students would prefer to study close from home. However, an analysis by Paulsen (1990) suggests that students are more likely to apply to a university that is located at a greater distance from their home when they are a male, have higher family income, higher academic aptitude, higher academic achievement, higher student educational aspirations, and the parents of student have greater educational attainment.

Inter-regional migration is the movement of people within the same country from one region to another (Cavalleri et al., 2021). Student mobility for higher education is a matter that affects the level of academics, institutions, society, and the economy (Rizzi et al., 2021). A study done by Santelli et al. (2020) on the determinants of student mobility in an interregional context in Italy listed down 4 types of migration, which explains the reasons why those from Campania, Italy chose to migrate to another region to continue their studies. The first one is Forced-type migration in which students are more inclined to seek larger universities that have a wider range of degrees available, with more number of student admissions. The second one is Anticipatory migration which is deciding on a location based on socio-economic and cultural factors in order to improve their quality of life. The third one is Migration due to university prestige, where students are more likely to choose a university with a good public opinion, regardless of the location. The last type of migration is Geographical-proximity mobility, in which those who live close to a region's border may choose to commute to a university outside of their region due to the close proximity.

This study is supported by a few other studies conducted such as what has been said by Capuano (2012) that explains distance is a crucial factor to consider when studying any type of migratory shifts, including student mobility. It was also found that greater origin-state tuition tends to encourage student out-migration, whereas increasing origin-state institutional quality has the reverse effect (Tuckman, 1970). Student mobility has been studied and linked to the ability to attract, which is defined as the availability of degree courses and a larger capacity of students' admittance to courses with limited enrollment (Dal Bianco et al., 2010). This means that students are more likely to emigrate to universities that offer a wider selection of courses, and they may enrol in specific courses in places where such availability is greater and so travel to other regions (Santelli et al., 2020).

Oppositely, a study done by Abdul Raufu Ambali et al. (2013) is about the financial constraints and cultural adaptation of UiTM students from Peninsular who is studying in UiTM Sabah and Sarawak. In this study, it suggests that young school leavers' readiness and acceptance of UiTM admissions to further their education in Borneo is dependent on their parents' financial capability, particularly when internal funding sources are unguaranteed. Hence, they might reject studying in Borneo due to a lack of financial resources for their studies and other important monetary demands.

2.4 Factors that influence the well-being of University Students' studying far from home

A book written by Grigsby (2009) shares a story about a boy named Abbot, a college athlete who expressed his sadness about how his parents are unable to attend his matches due to the far distance from his hometown and his college. This is just one of the many challenges faced by students who studies far from their home.

Being apart from family and home can have a negative impact on psychological well-being (Smith et al., 2018). Students who leave home for their higher education, whether

studying abroad or domestically, frequently experience negative impacts from being in a new environment because their home plays a significant part in daily life and contains multiple psychological implications (Moore, 2000).

A study done by Medani et al. (2024) highlight the difficulties that undergraduates experience when travelling a long distance to study in Saudi Arabia and identified three main areas, which are psychological, financial, and nutritional challenges. It was found that almost half of the students reported feeling stressed, and more than half reported feeling homesick. These findings are concerning because prior research has repeatedly shown that homesick students had a higher prevalence of health problems, psychological symptoms, and cognitive impairments than their non-homesick counterparts. Zahra Sadry et al. (2017) had also identified 5 types of challenges faced by female international students studying in Malaysia, which are Social environment, Facility, Emotional, Financial, and Academic-related issues. In another study done by Hinh et al. (2021), some of the difficulties that students face when studying far from home include financial difficulties and loneliness/homesickness.

Interestingly, Firmin et al. (2009) mentioned that personality traits of students can also impact their ability to detach and to their new college life. Shy students are more likely to experience loneliness, even if they have a strong social network or love connection. Leaving home itself led to emotions of loneliness. Hence, shy individuals may have a harder time adjusting and they also tend to adjust more slowly to college life (Firmin et al., 2009). In contrast, the author mentioned that individuals with high self-efficacy were more likely to adopt behaviours that increased their assimilation within the culture.

Of course, all these issues can lead to a worse mental health for these students. A qualitative study on the psychological effects of boarding students in schools far away from home was conducted by Malalagama (2020). In this study, 7 students who were boarded away

from home were interviewed, and the research discovered several main themes of the challenges they faced, including grief at leaving home, difficulty transitioning to a new school environment, emotional abuse, and even depression symptoms. Not only that, a study done by Barker & Galambos (2007) about the effects of Body Dissatisfaction, Living Away from Parents, and Poor Social Adjustment to predict Binge Eating Symptoms in young women transitioning to university also reported that the likelihood of reporting binge eating symptoms was three times higher in participants who lived away from home than in those who did. While it is a study that focuses on binge eating symptoms, it is still a cause of concern as it is something that will affect the student's well-being.

The following sections will then discuss about 3 main issues faced by the students who leave far from home, which are Acculturation and Adjustment issues, Homesickness, and Financial constraints.

2.4.1 Acculturation and Adjustment Issues

Another important point is about acculturation when moving to a new environment. Acculturation refers to the cultural and psychological change that happens as a result of interactions between various cultural groups and their members (Berry, 2017). When a person leaves home, he faces the cost of leaving his own culture and adapting to a new one (Brezis, 2011). Though in this research's context, the students are within the same country, they may still face acculturation from the different cultures that are there in East Malaysia. The culture in Sabah and Sarawak is slightly different from West Malaysia (Yeo, 2022). An example that was given is how West Malaysian Malays will usually choose to eat in halal-certified restaurants only while East Malaysian Malays won't mind dining in non-halal-certified restaurants as long as there is also halal food provided. Acculturation stress has also been linked with higher mental health issues such as depression and anxiety in numerous studies (Hwang

& Ting, 2008; Suinn, 2010; Zvolensky et al., 2016; Ponciano et al., 2020; Rutté & Rubenstein, 2021).

Not only that, when studying far from home, students also face adjustment issues. Adjustment difficulty is associated with problems that students might face by involvement, meeting new acquaintances, being far away from home, and so forth (Farris, 2010). When students leave home to study, they typically face responsibilities, often for the first time, as independent adults. They must manage time and money and cater to basic requirements such as food and clothing, which are typically handled by family members (Costa et al., 2017). If they live nearby, the students may still seek help from their families for such tasks, but those who live far away must take care of their own needs without help. According to Rahat & Ilhan (2016), university students are likely to suffer adjustment difficulties, which may appear as mental health concerns with varied degrees of severity. This is especially true for those who travelled far to get to their university. A study done by Divyashine Asok Kumar et al. (2019) also shows evidence that Malaysian students face difficulties in adjusting to the life overseas and need support in managing their emotions.

When acculturation stress is high and when students face adjustment difficulties, social support is beneficial (Divyashine Asok Kumar et al., 2019; Zhang, 2012). Hence, in this study, we will also identify the student's social support systems when they are far away from home.

2.4.2 Homesickness

Homesickness can be referred to as the desire to return home, particularly among individuals who have left their homes for the first time (Duru & Balkis, 2013). It is the most prevalent condition of distress among persons who have left their homes and are in new and unfamiliar surroundings (Van Tilburg et al., 1998). Meanwhile, Thurber & Walton (2012) interpreted homesickness as the distress or impairment caused by an actual or prospective separation from

one's family. Homesickness is an overwhelming longing for family and home when physically separated from them (Kinnaird et al., 2023).

Homesickness is linked with poor adjustment (Harris, 2010). Homesickness is a normal symptom among students studying away from home, however extreme homesickness causes students to experience more unpleasant situations (Hinh, 2021). Students experiencing homesickness during their first semester of college may be experiencing grief as a result of the apparent loss of their support network (Fisher, 2017). According to Fisher (2017), 50%-70% of the world's population will suffer homesickness at some point in their lives, which includes the students leaving far from home to further their studies. In a study done by Aulya et al. (2022), it was also found that there is a positive relationship between homesickness and academic stress.

Migrants may also bear the costs of migration which result in separation from family and friends (Sjaastad, 1962). College students who live close to their home may have the luxury to return home for weekend gatherings with family or friends, but the same cannot be said for those who study far away from home (Firmin et al., 2009). Majority of the participants in the study reported their wish to travel home whenever possible when studying far away from home.

When studying away from home, students also face the risk of losing or lessening the friendship bond they had. Due to distance and limited engagement, students had to reconsider their social connections. Students closer to home can easily sustain connections through visits over the school year, while students far from home must adapt to changing friendship dynamics, which demands deliberate effort and attention (Firmin et al., 2009). This is also the case for familial relationships where the students are affected by lost communication with people they are close to back at home.

2.4.3 Financial Constraints

In a study done by Abdul Raufu Ambali et al. (2013) who looked at the students' internal constraint and mobility to Borneo, it was found that most students feel hesitant to continue their studies when they are facing financial constraints. But how about those who braced themselves and still chose to continue their studies far away from home?

Medani et al. (2024) found that 57.9% of students in his study who lives far from home in the study reported facing financial concerns. Meanwhile, 93.3% of respondents in a study by Hinh et al. (2022) believed that financial issues are a big problem for them who are living far away from home.

To cover their financial needs, a lot of students would seek help from scholarship or even applying for a part-time job. This can be a burden for these students. As a result of borrowing money from student financial aid agencies, students could fall into debt just so they can cover their tuition and living expenses (Hinh et al., 2021). This could directly affect their psychological well-being as they would need to juggle between trying to find ways to look for money as well as studying.

2.5 Summary

This chapter discussed about the definition of Psychological well-being, the theory related to it, which is the PERMA model, Factors that influence University student's decision to study far away from home, Reasons for Interregional Student Migration, and Factors that influence the well-being of University Students' studying far from home.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, population and sample, data collection procedures, pilot study and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

In this research, the researcher focuses on UNIMAS undergraduate students who originated from Peninsular Malaysia's experience and psychological well-being after leaving their home. Given the researcher's goal to truly understand their experience and feelings, the researcher decided to use qualitative research methods. Qualitative approach is used in order to explore deeper about the experiences and struggles of the university students who leaves far from home. Afterall, Qualitative research allows you to ask questions that cannot be easily answered numerically to better understand human experience (Cleland, 2017).

3.2 Research Participants

The research participants in this study were UNIMAS undergraduate students who originated from Peninsular Malaysia. The selection of the sample for this study was done using purposive sampling. For this study, 8 participants were selected as samples using purposive sampling in which participants are intentionally chosen based on the fitting criteria.

The inclusion criteria of this research are participants who are:

- Undergraduate UNIMAS students
- Originated from Peninsular Malaysia
- Willing to participate in the study

The exclusion criteria of this study are:

- Participants who are not willing to participate in the study
- Participants not from Peninsular Malaysia

3.3 Pilot Study

A pilot research analyses the effectiveness of data collection and analysis methods and prepares researchers for unanticipated challenges before starting a research (Shakir & Rahman, 2022). One participant were recruited for the pilot study in which a set of semi-structured questions were asked to the participant. This is done in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. After the interview, it was found that some of the questions were a bit difficult to understand. Hence, some of the semi-structured questions were modified after the pilot study.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

This study used a semi-structured interview to collect data. The flexibility of a semi-structured interview allows researchers to delve further into the concerns mentioned by the participants throughout the interview. A set of questions were asked based on the research objectives. Based on the participant's answer, additional questions that were not in the set of questions may be asked to receive more information.

As for the method, the questions were asked directly to the participants face-to-face. The date and location were based on both the researcher and participant's availability and comfort. The data collection took around 2 weeks.

Before starting the interview, the participants were asked to sign a consent form to make sure they were informed of their rights and voluntarily agreed to join the study. The participant may choose to decline or withdraw their participation at any time. The interviews were also tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The study uses thematic analysis methods. It is a method used for analyzing qualitative data that entails reading over a piece of data and looking for patterns in its meaning in order to identify themes. It consists of 6 steps which are Familiarisation with data, Generation of initial codes, Searching for themes, Reviewing themes, Defining and naming themes and Producing the report.

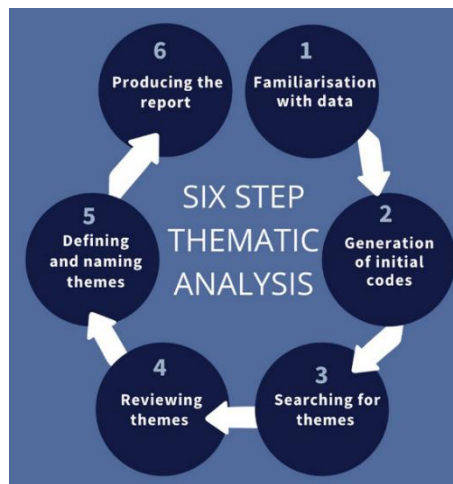


Figure 3.5 Six Steps of Thematic Analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006)

The researcher uses thematic analysis because when conducting research using a qualitative methodology, thematic analysis is frequently a useful step (Rosairo, 2023). Using the thematic analysis, the researcher found 4 main themes and 9 sub-themes. After finding out and naming the themes, the report can finally be produced.

3.6 Summary

This chapter discusses about the research design, population and sample, data collection procedures, pilot study and data analysis procedures of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of a few sections, including demographic information of the participants and findings from semi-structured interviews. All of the participants' names are not mentioned to protect their identity.

4.1 Demographic Information

No.	Participants	Age	Year	Origin place
1	Participant 1	22	Year 3	Kelantan
2	Participant 2	22	Year 3	Selangor
3	Participant 3	22	Year 3	Pahang
4	Participant 4	22	Year 3	Pahang
5	Participant 5	21	Year 1	Perak
6	Participant 6	21	Year 1	Kedah
7	Participant 7	20	Year 1	Johor
8	Participant 8	20	Year 1	Johor

Table 4.1 Demographic Information

The table above shows the demographic information of a total of 8 students from UNIMAS who originated from Peninsular Malaysia that were interviewed for this study. Four of them are Year 3 students, and another four are Year 1 students.

4.2 Findings

Eight UNIMAS students originally from Peninsular Malaysia were interviewed in-depth for this study, which was carried out using a qualitative methodology. Semi-structured interview questions were used. Following the data analysis, four major themes and nine sub-themes emerged.

Themes of the findings	Sub-themes	Categories
Theme 1: Factors influencing university students to study far away from home	External circumstances	• UPU placement • Parental Influence
	Internal factors	• Seeking New Experiences • Freedom/Independence
Theme 2: Challenges faced by university students who leave far from home	• Adjustment issues • Culture/Language barrier • Financial issues • Homesickness	
Theme 3: PERMA Model of	PERMA Model of well-being: • Positive emotion • Engagement	• Positive emotion • Engagement • Relationships

well-being as the coping strategies	• Relationships • Meaning • Accomplishments	• Meaning • Accomplishments
Theme 4: Support systems	Supporters	• Family • Friends • Clubs • Lecturers
	Types of support	• Emotional/Companionship support • Motivational support • Informational support

Table 4.2 Research findings

4.2.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing university students to study far away from home

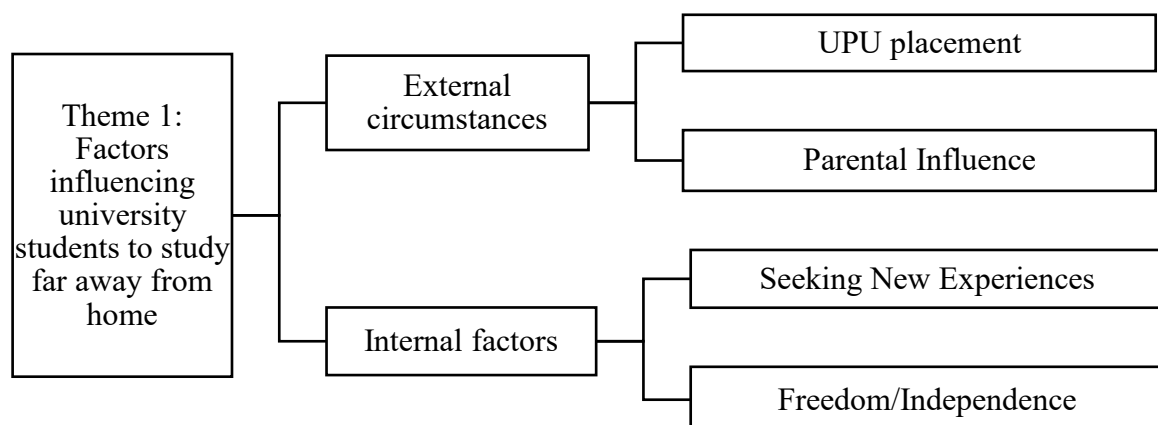


Figure 4.2.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing university students to study far away from home

There are two sub-themes under Theme 1: Factors influencing university students to study far away from home.

External circumstances

Based on the analysis, most of the participants revealed that the reason they study far away from home is not due to their own choice, but due to the results given by *Unit Pengambilan Universiti* (UPU) to them:

“At first, I didn’t expect to continue my studies here. I did expect to go far away, but the furthest would be in Johor. Suddenly, I got an offer in Sarawak, so I just accepted it.”

(Participant 1)

“Suddenly, I got UPU in Sarawak so whether I want it or not, I have to go since you can’t really refuse it. If you reject it that year, you can’t go to university, you have to try again next year.” (Participant 4)

Other than because of the choices given by UPU itself, some of them also applied for the course they wanted, which just so happened to be in a University in East Malaysia:

“Initially, I did apply for the course I wanted since it has been my choice since I was in Secondary school. And while filling in the UPU, I applied for UKM but I did not get past the interview stage. For my 2nd try, I got UNIMAS.” (Participant 2)

“After foundation, I filled in UPU once again. While looking at it, I saw the course I wanted, and it was the only one offered to me. So I thought it was interesting because I feel like there is hope to continue my ambitions during Form 4. It was in UNIMAS, but I didn’t know where UNIMAS was. So, I googled it and found out that it’s in Sarawak. So.. I was a bit hesitant to go since it’s far. It’s far, and I’ve never been as far as there. But

since it's been my ambition since I was in secondary school. I don't like it when my plans fail, and I want it to happen. I really want to take that course.” (Participant 3)

“Actually, I wanted to apply to universities in Peninsular too, but at the time, the merit needed was too high. So, I decided to continue my studies near Sabah and Sarawak. Coincidentally, Sarawak has the course that I wanted. So I chose to come here.” (Participant 7)

Besides that, there is also Participant 5 who mentioned that her parents expressed their desire for their daughter to study far away from home:

“For me, it's because... before this, my mom really wanted to send their child far away so I chose here because from when I was in primary school and secondary school, I was only in a fully religious school. So, my parents said that you have to go out, and go far away.” (Participant 5)

Internal factors

According to the data analysis, Participant 7 also wanted to continue studying in Sarawak for freedom and to gain independence:

“First of all, the reason why I furthered my study in Sarawak is because I want freedom. I think that when I get out of my comfort zone, since I never went away far from my family, like going to Kedah or Perak or anywhere out of Johor. Even since primary school and secondary school, I've only been in Johor. I want to explore new things, the new culture in Sarawak so when I got Sarawak, I immediately accepted it. It was my first choice. You can say it's because I want to learn new things, and I want freedom. My parents are very strict, so when I'm here, I can be independent.” (Participant 7)

Apart from that, some participants wanted to explore new places and cultures, as well as wanting to get out of their hometown:

“Since I’m studying far away, I also want to explore how are the places in Sarawak are like. Is it different from the places in Selangor?” (Participant 2)

“The first reason is because since I was little, I’ve never been out of my own state. From little, I’ve only studied in Pahang. Just maybe a different district. So I’m taking this opportunity in university to go far away. Initially, I wanted to go to Egypt, but my parents said that it was too far.” (Participant 4)

This was also supported by Participant 8 who wanted to try learning in a new place, learning the culture in Sarawak and to be independent:

“Firstly, I want to try learning in a new place, not a place I’m comfortable in. For example, I’m already used to Johor. So, why do I choose to study here? One of them is because I want to learn ways to live far from parents and family. Secondly, because I want to learn about the culture in Sarawak. I want to know and learn how is life in Sarawak. Thirdly, I also want to learn how to be independent.” (Participant 8).

4.2.2 Theme 2: Challenges faced by university students who leave far from home

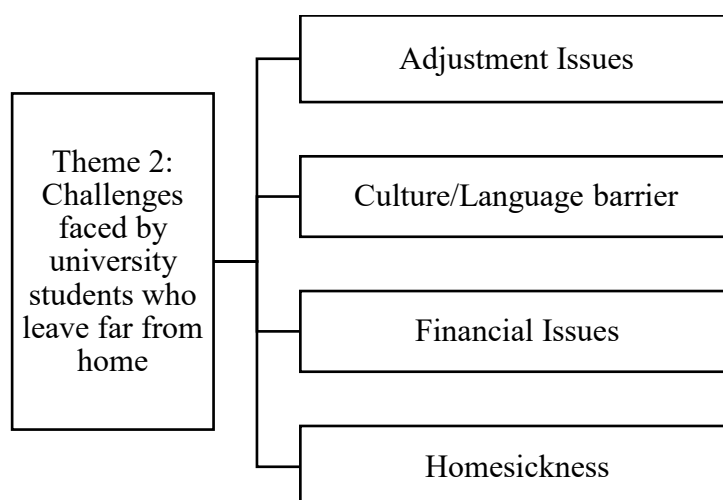


Figure 4.2.2 Theme 2: Challenges faced by university students who leave far from home

Adjustment Issues

Participant 3 expressed her feelings of having it hard to adapt due to not knowing anyone at first:

“When I first came here, it felt a bit hard to adapt because mostly, those who continued their studies, they went with their friends, right? But when I came, I really came alone. Even during online classes, I wasn’t really active, so I don’t really know people. I don’t know the majority of my classmates. So, it felt a bit hard to adapt. If I furthered my studies in a place that has my friends, it would be more comfortable, right? Since it’s people we’re familiar with. So, when I came here at first, yes it was really hard to adapt.”

(Participant 3)

She also added that since she came here for the first time alone, she was really scared of missing the flight:

“Like I mentioned earlier, since I’m alone, I also came here by myself. I went on a flight alone. Plus, I never rode an airplane before. So I worked hard searching for ways on how to ride a flight since I don’t want to miss the flight or anything coming here for the first time.” (Participant 3)

Similarly, Participant 4 also expressed her feelings about having a hard time adapting since she is not used to doing things by herself:

“The challenges are when I have to adapt to new things. For example, I’ve never ridden a bus alone, I have to study how to ride a bus by myself, buying my own flight tickets. And maybe before, if I wanted to go buy anything outside, my parents would have to

accompany me, or even if I wanted to go to a dentist or clinic, there was always someone with me. But now, I have to try hard and be independent.” (Participant 4)

Culture/Language barrier

Many participants expressed their struggles with the language barrier they faced during their time here:

“Because of the difference in culture and language that we use. They’re mostly Sarawakians, so they talk a lot using the Sarawak language, with their accent. So it was a bit hard at first to communicate with friends. Hence, it was a bit sad that we can’t ‘jump in’ or be friends with the Sarawakian because we couldn’t really understand at first.” (Participant 8)

“At first, it was really hard. Sometimes when I speak to people, it becomes a miscommunication since I’m talking about different things, but they’re talking about different things. Turns out, it was a completely different topic. We were already excitedly talking, but we turned out to be talking about different things. It’s funny, but it happens quite often.” (Participant 3)

“I have met with a counsellor before. The counsellor itself was struggling to understand us when we tried to speak in a Peninsular accent because most of their clients either speak in Sarawak language or in English. So, when I talk too much using Peninsular language with a thick accent, they would be like “Huh? What is it? Can you repeat?”, something like that. They just don’t quite understand.” (Participant 4)

“The first challenges that I faced in Sarawak is communication since I honestly don’t understand or have any basics in the Sarawak language. And then when I try to speak it,

sometimes my friends who speaks the language would go, “Huh? What is she talking about?”” (Participant 7)

Participant 8 also mentioned about the cultural differences she experienced in Sarawak:

“One of the challenges too, is the cultural barrier. In Peninsular, we’re already used to the way we speak, and the way we understand the jokes is also different. The jokes here are different, the way we speak are different, the culture is different.” (Participant 8)

Financial Issues

Most participants also admit to having financial issues when studying far away from home due to the cost of living:

“Firstly, the things here are expensive. We live far and transport is also a problem.” (Participant 1)

“So far, I have a bit of a financial problem because the things here are a bit pricier than normal, but you’d have to be good at managing all that.” (Participant 5)

“When it comes to food, you also have to save a bit because the food cost here is a bit high.” (Participant 6)

“Sometimes too, I have to starve.” (Participant 8)

In particular, a lot of the participants also have a problem with the expensive flight tickets, which caused them to hesitate to go back home:

“This semester break, I didn’t go home because the tickets were expensive even when we could look at the promotion and all that, but I feel like it wasn’t worth it to just go home for 1 week. And when I’d go home if my parents ask. My father is worried about my

eating, and my safety here. If I'm alone, they don't know what could happen to me."

(Participant 2)

"For the flight ticket, sometimes I have to consider whether I can go home or not. Usually, I would buy two-way tickets directly, but sometimes I have to buy one way first because the flight to return here is too expensive. So we have to wait for the right time to go home. That's why sometimes I go home a bit late for the break because of the expensive ticket."

(Participant 4)

"Mostly, yes. Usually, I have problems with the ticket. You'd have to usually buy the tickets early. Sometimes, I cannot go home for the holidays because it's expensive."

(Participant 6)

Homesickness

According to the data analysis, homesickness is a prevalent issue among the participants:

"I think one of the problems would be homesick. Because when we're homesick, we think about our parents at home. And then, we don't know what happened to them. When I was home, my mom was suffering from Head Vertigo, but Alhamdulillah nothing happened when we checked. I only found out when I got home that time. So I become worried for my parents." (Participant 2)

"When I first came here, I was happy but eventually, I felt a bit homesick since it's my first time going far, with no family here." (Participant 6)

"My homesickness wasn't as bad in the first semester. But now in the second semester, I had it often. I don't know why. I would suddenly cry at night. Or suddenly have mood swings because I suddenly remember about my family." (Participant 7)

For participant 3, it got to the point where it disturbed her emotions and mental state:

“My problem, I feel that it’s because I came here alone. So when I have problems, I can’t share them with others, and it became one of the factors that disturbed my emotions and mental state. It’s because I came by myself, and live alone, so I don’t share my problems with anyone.” (Participant 3)

Participant 8 also mentioned that the distance from family made her feel isolated and responsible for handling all challenges on her own:

“It’s the feelings of missing, homesick at my family since they’re far away. They’re my support system so, I feel like I have to call, or message them. It would be easier if they were closer. Plus, everything that is going on here, we have to settle everything by ourselves. We can’t expect our parents or siblings to help us, that’s one of the challenges I’ve faced here.” (Participant 8)

4.2.3 PERMA Model of well-being as the coping strategies

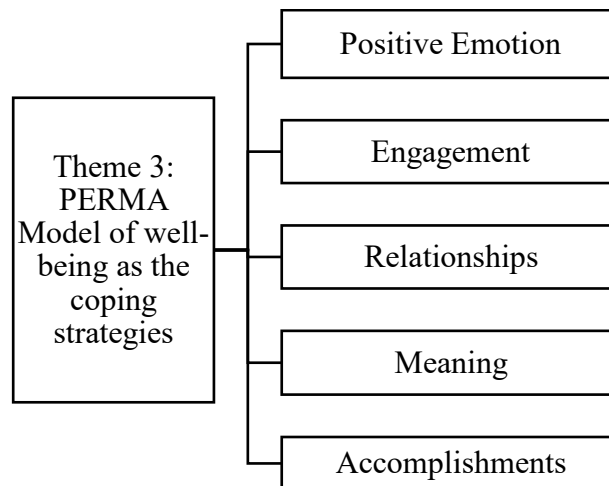


Figure 4.2.3 PERMA Model of well-being as the coping strategies

PERMA Model of Well-being

In this part, the coping strategies used by participants were categorized according to the PERMA Model of well-being (Seligman, 2011).

Positive Emotion

After coming here, some of the participants stated that they became more positive:

“Emotionally, I was a person who used to get angry easily. So when I came here and practiced what I had learned, now I can see that I become less angry. I don’t get angry so often anymore.” (Participant 1)

“I think I felt more positive because back then in Peninsular, especially during COVID, I rarely talked or hung out with people except on phones. If I had no friends, then I wouldn’t say anything. I only talk to my parents and siblings. So when I moved here, I was exposed to more friends, so I socialize more and feel more fun. I like socializing with people here more.” (Participant 4)

Meanwhile, Participant 3 and 6 would engage in activities that help them relax and improve their mood:

“Once in a while, I go on walks or go cycling so that I go out of my house or room. Sometimes, when I feel lazy to go out, I just go to refill my water or anything, as long as I go outside, especially when I’m entering my depressed stage. Because when I walk, especially during the evenings, it makes me feel relaxed and calm. Plus, usually when I go for walks in the evening, people always give me food, so it feels fun.” (Participant 3)

“Sometimes, I would go out of university, to go ‘healing’ for a while. Not looking at assignments too much. That’s how I adjust here.” (Participant 6)

Engagement

A lot of the participants shared how getting involved in various activities and clubs helped them adapt and feel more connected:

“When I first came here, I really only focused on my academics. I didn’t join any clubs or organizations, so it’s like I’m just sitting alone. I don’t leave the room much, I don’t really go anywhere. At one point, I thought that I couldn’t stay like this. So that’s why this year, since I’m already in my third year, I became more active. I joined many clubs, activities and actually got to know people. I think me joining clubs and organizations, and meeting a lot of people are one of the things that helped me to adapt here”
(Participant 3)

“Actually, I joined PALAPES to reduce my homesickness. Because when we participate in activities like that, we will socialize more and get more busier to think about the homesickness.” (Participant 4)

“I join faculty clubs to make friends here. I think because now I joined the club, I get busy managing activities, and managing the club. That’s why I don’t really think of home much. That is one of the things that gave me a positive impact, which is when I joined clubs and did a lot of activities here. It doesn’t make me as homesick, like wanting to go home often.” (Participant 8)

A few participants also coped by trying to communicate and engage with people around them:

“For example, if I don’t understand their language, I would be honest with that person. Like asking, “I don’t understand this, can you explain it again?”. Then, they will explain it.” (Participant 7)

“I think I coped by trying to communicate. Because usually in Peninsular, there’s instances where the group is only full of Peninsular people. But when I think about it,

you can't be like that because we're in a different place. So, we should also get different friends." (Participant 4)

"I think that the language barrier is one of the ways we can make ourselves more communicative because there's a reason to speak to them, at least to ask them to teach us if we don't understand what they're saying. I use the language barrier as a medium of communication because even if they speak in their language, they eventually can speak in the standard Malay language too. I use it as one of the topics to talk to people. If I have an Iban friend for example, sometimes I would ask them, "Can you say this and that?" because it feels amusing to hear them say it. That is how I cope with language. Even if I want to understand it, I still won't get it. So at least I can strengthen the relationship with that misunderstanding." (Participant 3)

Relationships

Having frequent contact with their family helped the participants to cope with the challenges of being far away from home:

"Usually, to cope with my problems, I would call my parents. Even if I missed it, I would call again in case of emergencies." (Participant 2)

"For the homesickness, I would video call with my parents. Every time I'm homesick, I would video call with them so I feel less homesick since I can see their faces and voices." (Participant 4)

"If I'm sad, at night I would always video call with my family." (Participant 6)

"After I came here, I feel happy but after a week, I started getting a bit sad because I'm away from my parents. But it only lasted a moment, and eventually I get to adapt with new friends and new atmosphere. I like it because I'm an extrovert. I like to socialize and

make friends. So when I first felt like I was lonely, after a while, I had friends that I felt I could be close to, and I thought, oh I'm okay with being here now." (Participant 7)

"If I'm feeling homesick, I often call my parents. It's not like the call is to complain about my problem, but it's so that we don't feel so far away." (Participant 8)

Other than friends, a lot of the participants stated that being and having a good relationship with friends also helped them:

"There are times when I'm happy because of friends. Sometimes when we go out together, I feel happy that I got to be with them, and I also like studying and doing work together." (Participant 2)

"I think that joining the club also helped a lot because when I first came here, people said that I look very unapproachable. So, it's the same when I ask the club members. But when I came to the club, 2 seniors from the club made me want to join the club because of how they approached me. It kind of helped me to get out of my phase of not really talking and socializing to people. They really helped me to get used to socializing." (Participant 3)

"My 2-3 close friends really helped me. Whenever I feel down and need someone to share my stories to, I would go to them. They would also do the same. And if they also felt tired or burnt out, they will share it to me. It's like give and take." (Participant 7)

Participant 4 also mentioned that initially, she struggled with adapting to the new culture and socializing with locals, but necessity pushed her to engage with her surroundings:

"Around the first week, I just locked myself in the house because I'm scared that I can't accept the foreign culture. But because I ran out of food supply, I had to go out and interact with people, the canteen worker and all that. So from then, I learned to speak the language a little, and how to speak with people." (Participant 4)

Meaning

Many participants learned a valuable lesson after being far away from their homes. Participant 3 realized that being in a positive and supportive environment can significantly impact personal growth and well-being:

“The people of Sarawak are very kind, they like to help. Somehow, the way they approach us makes us very comfortable. Yes, so it made me realize that sometimes, it’s not our problem, it’s just a certain circle is toxic. So when I came here and found such nice people, I felt like... oh, if we’re in the right circle, we can be the best version of ourselves. It opened up my eyes.” (Participant 3)

Meanwhile, Participant 5 understood the importance of mixing in and stepping out of their usual social circle:

“Here’s how I think. If we’re just stuck in the same circle, which for me is with my religious friends, it will be hard to mix in when I’m working later because our attitudes are different. So when I got an offer to study here, I was like, why not just go there to get used to it.” (Participant 5)

Participant 2 became more self-aware and learned to manage their emotions better through the experiences and challenges faced during their degree:

“When I entered degree, learning and becoming friends with everyone else, I feel like... this is the life and our journey. I noticed that when I entered degree, I realize that I can’t be like this. I have to be more aware, reflect on myself and try to control my emotions.” (Participant 2)

Participant 8 reflected on how her experiences made her more mature:

“For me, if we were to talk about mood changes, I think it became more positive because I think that everything that happened to me from when I was in Johor until today, it

matured me. It matured the way I think, matured the way I make decisions, matured me from all aspects.” (Participant 8)

Participant 2 realized her need to be independent after staying by herself for the first time:

“When I came here, the positive impact is that I get to be independent. For example, I never dared to cook my own rice before if no one told me to. I also didn’t think of cooking my own food since mostly at home, I’d help my mom but she’s the one doing the cooking.”

(Participant 2)

Accomplishments

To cope with the challenges, some of the participants found making lists to be helpful:

“I make lists. In terms of financial, whenever I go out to buy groceries, I will make a list of what I have to buy. Is it a need or a want? So, I don’t go out of budget.” (Participant 1)

“Usually, how I cope living far away, usually there aren’t a lot of people who are supervising us, right? So when I feel stressed about things I have to do, I will make a to-do list. Whenever I complete the to-do list, I feel a sense of achievement. So when there is that sense of achievement, I feel like wanting to keep doing things that are beneficial while making the to-do list.” (Participant 2)

4.2.4 Theme 4: Support Systems

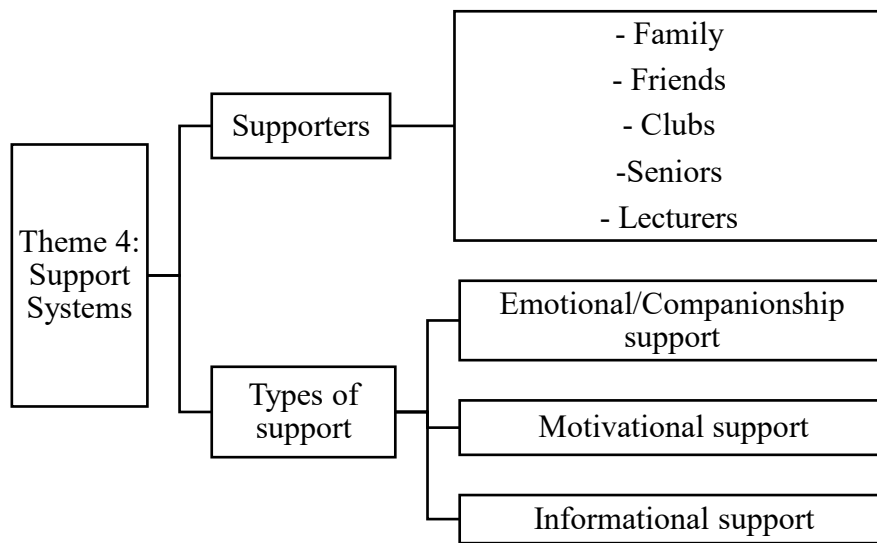


Figure 4.2.4 Theme 4: Support Systems

Supporters

Based on the findings, participants received support from multiple sources. In general, family and friends are the most prominent support system for them. Some participants also mentioned clubs, seniors and lecturers as their support system.

Types of support

Emotional/Companionship support, Motivational support and Informational support are the three types of support received by university students studying far away from home.

Emotional/Companionship support

Staying in contact with their family helped a lot of the participants to feel supported:

“I always call my family. Whenever I miss them, I would call them and update about myself. Like, “Umi, today I went here.” (Participant 1)

“One of them is my parents. When I’m here, they always called me every day until it became a habit. If they missed a day of calling, I would get worried and overthink. And when they call, I feel relieved. Usually, they would ask if I’ve eaten or not. But sometimes, I’d feel bad for lying so I would eat after the call. So, it also encouraged me to take care of my health.” (Participant 2)

Other than family, friends are also a primary source of support for them:

“It’s mostly friends. I’m a bit picky when it comes to making friends. But whenever something is going on, I have a few friends that I would tell things to. There are times you share, but not everything. But when I need someone, I would share it with them and they would give support to me. They helped me a lot.” (Participant 5)

“My friends. One of my friends here helped me a lot. They gave me a lot of words of encouragement to me since they’re also not from here. So sometimes they would listen to my worries, and they would cheer me up. Other than that, I also shared a lot of my concerns with my mother.” (Participant 6)

“Of course, it’s my friends. Because here, I don’t have any relatives and my parents have never been here except for the day of my registration here in UNIMAS. I would always go to my few close friends whenever I feel down, or if I need someone to tell my stories to and share how I feel.” (Participant 7)

Members of clubs or organizations joined by the participant also became one of their support systems, as mentioned by Participant 4:

“In PALAPES, there’s a buddy system and everyone has a buddy partner. So whether you want it or not, we must and will have a close friend. Plus, we are allowed to choose our own housemate. So those are the things that become my support for when I’m in Sarawak.” (Participant 4)

Motivational support

According to Participant 2, her friends, lecturers and seniors motivated her to be better and encouraged her in multiple ways:

“In terms of learning, I adore my friends a lot because there are those who work smart, and those who work hard. The way they learn encouraged me to go further. When I’m friends with those people who always do their work, I feel like I also want to do the same. Mostly, my friends are okay and they made me feel less homesick and regret coming here. Lecturers also help me, but indirectly. For example, there’s a lecturer that I adore because he is someone who likes to search, and do research. That also motivated me. Not only that, some seniors are good at making programs. So it also made me interested and encouraged me in a sense that even when I live far away from home, I can also do things without the help of people there.” (Participant 2)

Informational support

Internet and Social Media also helped to be a source of information when coming to a foreign place:

“To adjust here, I also tried searching on the Internet and Social media. So I can know about Sarawak, the places here and how the culture is like.” (Participant 1)

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Factors that influence University student’s decision to study far away from home

Not a lot of people would choose to leave the comfort of being close to their loved ones.

According to the current study, most of the participants did not expect to further their studies far away from their homes. Instead, the participants indicated that their decision to study far

from home was heavily influenced by the placements allocated by UPU. However, there are also those who were genuinely interested in getting to know the culture of Sarawak.

University students who choose to go far away from their home for a while can experience a variety of new things that they would not have otherwise had the opportunity to in their home city or place (Prasetio et.al., 2020). The desire of the parents to send their children far away to gain broader exposure and experience also plays a role in influencing the participant's decision to study at UNIMAS. In the study done by Firmin et al. (2009) on the reason for the selection of a college distant from home, the participants all sought parental approval to confirm their decision to study far away from home even though they had the last say on where to attend college. This proves that in the process of leaving the family home, parents are thought to be crucial (Mann-Feder et al., 2014).

Other than that, getting freedom and learning to be independent is also one of the reasons why they chose to study far away from home. In the end, leaving home signifies the beginning of the shift to totally independent living (Sá et al., 2011). As mentioned by Plante (2020), students choose to study far away from home in order to advance academically and personally as well as to take advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime chance for spiritual development and transformation. Most respondents are trying to develop themselves to be more independent, and took the opportunity to study far away from home to learn how to be independent.

4.3.2 Challenges faced by university students who leave far from home

Psychological well-being is the combination of feeling good and being able to function effectively and is all about life going well (Hupper, 2009). Venturing into a distant, unfamiliar place can pose a significant challenge for many that may threaten their psychological well-being. Adaptation is surely a challenge when it comes to university students studying far trying to live a good life (Savira & Widiasih, 2023). Several of the participants found it hard to adapt

to the culture, new environment, and to deal with new things. When students move away from home for their studies, they frequently encounter responsibilities as independent adults for the first time. They need to manage their time and finances and take care of essential needs like food and clothing, which are usually managed by their family members (Costa et al., 2017). For example, a few of the participants had never ridden an airplane before or had never gone out of their hometown by themselves. When they come here by themselves, they need to learn how to be independent.

Aside from that, the culture in Sabah and Sarawak is slightly different from West Malaysia (Yeo, 2022). Coming from Peninsular Malaysia, a lot of the participants reported having a hard time with the language barrier they faced when being here. The Malay language serves as a means of integration between the people of the Malay Peninsula and the Bornean states of Sabah and Sarawak, despite differences in region (Idris & Rosniah, 2009). The majority of Malaysians in West Malaysia are from the three racial groups of Malay, Chinese, and Indians, and they speak these languages widely. However, it differs in East Malaysia where there also exist many other ethnic groups (David & Dealwis, 2008). For example, the Ibans, Bidayus, and Dayak people. Even as members of the Malay language community, the Malays in Kuching have their own accents, which are distinct from other Malays' accents or the typical national accent (Idris & Rosniah, 2009). With the diversity of ethnic groups and slight differences in language, language barriers or miscommunication are sure to happen. Language differences were a significant challenge for many participants. A participant experienced frequent miscommunications, leading to misunderstandings during conversations, and another noted that even professionals like counselors struggled to understand her Peninsular accent, highlighting the depth of the language barrier. This barrier often led to feelings of exclusion,

as they could not fully participate in conversations or group activities, thus hindering their ability to form connections.

Financially, a lot of the participants either get their financial support from their parents, scholarships or loans. However, some admitted to still having financial issues. It is to the point that most participants only go back to their homes once each semester due to the expensive flight tickets. Not to mention, some also noted that the things here are costly, and even resorted to starving to save money. Plus, students' financial difficulties may negatively impact their mental health, academic performance, and personal and social life (Guan et al., 2015). In some cases, it can even lead to greater depression, stress, anxiety, global mental health, and alcohol dependence in students (Richardson et al., 2016).

Having to deal with everything by yourself, homesickness may occur. Homesickness is also a prevalent issue, with several participants mentioning its impact on their well-being. In past studies regarding challenges faced by university students studying far away from home, homesickness is an issue that is often raised by those students (Fisher, 2017; Hinh et al., 2021; Medani et al., 2024). On top of that, they also have a hard time to turn on someone whenever they're having problems as their family is staying far away.

4.3.3 PERMA Model of well-being as the coping strategies

In this study, the researcher uses the PERMA model of well-being as a coping strategy for the participants. Research on the application of the PERMA Model of Well-being in Undergraduate Students was done by Kovich et al. (2023) and it was found that the PERMA Model supports the application of the theory to undergraduate students and it also contributes to the understanding of the traits associated with well-being in this population. A study done by Kotera & Ting (2019) also proves that the PERMA model is applicable in educational settings as there is a strong positive correlation between positive psychology and mental health

in terms of Malaysian undergraduate students. Hence, the PERMA model can be a helpful tool to describe the psychological well-being of University students who leave far from home based on how they coped with their challenges.

P: Positive emotions

Positive emotions represent feelings and ideals like joy, love, gratitude, hope, and compassion. Increasing those positive emotions may help improve their well-being. Maintaining positive emotions can be an important coping method for Peninsular students studying in East Malaysia, as it helps them deal with homesickness and the stress of adjusting to new surroundings. Participating in activities that promote happiness, such as social gatherings, hobbies, or discovering local culture, can help these students develop resilience and retain a happy attitude. For example, Participant 3 takes walks to maintain their psychological well-being as it makes her feel relaxed and calm. Other than that, a few participants mentioned that they became more positive after moving away to study because of factors such as increased social interactions, engaging in outdoor activities, and taking breaks to relax and unwind. Previous studies also show that positive feelings reduce stress and facilitate coping and problem-solving (Alkan, 2004; Slavin et al., 2012).

One of the critical aspects of maintaining positive emotions is social interaction. For students like Participant 4, socializing with peers in their new environment has significantly contributed to their sense of well-being. Engaging with others provides emotional support, helps in sharing experiences, and reduces feelings of isolation. This is consistent with research by Slavin et al. (2012), which emphasizes the benefit of social support for elevating happy feelings and lowering stress levels. Having a strong social network to lean on can be extremely beneficial while adjusting to the difficulties of an unfamiliar environment.

Additionally, engaging in outdoor activities such as walking or cycling, as mentioned by Participant 3, can have a good impact on mental health. Physical activities are known to release endorphins, the body's natural mood lifters, which can help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety (Rebar et al., 2015). A study done by Bratman et al. (2015) also proved that being in nature has been shown to reduce stress and improve overall well-being. Similarly, participant 6 also mentioned their tendency to take breaks to relax and unwind by going out from the university, which is one of her ways of adjusting here.

E: Engagement

Engagement is about being occupied with activities and carrying them out with passion and commitment (Chisale & Phiri, 2022). In the context of university students, engagement in activities and organizations plays a crucial role in the well-being of students. Participation in college activities such as student organizations improves student learning and development while also positively predicting psychological well-being, including personal growth and positive relationships (Kilgo et al., 2016). According to Boulton et al. (2019), engagement in clubs and activities in universities has a positive interaction with happiness. Participant 4 mentioned that initially focusing entirely on academics and not participating in any extracurricular activities caused feelings of isolation. However, as she began to participate in clubs and organizations, she observed an increase in her social relationships and overall adjustment to the new environment. Meanwhile, Participant 3 and 8 stated that actively involving themselves in clubs reduced their feelings of homesickness. Students who participate in structured activities can shift their focus away from homesickness and towards forming new relationships and a sense of belonging. This perspective is supported by a study conducted by Walton and Brady (2020), which found that structured social activities help students build

resilience and reduce feelings of isolation. In addition, extra-curricular activities at university positively impact students' sense of belonging and wellbeing (Winstone et al., 2020). Multiple studies also supported the fact that extracurricular involvement in universities can decrease homesickness (Thurber & Walton, 2012; Wittrup & Hurd, 2019). Engagement in clubs and activities in universities can help alleviate homesickness by promoting relaxation, napping, meditation, and sharing feelings and experiences (Mohamed & Ali, 2023).

R: Relationships

Relationships are a crucial aspect of the PERMA model, emphasizing the need for social connections and support networks. It is about socializing with others and developing stable relationships that contribute to happiness and well-being. Good relationships with friends, families and other people around them help the participants in this study to cope with their struggles staying far away from home. This includes feeling connected to others, expressing affection, and sharing feelings with them (Norfaezah et al., 2023). To cope with the challenges of studying far away from home, the participants would have to form a meaningful connection to help them deal with the loneliness of coming to a new, foreign place alone. Friendship at university is important for comfort and a sense of 'belonging' (Read et al., 2020). A lot of the participants mentioned that forming new friendships helps them to adapt here. For instance, Participant 7 would go to her friends and share her feelings whenever she felt down. According to Heron (2019), friendship and family significantly affect happiness, confidence, and a sense of belonging at university. Other participants would also frequently use video calls to see and hear their family members, which helps them feel less isolated. Participant 2, 4 and 8 mention that regular calls to her parents help them feel closer to home, even when physically distant. This is supported by a study by Abel et al. (2020) which indicates that video calls can help

maintain family bonds and accomplish shared tasks in long-distance families with limited face-to-face interaction.

M: Meaning

Meaning refers to the belief that one's life is valuable and that one is related to something bigger than oneself (Seligman, 2011). In this study, participants tend to find meaning in their life by discovering themselves when studying far from home. A study done by Demir et al. (2023) shows that having a meaning in life significantly predicts psychological well-being and happiness in university students. For example, Participant 8's views on her maturity process after moving from Johor to Sarawak demonstrate how tough events lead to personal progress. She attributes her more mature decision-making and outlook on life to the experiences she has had. Meanwhile, Participant 5 realizes that it is not good to be stuck in the same circle since it will be hard to mix in with people for her future job, which is what influences her decision to study far away from home and meet various new people from different backgrounds. After witnessing the warmth of Sarawakian people, Participant 4 also came to the realization that being a part of the right circle can help you become the best version of yourself. This is aligned with research done by Walton & Cohen (2011), which shows that a supportive social environment promotes a sense of belonging and purpose, leading to enhanced mental health and well-being.

A: Accomplishments

Accomplishments are about having ambitions and goals in life that enable us to do things that can make us feel accomplished (Chisale & Phiri, 2022). In this study, the participants cope by making a to-do list and preparing themselves beforehand. According to Kronsbein et al. (2023),

accomplishment is one of many factors that affect well-being. For example, Participant 2 reveals that her emotional well-being will improve when she finishes a task. Hence, she would make to-do lists often which makes her feel a sense of achievement when they are completed.

4.3.4 Support systems

Support systems play a critical role in the well-being and adjustment of Peninsular students studying in East Malaysia. These support systems, which include emotional, motivational, and informational assistance, assist students in managing the difficulties of living and learning away from home. The participants in this study found support from themselves, family, friends, clubs, seniors, as well as lecturers.

College is supposed to be the best period of a young adult's life, but in order for this to actually happen, students need a strong support system (Piorkowski, 2023). Studying away from home presents challenges in transitioning to higher education, with a psychosocial component compared to those closer to home (Khojanashvili et al., 2023). When that occurs, it makes sense that the students would want to have a strong support system to turn to during difficult times. Research indicates that social support could serve as an effective strategy for managing stress related to psychological well-being (Rui & Wang, 2015; Van Gorp et al., 2017). Plus, students who have a support system tend to have higher levels of well-being than those who don't (Piorkowski, 2023).

CHAPTER FIVE

LIMITATION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will confer about the limitations of this study, recommendations for future studies, and the conclusions.

5.1 Limitations of Study

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, given the qualitative nature of this study, the transferability of findings may be limited, and it is hard to generalize the findings. So, it is hard to say that every university student who leave far from home experiences the same thing. Plus, qualitative data is also subjective.

Other factors such as educational stress, relationship issues and prior mental health issues may also influence the participants' psychological well-being. This makes it hard to attribute that their well-being is affected solely by being far from home. Rather, other factors should also be explored and separated beforehand.

Lastly, time constraints are also considered a limitation of this study. The limited time frame for gathering data made it challenging to find participants for this study. Hence, it would be best if this research could be done within a longer time frame.

5.2 Recommendations

Future research can conduct longitudinal studies to track the psychological well-being of Peninsular students throughout their university education in East Malaysia. It can provide insights into how their well-being evolves over time and the long-term effects of studying far from home.

Additionally, this study did not distinguish between students who were leaving home for the first time and those who had previous experience with living away from home. Future research could explore the differences in experiences and coping strategies between these two groups to provide a more nuanced understanding.

Other than that, future research can also do a similar study but by focusing on those who originated from East Malaysia and decided to further their studies in Peninsular Malaysia, to see if there are any significant differences between both.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the many reasons on why University students decided to study far away from their home, they still faced many challenges contributed to the effects of being far away from their home. This includes the feelings of homesickness, financial issues, adaptation issues and language barrier. Even so, many factors helped them to cope with their struggles, such as engaging in club activities, making friends, and making to-do lists to prepare for something. Their support systems also include friends, families, clubs, seniors and lecturers– which provide them with various types of support such as Companionship support, Motivational support and Informational support. These experiences show how important it is to be resilient in new places, and how helpful supportive communities can be in overcoming challenges and for personal growth.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM



UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA SARAWAK

94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak.

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences & Human Development

Fakulti Sains Kognitif & Pembangunan Manusia

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TITLE: EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO LEAVE FAR FROM HOME

RESEARCHER: My name is Nuha Sofiyya binti Yusliizudin (80480). I am currently researching for my undergraduate Final Year Project (FYP) at UNIMAS.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: This research aims to explore the psychological well-being of Semenanjung-originated students who came to study in East Malaysia, by looking at the challenges they face and how they coped with it.

YOUR ROLE

If you would like to participate in this research, it will require an interview session between 30 minutes to 1 hour, or less. The interview time will be set according to the suitability of your time. Your role is to answer the questions truthfully and share your opinions and thoughts.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information shared in this interview will remain confidential. There will be an audio recording for documentation purposes, which will be deleted after the transcript is done. As

needed, this research will also be reviewed by my supervisor and might also be published. However, I will ensure that any information used will not contain your name; instead, pseudonyms or only an initial will be used.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may change your mind about participating at any time without penalty.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any inquiries or further questions regarding this study and your participant as an interviewee, please contact:-

Phone no: 011-65161202

E-mail: 80480@siswa.unimas.my

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM



**EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS WHO LEAVE FAR FROM HOME**

By signing below, I certify the following:

- I have adequate information about the research project and have read and understand the information provided.
- I have sufficient time to consider participation in this research study.
- I have accepted the study's goal and procedure.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from this study at any time without consequences.
- I understand that all the research data will be treated with confidentiality.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Why they decide to study far away from home/Sebab untuk belajar jauh dari tempat asal

-Where are you originally from? *Asal dari mana?*

-What factors drive you to choose a university far from your hometown?

Apa sebab awak pilih untuk pergi sambung belajar jauh dari rumah?

- Can you describe your feelings after you move here?

Apa perasaan awak lepas awak datang ke sini?

-How often do you go back home? For what reason?

Berapa kerap awak balik ke rumah? Kenapa?

B. Challenges / Cabaran

-What challenges have you encountered since moving away for your study?

Apa cabaran-cabaran yang awak hadapi selama duduk jauh dari rumah?

-How do you manage these challenges?

Macammana awak atasi cabaran-cabaran itu?

-Can you describe any cultural/social/language differences you've encountered since moving away from home, and how they've impacted your well-being?

Boleh tak awak describe apa-apa perbezaan budaya/sosial/bahasa yang awak hadapi sejak pindah ke sini?

-Can you describe your emotional well-being since starting living far away from home?

Boleh awak describe emotional well-being awak sejak pindah ke sini?

-Have you experienced any financial challenges due to living far away from home and how do you address them? Where do you get money from? Is it enough?

(Scholarship/working/parents)

Awak ada hadapi masalah kekurangan duit tak bila pindah ke sini?

– *Awak sumber kewangan awak? (parents, scholarship, kerja)*

– *Awak rasa cukup tak?*

-Have you noticed any changes in your mental health or emotional well-being since starting university far from home?

Sejak pindah ke sini, awak ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam mental health/emotional well-being awak? Contoh, lagi senang moody, atau maybe jadi lagi positif?

-Are there any positive aspects to coming here?

Awak rasa ada tak aspek positif datang kesini?

C. Coping strategies

-How do you cope with the challenges faced while away from home?

Macammana cara awak mengatasi masalah-masalah awak?

-What strategies or resources do you find helpful for your adaptation?

Apa strategi/sumber yang awak rasa membantu awak untuk menyesuaikan diri kat sini?

-Have you sought out any professional support or counseling services to help with the transition to university life far from home?

Awak ada dapatkan sebarang sokongan profesional/kaunseling tak untuk bantu hadapi masalah2 yang awak hadapi/untuk bantu menyesuaikan diri dekat sini?

D. Support system

-What support systems or networks do you rely on for emotional or psychological support while away from home? (example: hobbies, parents)

Siapakah sistem sokongan anda semasa menghadapi cabaran-cabaran semasa berada jauh dari tempat asal/rumah?

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT 1

Soalan kategori pertama, tentang kenapa awak datang ke sini. So firstly, awak asal dari mana?

-Saya asal daripada Semenanjung, Kelantan. Lebih tepatnya di Kota Bharu.

Apa sebab awak pilih sambung belajar jauh dari rumah?

-Mula-mula tak expect nak sambung sini, mula-mula memang plan nak pergi jauh tapi paling jauh Johor la. Tiba-tiba dapat tawaran Sarawak, so macam datang jela. So bila dapat tu, first macam okay dapat sini, boleh belajar pasal culture orang Sarawak macammana, bahasa dia, agama taklah— dia punya kaum.

So, maybe tak expect pun la? Mainly sebab UPU?

-Main dia UPU. First choice UiTM Shah Alam.

Apa perasaan awak lepas datang ke sini? Mostly happy atau sedih ke? Good experience or bad?

-Good experience. Tak bad sebab saya dah pernah duduk jauh dari family dulu sebab asrama dan takde lah sedih sangat.

Berapa kerap awak balik ke rumah dan kenapa?

-Sebab duduk jauh, so cuti jelah. Cuti semester je balik. Yang panjang je. Tapi tahun lepas, balik raya lah. Tahun ni tak balik.

Okay next, pasal cabaran awak. Apa cabaran-cabaran yang awak hadapi selama duduk jauh dari rumah.

-Satu, barang sini mahal. Kita duduk jauh dan transport pun salah satu masalah jugak. Tapi sini kita guna grab kan, so okay lah. Then, bahasa lah. Tapi, dia takdelah susah sangat sebab ramai

yang guna bahasa standard kat sini. Kadang-kadang bila orang Sarawak ni jumpa gang dia, kita macam.. “Apa yang diorang cakap ah?” Ada lah sikit.. language barrier kat situ. Duit satu lagi. Yang lain okay je.

Boleh tak describe perbezaan culture/social/bahasa yang awak hadapi sejak pindah ke sini?

-Dekat whatsapp kadang-kadang bila saya masuk club ni, kat sini mostly orang Sarawak. So dia chat pun dalam bahasa Sarawak je. So saya selalu kena tanya, apa maksud ni? Camtu.. Ada nampak cam lembap sikit la dekat situ. Tapi sambil-sambil tu belajar la jugak diorang punya bahasa kan. Orang cakap duduk universiti jauh ada culture shock kan, dia ada lah sikit, tapi tak banyak. Kelantan dia– dari segi pemakaian dia, lain so bila datang sini cam ooo dia muslim tapi freehair. Takdelah judge, cuma oo ingatkan dia ni agama lain, tapi oo Islam. Ada jugak yang dia bukan Muslim, tapi dia pakai camtu. Sini kan banyak kelab kan, tapi tak pernah jumpa lagi. Tak seroommate lagi dengan orang macam tu. So it’s okay.

Sejak awak pindah ke sini, awak ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam mental health/emotional well-being awak? Maybe jadi lagi moody/positive?

-Dia tak moody. Dia ada beza. Duduk rumah ni– cepat betul nak marah. Kadang-kadang sebab ramai orang kan. Tapi dekat sini, lagi-lagi kita belajar pasal Psychology– so apa-apa yang saya practice, belajar, jaga emotional well-being, mental health ada la. Saya cuma untuk positif sebanyak yang mungkin. Supaya dia tak stress, depressed.

Awak rasa ada tak aspek positif datang ke sini?

-Ada, saya jadi lebih bagus kot. Dari segi emotional, saya dulu jenis yang cepat marah. So, bila datang ke sini tu, kita belajar kan. Praktis apa yang dibelajar, so sekarang saya nampak yang saya kurang sikit jadi marah. Saya jadi dah tak marah sangat. Then, bila saya nampak orang tu moody, saya tak me-moody kan dia. Saya just buat lawak bodoh ke buat dia senyum camtu.

So, positif tu banyak la. Sama jugak bila saya kat rumah pun sekarang ni saya tak cepat marah sangat.

Next part, pasal awak punya coping strategies. Macammana cara awak cope atau atasi masalah-masalah awak?

-Saya buat list. Kalau segi financial, bila nak keluar beli barang, saya akan buat list apa yang saya perlu beli. Keperluan ke kemahuan? Pastu takdelah lebih bajet macamtu. Itu satu. Dari segi financial lah.

Sumber kewangan awak mostly dari siapa? Parents ke scholarship ke?

-Mostly dari scholarship. Tapi PTPTN kan datang sekali terus, so duit tu saya akan bahagikan terus. Yuran berapa, untuk makan berapa. Pastu ada la simpan sikit2. Dan juga daripada parents, tapi saya tak selalu mintak lah dengan parents. Diorang duduk jauh kan, cuma untuk berdikari sendiri. So, dengan parents tu..macam nak keluar jauh sikit baru bagitau, 'Nak duit boleh? Umi nak elaun.' macamtu. Tak pun saya mintak dengan kakak saya, 'Wei, elaun.'

Awak rasa cukup tak duit yang awak dapat?

-Nak cakap cukup tu, kalau saya belanja tak lari dari bajet, cukuplah. Kalau saya terlebih overspend, dia akan jadi tak cukup. Tapi, makanan yang saya beli ni, memang akan bertahan dalam 2 minggu ke sebulan la. So takdelah, kat sini saya keluar duit banyak.

Apa strategi/sumber yang membantu awak menyesuaikan diri dekat sini?

-Kawan. Bila kawan dengan ramai—kawan dengan orang sini, orang Semenanjung. So bila saya berkawan dengan orang sini, kita boleh tahu dia punya bahasa, dan nak sesuaikan diri. Cam oh kalau dekat sini, kita kena react macamni. Satu lagi sumber saya, Internet kot. Social media. Nak tahu pasal Sarawak ni kan, tempat-tempat dia, culture dia.

Awak ada rasa homesick tak? Ke sebab dah biasa duduk jauh, jadi tak rasa sangat?

-Homesick tu datang.. Haritu pernah lah rasa. Tapi tak teruk sangatlah. Sebab walaupun saya duduk asrama, saya duduk rumah pun lama sebab PKP. Jadi, 2 tahun kot saya terperap duduk rumah je. So bila dah datang sini, takde orang lah. Kosong. Rindu pulak dekat rumah. Mostly, kalau rindu tu call je lah dengan diorang.

Soalan last, siapakah sistem sokongan awak semasa menghadapi cabaran-cabaran semasa berada jauh dari tempat asal?

-First, keluarga lah. Saya selalu call diorang. Bila rindu, call supaya boleh tahu hal apa yang kita buat. Macam, 'Umi, harini saya pergi ke sini.' Cerita apa yang kita buat. Satu lagi, saya akan menyibukkan diri dengan scroll media sosial supaya saya tak fikir. Then, kawan. Pergilah borak dengan kawan, jumpa kawan ke.

PARTICIPANT 2

Firstly, awak asal dari mana?

-Saya asal dari Shah Alam, Selangor.

Apa sebab awak pilih sambung belajar jauh dari rumah?

-Asal dia macamni, saya memang mohon Psikologi, sebab untuk pilihan saya dari saya Sekolah Menengah. Dan waktu UPU tu, saya mohon untuk UKM and saya dapatlah untuk proses temuduga tu tapi saya tak dapat. 2nd try, saya dapat UNIMAS. Asalnya, Ibubapa saya rasa tak rela sebab anaknya pergi jauh. Tapi, disebabkan Covid, so semuanya online. So bila online tu at least macam.. Kita punya masa dengan Ibu bapa tu lama lah. So bila lama-lama tu, saya tak kisah pun dapat kat mana, cuma Ibu bapa saya lah saya risau sebab diorang bila diorang risau pasal saya pun, saya risau la kan. Saya terfikir, sebab saya pun ada jugak pengalaman duduk jauh jugaklah dari parents saya, sebab ada program kat luar waktu saya Sekolah Menengah. So saya belajar jauh ni, saya pun nak tengok macam kawasan Sarawak macammana. Adakah

berlainan sedikit dengan kawasan Selangor kan? Universiti kat Selangor. So saya rasa macma better saya cuba dulu adn then bila saya rasa macam something tak kena, baru saya keluar dari U. Tapi alhamdulillah sekarang sampai Tahun 3 saya stay.

Ni first time awak duduk jauh yang lama? So tak pernah asrama la sebelum ni?

-Haah, ni first time jauh yang lama. Tak pernah asrama. Sekolah harian.

Apa perasaan awak lepas awak datang ke sini? Mostly happy/sedih?

-Mostly macam excited. Dia macam sebab- waktu mula-mula datang tu, saya adalah risau sebab saya waktu dah dapat ticket tu, Ibu bapa keluarga saya kena covid. Jadi terpaksa tangguh lah penerbangan tu. So saya punya pembelajaran tu terpaksa seminggu delay. So saya risau samada dapat kolej– alhamdulillah kolej tu dia bagi peluang lah untuk saya dapat mohon lambat. Kedua, saya risau pasal kumpulan group sebab kan minggu pertama dan kedua, semua dah start pembahagian group. Tapi alhamdulillah lah kawan saya ada yang ajak masuk group diorang. And then, saya risau saya tak dapat catch up ngan orang lain. Sebab minggu pertama, ada yang dah start baut kuliah yang betul. And then, pertama saya excited sebab saya nak tengok macam adakah macam tempat2 dia, dia punya pemandangan tu tenang ke tak. Sebab saya duduk kat sana, mamca busy sikit sebab kawasan bandar kan. So bila kat Sarawak ni, alhamdulillah saya rasa gembira la datang sini jugak, sebab dapat tengok, melancong sana sini dengan Ibu bapa saya. Ibu bapa saya pun dah macam okay saya duduk sini. So macam, saya lega la dan risau jugak.

Berapa kerap awak balik ke rumah dan kenapa?

-Biasanya, saya balik rumah kalau cuti panjang. Contohnya, Tahun 2 dulu. Sebenarnya saya tak kisah pun duduk sini lama sebab dia rasa macam even saya duduk sini, saya rasa macam masih belajar walaupun saya tak buat pape, tapi belajar tu ada lah. Tapi bila balik rumah tu, contoh cuti tu panjang lebih dari seminggu. Cuti sem ni saya tak balik sebab saya rasa ticket

mahal la walaupun kita boleh tengok promosi semua tapi saya rasa tak berbaloi untuk balik seminggu tu. And then, bila saya balik tu sebab Ibubapa mintak, saya baliklah. Sebab kalau cita lama, ayah saya risau sebab kisah pasal makan, and then macammana nanti keselamatan saya kat sini. And then, kalau sorang-sorang, kita taktau apa nak jadi kan. So macam bila saya balik tu, saya fikir apa yang mak ayah saya rasa kalau saya duduk sini lama-lama. And then contohnya macam saya rancang nak cuti panjang nanti nak volunteer. Tapi mak ayah saya kalau boleh um, taknaklah sebab takut takde kemudahan. Sebab cuti panjang ni takde kemudahan untuk kolej, untuk makanan minuman. So mak ayah saya risau lah. So bila saya balik tu, saya fikir factor-faktor macam ibubapa saya, faktor penerbangan, macam tiket. Lepastu saya kena fikir macam adakah waktu saya balik tu, kelas ke tak?

Next section pasal cabaran, apa cabaran-cabaran yang awak hadapi selama duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Rasanya homesick la. Sebab kita homesick tu dia macam kita fikir mak ayah kita duduk kat rumah. And then, kita tak tau apa yang jadi kat diorang. Waktu balik tu, mak saya mula-mula sakit vertigo kepala tapi alhamdulillah dia tak ada apa-apa waktu dicek tu. Itu saya baru dapat tau bila saya balik cuti haritu. Jadi saya macam risau lah mak ayah saya. Lagi satu, bila saya sakit, saya takut nak bagitau kat diorang sebab saya risau dia okay ke tak kalau saya sakit kat sini? Sebab takut nanti.. Kadang-kadang saya malas nak pergi klinik sebab fikir boleh baik sendiri. So macam bila dah telefon diorang tu, rasa bersalah nak bagitau ke tidak. And then, cabaran lain tu macam financial jugak lah. Sebab kadang-kadang saya ni, saya pandai track macam bajet semua. Tapi kadang-kadang terlajak bajet. So bila mak ayah saya tahu, saya tak berani tak bagitau diorang masalah financial saya sebab saya fikir banyak sangat dah diorang buat saya, banyak bagi duit. Lagipun saya rasa macam selagi saya boleh makan dan minum, saya cubalah kawal bajet saya semua. Cabaran lain, cabaran dengan bahasa dan loghat

Sarawak. Sebab Sarawak ni, saya memang kurang sikit lah, ada yang saya faham, ada yang saya tak faham. So bila tak faham tu, kadang-kadang saya ni jenis yang ego, so macam nak tanya tu jadi segan. Tapi kalau dah kawan-kawan rapat tu saya tanya lah. Cuma bila dengan orang yang saya tak kenal, saya just angguk, pura-pura tau. Asalkan ada hint-hint apa yang dia cakap tu.

Boleh tak awak describe emotional well-being awak sejak pindah ke sini?

-Kalau ikut peratus, 60-80% sebab kadang-kadang saya pasal motivasi jugak lah kat sini. Sebab sama jugak saya duduk sana, emosi saya takda tapi at least saya rasa terkawal lah. Macam rasa emptiness, kalau kat sini kadang-kadang dapat kawal, kadang-kadang tak dapat kawal. Emotional well-being saya akan meningkat kalau saya rasa saya siap benda. Contoh, siap latihan reflection, assignment. Tapi bila saya rasa tak siap tu, saya punya well-being tu rasa mundur lah. So macam saya cuba lah nak tengok, kawal saya punya emotional well-being. Sebab kadang-kadang saya rasa terlalu fikir, kelam kabut, saya automatic macam cut off saya punya sekeliling. Saya rasa macam saya stress, tapi pada masa yang sama, tak. Contoh, waktu saya exam, saya ada time tu saya tak baca langsung, lepastu saya memang rasa berdebar nak baut tu sebab tak ada ilmu yang saya ingat. Saya rasa berdebar tu ada, saya rasa jadi macam derealization. Tapi alhamdulillah, ada jugak time saya rasa gembira sebab kawan-kawan saya pun kadang-kadang kita keluar sama -sama so macam rasa happy lah dapat bersama dengan kawan-kawan lain dan saya lebih suka macam buat belajar sama-sama, buat kerja sama-sama. So lagi satu yang saya kurang gemar itu macam bila masa saya belajar, dia macam ngantuk yang itu saya tak suka sangat lepastu bila lepas kelas tu tiba-tiba segar so macam “Kenapa lah buat macamni?”, macam menyesal lah tak belajar, macam cuba diri nampak segar.

Jadi awak ada mention masalah financial jugak kan, mostly awak punya sumber kewangan datang dari mana?

-PTPTN dan jugak Ibubapa saya. PTPTN ni setakan ni alhamdulillah, ada lagi lah dalam RM1000 something. And then saya agak cuba macam 1 bulan itu saya cuba macam cuba belajar lebih bawah dari RM500, tak pun RM400 lah sebab rasa macam banyak saya punya kewangan tu saya membazir kat benda lain daripada benda untuk belajar tapi alhamdulillah lah sebab saya punya PTPTN dengan duit ibubapa beri tu saya dapat belanja ke arah yang berfaedah so macam saya guna apa-apa apps kan untuk track semua. So bila dah guna apps tu saya dapat tahulah apa yang saya belanja semua tu. PTPTN itu yang saya rasa menyesal sikit, waktu saya Sem 2 Tahun 1 sebab saya banyak belanja dekat shopping dan semua tu kan so yang tu jelah yang saya rasa risau. Sekarang ni saya cuba kontrol lah sebab saya perasan yang duit saya pun macam semakin sikit sebab untuk keperluan hidup. So mostly dari duit PTPTN, dan mak ayah saya.

Awak rasa duit yang awak dapat tu cukup?

-Cukup. Saya rasa cukup. Setakat ni saya nampak memang cukuplah untuk saya.

Sejak pindah ke sini, awak ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam mental health atau emotional wellbeing awak?

-Saya rasa ada kalau saya bandingkan dengan asasi. Contohnya macam asasi, saya dekat UM. Jadi apabila saya jadi asasi situ, kit dalam kalangan budak -budak yang Straight A. Jadi dia macam saya punya insecurity, self esteem memang low gila. Jadi macam... Bila masa situ, saya memang insecure. Dan saya banyak... Walaupun saya tengok result saya... Memang result saya making menurun, tapi alhamdulillah masih tak menggagalkan saya. Tapi saya perasan lah... yang saya rasa lebih distant dengan kawan-kawan lain. Dan saya juga macam takut. Bila masuk ke degree, saya perasan saya mula takut untuk bergaul dengan orang lain hasil daripada asasi itu. Saya fikir macam semua orang saya ini pandai. Dan semua orang saya ini macam bagus dalam pelajaran. Dan bila masuk degree, bila belajar dan berkawan dengan semua orang lain,

saya dapat rasa inilah life dan journey kita. Saya perasan yang bila masuk ke degree, saya dah macam sedar sikit. Saya tak boleh macam ni. Saya kena macam sedar, reflect diri saya. Dan cuba kawal emosi saya. Sebab kadang-kadang, saya jenis yang yang pasif agresif. Dan kadang-kadang ada orang kata saya macam terlalu baiklah dengan orang. Tapi sebenarnya saya takut untuk membuat konflik dengan orang lain. Jadi masuk degree ni, saya cuba untuk kawal saya punya sikap, macam nak please orang. Dan saya cuba kawal, tak nak terlalu rasa kosong. Sebab ada bila rasa kosong, saya semua benda saya tak nak buat dan biasanya saya cuba distract diri saya dengan phone, so macam tak baguslah sebab bila saya terlalu main phone semua benda macam tak siap so macam rasa dia better bila saya duduk jauh ni better daripada saya duduk duduk di kawasan rumah lah sebab even ibu apa saya, saya rapat dengan ibubapa saya tapi saya jenis yang memendam. Saya tak pernah macam beritahu apa masalah saya kat sini and then apa saya rasa walaupun saya teringin nak beritahu kat diaorang. Bila saya rasa macam sedih ke apa, biasa saya distract diri saya dengan benda lain.

Awak rasa ada tak aspek positif dia datang ke sini?

-Ada. Saya rasa banyak lah. Macam, kita dapat jumpa orang lain, kan? Dan saya dapat tengok macam mana orang kerja, macam mana perangai orang ni. At the same time, saya juga lebih suka kawasan suasana kat universiti ni. Sebab biasa saya duduk sana, dekat tempat tinggal saya, saya rasa macam semua macam kelabu. Bila pandang kat jalan-jalan ke, saya nampak semua macam daun-daun. Dia macam terlalu blur, walaupun hijau. So bila datang sini ni, dia macam, oh kata macam mewarnai mata saya sendiri. Dia macam, oh jelasnya nampak pemandangan alam sekitar semua. Sebab saya jenis yang, bila saya nak tengok kat luar, saya tak nak macam jadi sifat rasa kosong tu datang kat diri saya. So saya rasa macam impak positive tu, bila datang sini tu, saya tak terlalu stres. Dan saya tak terlalu macam serabut. Selepas tu, bila sama-sama saya rasa macam banyak benda lah dapat pergi kan. Contohnya macam, kat

sini ada yang uptown tu, banyak makanan. Sebab kat sana susah sikit kalau nak dapat makanan banyak macam tu. So macam, bila datang sini impak positifnya, saya dapat berdikari juga lah. Contohnya dulu saya tak pernah berani nak masak nasi sendiri, tanpa orang suruh. Dan saya tak berani macam, buat makanan, bukan tak berani. Dia macam tak terdetik nak buat makanan untuk diri sendiri. Sebab mostly saya kat sana, even saya tolong, mak saya lah yang memasaknya. Sebab saya kat dalam rumah tu biasanya kalau ayah saya kerja, mak, saya dengan adik saya je. Tiga orang kat rumah. So macam makan tu sekali je dah cukup la. Kalau dekat sini, at least saya boleh makan bila-bila masa ikut suka hati saya lah. Itu lah yang positifnya.

Next, tentang coping strategies. Masa mana cara awak cope atau mengatasi masalah-masalah awak? Masalah bila datang ke sini.

-Kalau yang bila datang sini tu, kalau saya fikir pasal masalah duit kewangan untuk flight tu biasanya saya akan, at least saya cuba order ticket awal sebulan daripada tu.

So macam saya dapat kawal lah tengok dulu tarikh dia. Biasanya saya cuba kawal bawah RM300. Tu Alhamdulillah lah, dapat ticket pun murah. And then kalau yang macam perasaan, pasal emotional well-being sesuatu, biasanya saya cope dengan phone lah sebab saya nak cope dengan assignment, buat benda-benda yang tu, saya rasa macam terlalu peka dengan masalah saya sendiri. So bila saya guna phone, dia macam dia siap betul-betul cuma masalahnya yang tu tak terlalu bagus lah. So saya pernah lah cuba dengar macam dengar lagu ke dan saya cuba baca buku cerita yang saya download ke. So macam taklah terlalu tengok phone tu lama. Dan rasanya saya cope tu, saya cuba ingat balik, reflect balik diri saya, adakah saya datang sini hanya untuk bermain ataupun untuk belajar? So bila saya fikir, reflect itu apa saya dah hantar sini dan nak saya belajar bersungguh-sungguh, so saya tak boleh macam dia. So saya kena cuba kawal diri saya daripada terlalu self-pity dan terlalu mendalami masalah saya dan saya cuba

untuk get out of comfort lah. Biasanya saya cope masalah saya tu, biasanya mak ayah saya lah telefon saya. Kalau saya terlepas pun, saya cuba call balik sebab takut ada emergency. Tentang bahasa-bahasa tu, saya cuba tanya balik lah diorang apa maksudnya. Kalau dengan orang saya tak kenal tu, biasanya saya cuba bagitau lah yang saya ni daripada semenanjung, so saya cuba guna Bahasa Melayu yang kita guna lah. Kalau Bahasa Sarawak tu, saya cuba untuk tau maksud dia semua. Biasanya saya cope bila duduk jauh ni, biasanya kita tak terlalu ada orang perhati kan. So, biasa kita banyak serabut benda apa nak buat. So saya selalu buat to-do list. Bila buat to-do list tu, saya Bila saya lengkap semua, saya rasa macam sense of achievement lah. So, bila ada sense of achievement tu, saya jadi macam nak terus buat benda-benda yang berfaedah sambil buat to-do list tu.

Tentang culture barrier tadi tu, bagaimana cara awak adapt dengan benda tu?

-Kalau tentang bahasa tu. saya selalu tengok body language diorang untuk dapat hint-hint maksudnya. Kalau tentang halal atau haram, kadang-kadang saya takut jugak kalau beli makanan biasanya kita tak tahu yang walaupun kita tengok ada orang macam muslim menjual, tapi saya tak tahu siapa yang belakang takbir tu siapa so macam saya rasa cuba tanya.

Last question, siapakah sistem sokongan awak semasa menghadapi masalah-masalah bila duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Salah satunya, Ibu bapa saya sebab saya duduk sini itu, diorang selalu call saya setiap hari lah sebab bila call setiap hari itu, dah jadi habit la. Kalau diorang tak call sehari tu, saya jadi macam risau apa jadi, saya mula overthinking. Tapi kadang-kadang bila diorang call tu, saya jadi lega. Selalunya, diorang tanya dah makan ke belum. Tapi nak tipu tu rasa bersalah so saya akan makan lepas call tu So dia macam mendoronglah saya untuk jaga kesihatan. Satu lagi kawan-kawan saya lah, macam dari segi belajar sebab saya ada banyak adore diaorang sebab dia orang belajar ada yang belajar work smart, ada yang work harder so cara belajar dia orang itu

mendorong saya untuk ke depan. Bila saya dalam kalangan duduk dengan kawan-kawan yang memang saya nampak buat kerja semua, so saya rasa nak ikut dia orang buat. Mostly, kawan-kawan saya okaylah, diorang mendorong saya then tidaklah saya terasa homesick dan rasa menyesal duduk di sini tu so Alhamdulillah lah. Lecturer pun ada, tapi secara indirect lah. Contohnya, lecturer-lecturer yang saya adore macam Professor XXX sebab dia jenis yang suka mencari, research. Tu pun macam mendorong saya. Cuba kalau saya buat macam tu, boleh ke tak? Then ada jugak lah certain-certain senior yang pandai buat program semua. So saya macam tertarik untuk menyemangat saya, menyemangatkan diri saya bila hidup jauh ni yang saya boleh juga buat sendiri tanpa bantuan yang kat sana.

PARTICIPANT 3

Awak asal dari mana?

-Saya berasal dari Kuantan, Pahang.

Apa sebab awak pilih untuk pergi sambung belajar jauh dari rumah awak?

-Basically sebab kos psikologi sendiri sebab saya waktu Form 4, saya memang decide nak explore lebih tentang psikologi. Kemudian, waktu lepas SPM, saya fikir masuk asasi sains sosial dan berkaitan. Yang mana boleh sambung belajar psikologi dengan mudahlah. Tapi somehow, saya tak dapat. Bila isi UPU tu kan, kita dapat isi ikut kelayakan kita. Somehow, saya tak layak, saya tak tahu kenapa. Tapi saya tak layak. Dan saya dapat asasi undang-undang dekat Dengkil. Selepas asasi tu, isi UPU sekali lagi. Dalam pilihan itu tiba-tiba nampak ada psikologi. Tapi ada satu je yang di-offer kepada saya. So daripada situ, bila tengok UPU tu macam menarik jugak lah. Selepas itu dia nampak psikologi. Jadi saya rasa macam ada harapan nak sambung cita-cita waktu Form 4. Saya tengok UNIMAS. Tapi saya tak tahu UNIMAS ni

dekat mana. Jadi, saya google dan rupanya kat Sarawak. Jadi macam... ragu-ragu juga nak pergi sebab jauh. Jauh, lepas tu saya tak pernah pergi sejauh pergi ke Sarawak. Tapi sebabkan saya punya cita-cita sendiri lah. Sebab saya dah ada plan daripada waktu sekolah menengah. Jadi saya tak suka plan saya itu tak menjadi. Kalau boleh saya sampai jadi jugak. Sebab saya nak ambil kos tu semua. Basically, sebab UPU lah. Kalau tak, mungkin saya akan sambung apa yang saya study dulu. Tapi sebabkan nampak dalam UPU itu ada dalam pilihan, itu saya rasa ada harapan untuk sambung apa yang saya nak.

Apa perasaan awak lepas awak datang ke sini? So, mostly, happy, sedih, good experience, or mostly bad experience?

-Mostly, waktu mula datang, rasa susah sikit nak adapt dengan.. sebab mostly, macam ada sesetengah orang tu bila dia sambung belajar, dia pergi dengan kawan dia, kan? Tapi, bila saya datang sini, memang saya datang seorang. Masa online pun saya tak aktif sangat. So, mostly saya tak kenal orang sangat. Classmate pun, majoriti saya tak kenal. So, saya rasa macam susah juga nak adapt. Kalau saya sambung belajar kat tempat yang ada kawan-kawan saya, dia jadi lebih selesa, lah, kan? Sebab ada orang-orang yang kita kenal, macam familiar lah kalau pergi ke situ. So, kalau pergi ke sini, waktu mula-mula datang, itu memang susah nak adapt lah. Dengan, bukan dengan culture atau apa, tapi lebih kepada sebab tak kenal sapa-sapa, itu salah satu yang... saya rasa tough sikit lah, bila datang tu. Waktu mula-mula saya datang, memang saya fokus pada akademik saya sendiri. Saya tak join apa-apa kelab, tak masuk apa-apa organisasi tu, so kira macam saya memang duduk seorang-seorang juga lah, macam tak keluar bilik sangat, tak pergi mana-mana sangat. At one point, saya rasa macam oh, tak boleh macam ni. So, sebab itulah tahun ni, dah masuk year 3 ni, saya agak aktif sikit, saya join macam-macam kelab, aktiviti, dan actually berkenal dengan orang. So, saya rasa dia ambil masa lama juga untuk saya adapt dengan surrounding. Tapi yang bestnya yang pasal datang ke Sarawak

ni, masuk kos Psikologi ni sebab classmates psikologi, saya tak tahu lah sebab saya rasa macam tak semua orang dapat macam ni tau. So, classmates kalau budak psychology ni sangat - sangat... non-judgmental, sangat-sangat understanding. So, saya rasa macam... macam mula sampai sini macam terkejut sikit tau, sebab kos saya dulu saya, bukan nak kata diorang jahat, tapi diorang takde lah macam ni tau. Tapi kalau budak psychology ni dia macam... tegur semua orang, so saya rasa macam oh, best juga tak lah bila lama-lama duduk dengan surrounding ni, untuk berkawan... berkenalan dengan orang macam itu.

Berapa kerap awak balik ke rumah dan kenapa?

-Oh, balik ke rumah. Jarang-jarang saya balik. Saya datang awal semester, saya balik hujung semester. Satu semester tu memang sekali lah. Pergi sekali, balik sekali.

Okay, next. Next pasal cabaran awak. Apa cabaran -cabaran yang awak hadapi selama duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Cabaran. Macam saya cakap tadi lah satu sebab saya... sorang-sorang, datang sini sorang-sorang. Datang naik flight tu memang datang seorang-seorang tau. Saya dahlah tak pernah naik flight. So memang saya cari habis lah cara nak naik flight. Sebab saya tak nak lah tertinggal flight ke apa kan waktu first time datang. Lepas tu, datang sini cabaran dia sebab seorang-seorang salah satu. Sebab saya memang introvert. So susah juga nak buat kawan tu. Sebab saya memang selesa seorang-seorang. So walaupun berkawan dengan orang, saya masih duduk seorang seorang jugak. Mula-mula rasa awkward jugak lah benda tu, tapi lama-lama... saya memang suka duduk seorang-seorang. Cuma once in a while tu saya akan pergi bercakap dengan orang. Kita kan macam social being kan. So ada masa kita kena bersocial. Tak, mungkin sebab saya pergi counselling session full time. Dan dalam counselling session tu, saya belajar mengenali diri sendiri. So saya tahu limit saya. Dan untuk bersocial tu saya tahu takat mana saja limit saya. Takat mana saja yang saya patut bercakap dengan orang dan untuk spend

time dengan diri sendiri macam tu. Kemudian, cabaran lain, saya rasa kalau ada apa -apa masalah macam kat sini macam susah nak reach out untuk dapatkan bantuan apa -apa sebab family saya kan macam jauh kan macam tu so kalau nak minta tolong dia orang bukan dia orang boleh buat apa-apa so rasa tu macam a bit tough lah. Kalaupun duduk dekat rumah, kalau sakit ke apa boleh balik macam tu kan, tapi kalau kat sini memang tak lah nak balik. Satu semester sekali je balik. And then mungkin, makanan juga lah. Waktu mula -mula datang sini saya memang susah sikit nak adapt dengan makanan kat sini sebab mak saya masak sedap tau, so bila mula-mula datang sini saya macam tak ada apa yang rasa sedap tau tapi bila lama -lama di sini, oh dah boleh start makan makanan Sarawak semua kan so sekarang ni okay lah. Boleh nak makan Laksa Sarawak ke. Okay lah, dah boleh adapt dengan makanan-makanan kat sini. Saya rasa just masa tu lah, waktu mula-mula datang memang a bit struggle tapi bila dah lama, bila dah biasa dah adapt, saya rasa cabaran tu bukan lagi satu cabaran ataupun masalah yang besar.

Awak mention pasal makanan kan, kalau selain makan, awak ada pernah rasa tak culture/language barrier kat sini?

-Ya, pernah juga lah sebab saya entah lah saya rasa kalau dalam bahasa kan kita ada 3 benda lah. Menulis, mendengar, bertutur macam tu. Kalau saya, saya rasa kalau bahasa Inggeris boleh lah menulis kan tapi kalau bahasa Sarawak ni, lama -lama tu walaupun sekarang saya macam dengar, boleh faham tapi tak boleh nak bercakap, tak boleh nak menulis dalam bahasa diorang. Tu pun boleh faham kalau diorang cakap basic je lah. Kalau diorang tiba-tiba cakap yang pekat tu, memang sampai sekarang tak faham. Saya tak tahu macam mana nak belajar bahasa orang sebenarnya sebab saya tengok orang lain kejap je datang sini, tapi dah macam orang Sarawak dah. Tapi saya dah 4 semester kat sini still tak boleh nak bercakap Bahasa Sarawak. Tak boleh nak pura-pura cakap Bahasa Sarawak pun sebab dia memang tak reti. Waktu mula-mula tu

memang susah juga lah, kadang-kadang saya bercakap dengan orang jadi miscommunication tau sebab saya cakap benda lain, diorang cakap benda lain. Rupa-rupanya topik pun lain. Macam dah rancak berbual, rupanya benda lain. Kelakar, tapi selalu jugaklah jadi macamtu. Saya rasa best jugaklah kalau boleh nak bergaul dengan local dengan cara bercakap diorang kan tapi kalau dengan bahasa ni memang benda paling sukar untuk otak saya hadam.

How about financial challenges? Sebab awak balik satu semester sekali je kan. Adakah sebab tak cukup duit ke, atau sebab ticket mahal ke?

-Sebenarnya, kalau saya nak balik saya boleh balik sebab saya student dapat JPA as scholarship so kalau saya nak balik tu ada je duit tapi mungkin sebab saya macam calculative type of person. Ya lah balik boleh jumpa family semua tu tapi sebab saya rasa better duit tu boleh simpan untuk future saya sendiri sebab tu kebanyakan duit saya, bila dapat je duit masuk, saya akan simpan terus dalam simpanan saya plan untuk guna mungkin bila nak sambung Masters ataupun untuk emergency separuh and then baru fikir untuk belanja semua tu. Macam memang boleh balik tapi duit tu kalau saya rasa kalau saya simpan, benda tu yang saya akan boleh guna untuk sambung belajar nanti, untuk future saya. Kalau tak sambung belajar mungkin saya boleh buat benda lain guna duit tu kan sebab saya memang belajar family tak support financially so kalau saya nak plan masa depan saya, saya kena plan guna duit sendiri kan so saya memang kena plan betul-betul lah macam tu. So sebab tu saya tak balik sebenarnya, bukan sebab tak ada duit sangat ada tapi saya rasa duit tu saya nak guna untuk masa depan saya sendiri untuk future saya.

Boleh tak awak describe awak punya emotional well-being sejak pindah ke sini?

-Okay, jadi seperti yang saya katakan, tadi saya ada pergi jumpa kaunselor. So, basically, waktu mula-mula datang sini, waktu first semester, saya pun tak sure saya punya emosi saya ni macam mana,. Tapi bila dah masuk semester dua, saya pergi jumpa kaunselor untuk, saya tak tahu saya

punya emotion, saya tak tahu apa yang saya rasa ni, saya tak tahu apa yang saya nak dalam life ni. So, saya jumpa dia untuk tolong saya sorting masalah saya juga saya, sebab saya tak tahu apa masalah saya tapi saya rasa kadang -kadang itu rasa macam a bit depressed. Saya ada masalah untuk tidur juga, sampai sekarang lagi ada masalah itu. Tapi yang saya cakap dalam banyak -banyak semester, semester lepas saya punya emotional well-being sangat teruk, ada a few times saya skip class tak datang, so, yalah memang sangat teruk. Saya rasa saya ni improve lah, sebab kalau semester lepas, sebelum -sebelum ni, kalau saya buat group assignment, kalau saya ambil lead sebagai leader, saya akan double check kerja orang lain banyak -banyak kali, saya akan paksa sikit untuk orang buat betul -betul supaya memenuhi rubrik semua tapi last semester walaupun saya ambil lead sebagai leader, saya just buat part saya betul -betul, part lain orang lain saya just tengok sekali, walaupun saya rasa tak ok, saya just submit sebab saya memang tak ada energy untuk suruh mereka bertukar, memang betul -betul tak ada energy untuk anything lah,. Memang sangat -sangat teruk mental tapi this semester, saya rasa okay.

Benda tu terjadi sebab daripada cabaran -cabaran awak bila datang ke sini?

-Saya tak rasa sebab datang ke sini je, saya rasa memang ada sikit sebab saya datang sini seorang -seorang so bila saya ada masalah, saya tak boleh nak share dengan orang lain kan, so itu salah satunya saya rasa kalau cabaran yang datang ke sini, itu salah satu faktor yang ganggu saya punya emotion dan saya punya mental state. Kalau faktor dia, memang faktor sebab saya datang seorang tu, dan memang saya tinggal seorang, tak share masalah dengan orang. Personal factor juga and mungkin sebab saya stress juga dengan akademik, sebab last semester pointer saya jatuh tapi saya dah expect lah pointer tu jatuh dengan cara saya buat tapi saya memang semua kan, saya tahu saya tak boleh maintain saya punya pointer sebab last semester juga.

Kan awak jauh dari family, ada rasa homesick tak?

-Saya tak tahu nak describe sebagai homesick ke tak sebab saya jenis yang tak terlampau rapat juga dengan family saya sendiri. Kalau saya rapat pun saya rapat dengan kakak. Saya bukan jenis yang share apa-apa dengan family. Dengar kakak saya pun, kalau benda happy saya share la. Kalau benda sedih, saya jarang share dengan orang. Kalau nak cakap homesick tu, saya tak rasa saya jenis yang homesick sebab saya tak adalah attach sangat dengan family saya sendiri. Agak pelik tapi kalau ada masanya saya macam, kalau boleh nak balik rumah. Yalah nak balik rumah and just relax. Tapi tak tau nak cakap homesick ke tak sebab benda tu sangat rare. Benda tu terjadi bila saya dalam depression stage lah dan bila tak nak duduk sini, dah tak nak belajar, bila saya ada mindset macam tu. Tapi biasanya itu sangat jarang lah. Kalau duduk biasa-biasa, dia tak rasa homesick. Kalau saya macam lama tak cakap dengan mak saya, saya call je.

Sejak pindah ke sini, awak ada rasa tak perbeza dalam mental health or emotional well-being awak? Contoh, jadi lagi senang moody ataupun jadi lebih positif?

-Hmm, macam saya cakap. Mula-mula datang tu, saya rasa banyak sangat emotion at once. Ada masa saya rasa excited, ada masa, hmm.. Saya memang nak belajar benda ni tapi saya tak ada semangat macam tu untuk buat assignment semua tu. Tapi okay la semester ni saya dah makin okay. Sebab sekarang ni saya macam tak care sangat pasal akademik saya. Bukan tak care, tapi saya macam tak pressure diri saya macammana saya pressure diri saya sebelum ni.

Awak rasa ada tak aspek positif datang tu sini?

-Ya, ya. Saya rasa sebab culture Sarawak ni lain tau dari culture yang saya experience waktu itu sekolah saya dulu, or kerja dulu kat Pahang tu. Culture dia lain lah. Orang Sarawak ni, taktau lah kenapa tapi dia orang ni baik sangat. Saya tak cakap orang Pahang tu jahat tau, tapi Orang Sarawak ni baik sangat, suka menolong. Somehow, cara diaorang approach kita tu buat kita rasa macam selesa tau. Ya, jadi... Datang sini buat saya realise lah sebenarnya... kadang-kadang bukan kita masalah tu, cuma certain circle tu yang...toxic. So bila datang sini jumpa

orang yang baik ni kan, kita rasa macam... Oh, kalau kita dekat the right circle, we can be the best version of ourselves. Dia macam membuka mata saya sendiri.

Next, pasal coping strategies. Macam mana cara awak cope atau mengatasi masalah - masalah yang bila datang ke sini?

-Saya rasa saya join club dan organisasi itu dan saya jumpa ramai orang tau dan itu saya rasa salah satu cara yang bantu saya untuk adapt juga di sini. Selain itu, saya rasa pergi terapi juga. Psychologist yang saya jumpa ini saya rasa bagus dan dia macam tolong saya untuk discover diri saya sebab saya waktu mula-mula datang tu, saya tak tau apa yang saya nak. Saya tau yang saya nak habiskan degree, tapi saya tak tau macammana nak sort out kan emotions saya ni. Jadi, pergi jumpa psychologist ni juga membantu saya untuk discover diri saya sendiri untuk faham apa -apa yang saya perlu buat. Once in a while, saya ambil walk, pergi walk ataupun cycling untuk saya keluar daripada rumah ataupun bilik. Kadang -kadang, bila saya malas nak keluar, saya pergi refill air ke apa asalkan jalan keluar, especially bila saya nak masuk balik ke depressed stage tu. Sebab saya tau kalau saya duduk jugak dan tak nak keluar, memang saya akan jadi macam last semester. So sekarang ni, setiap kali saya rasa macam tu, saya akan keluar pergi jalan -jalan, tak kisah lah pergi jalan -jalan pergi mall terdekat ke. Sebab bila berjalan tu, especially kalau waktu petang-petang dah mendung sikit, dia macam bagi saya relax sikit, rasa tenang. Dan selalunya kalau jalan petang -petang, orang selalu bagi makanan, so saya macam seronok. Tak perlu exercise, just keluar untuk ambil udara luar. Macam tu lah cara saya cope.

Kalau tentang language barrier atau cultural?

-Daripada tempat saya datang, mostly memang melayu kenal dengan melayu je. So kat sini memang jumpa dengan multicultural punya orang daripada kaum lain, religion lain. Kalau language barrier pulak, cara nak copingnya biasanya kalau saya tak faham, saya tanya. Tapi itulah, bila saya tanya pun, saya lupa jugak. Ya tapi kalau saya tak faham, biasanya saya suruh

diorang explain dalam bahasa yang saya faham lah, sebab saya memang susah nak belajar bahasa diorang so saya mintak dia orang untuk terangkan dalam bahasa yang saya faham. Tapi saya rasa language barrier itu pun salah satu cara untuk buat kita orang jadi lebih berkomunikasi tau sebab saya ada alasan untuk bercakap dengan diaorang untuk at least minta dia orang, ajar saya ke walaupun saya tak faham-faham. Saya gunakan language barrier itu sebagai medium komunikasi saya sebab diaorang walaupun dia bercakap Sarawak, dia orang nanti juga cakap bahasa Melayu yang standard. Saya gunakan dia sebagai salah satu topik juga lah untuk bercakap dengan diorang. Kalau saya ada kawan yang Iban, kadang-kadang saya just, “Cuba cakap dalam bahasa ni”, sebab macam seronok tau dengar diorang cakap macam tu. Ya, macam itulah cara saya coping dengan bahasa. Sebab kalau saya rasa nak faham, saya masih tak faham. Tapi at least saya dapat mengeratkan hubungan dengan ketidakfahaman tu.

Last question, siapakah sistem sokongan awak semasa menghadapi cabaran -cabaran semasa berada jauh dari tempat asal/rumah?

-Saya rasa daripada diri sendiri juga. Walaupun saya macam ada up and down, tapi kalau apa-apa, kalau saya macam down, saya akan refer to my past self. Waktu saya muda-muda dulu, saya sangat saya sangat positif juga. Someone positive, playful. So, kalau saya rasa macam down tu, saya akan ingat balik pada saya diri saya dulu. Waktu saya muda-muda tu saya yang selalu bagi motivasi ke orang. So, macam kalau saya boleh bercakap dengan diri saya dulu, macam mana dia akan bagi motivasi saya kat sana untuk handle aku yang saya hadap sekarang. So, saya rasa itu salah satu support system saya. And saya rasa saya join kelab pun sangat membantu jugak sebab waktu mula-mula saya datang, kalau orang tengok saya waktu itu kan memang nampak macam berlagak. Kalau saya tak senyum, saya akan nampak sangat sombong, nampak sangat unapproachable macam tu. So, macam tu juga bila saya tanya member kelab tu kan. Tapi waktunya saya datang tu, 2 orang senior dari kelab tu yang buat saya rasa nak

join kelab tu sendiri. Saya rasa dia orang pun sangat membantu lah. Sebab cara dia orang approach saya saya malam tu, dia macam membantu saya untuk keluar daripada saya punya phase bila saya waktu datang dan tak bercakap sangat dengan orang. Dia orang memang membantu saya untuk mula biasakan diri untuk bersosial. Sampai sekarang saya memang have a really good relationship lah dengan dia orang. Ya saya rasa kalau bukan sebab dia orang, saya mungkin saya takkan jadi talkative macam sekarang. So saya rasa sebab diri saya dan diorang.

PARTICIPANT 4

Pertama sekali, asal dari mana?

-Saya asal dari Jerantut, Pahang.

Apa sebab awak pilih sambung belajar jauh dari rumah?

-Sebab yang pertama sebab saya dari kecik lagi memang tidak pernah keluar negeri sendiri. Dari kecik belajar dekat pahang je, cuma lain daerah la. Jadi saya ambik peluang time universiti ni untuk keluar jauh. Ikutkan nak keluar ke Mesir tapi bila parent cakap jauh sangat la. Tiba-tiba UPU dapat di Sarawak so nak tak nak diorang terpaksa la bagi. Kan kalau UPU tak boleh nak tolak, kalau tolak tahun tu tak boleh pergi universiti kena try lagi tahun depan.

Apa perasaan awak lepas awak dating ke sini? Macam mostly happy ke mostly sad?

-Takut jugak sebab tak pernah keluar dari negeri sendiri dan tak pernah, even lain daerah dalam Pahang pun tak pernah naik bas sendiri. Memang parent akan jemput lah. Even 2 jam daripada rumah ke sekolah pun parent sanggup jemput. Memang tak pernah naik bas sendiri semua tapi tiba-tiba pergi Sarawak nak kena naik kapal terbang sendiri. So jadi benda tu agak takut. Takut la, jugak berdebar semua tapi excited tu ada jugak sebab first time dpt keluar daripada negeri sendiri.

Berapa kerap awak balik rumah dan kenapa?

-Dalam 2 bulan sekali macam tu. Biasanya, sebab saya ahli PALAPES, jadi waktu cuti panjang tak ada, jadi kita orang akan gunakan masa macam contoh ade cuti 3 atau 4 hari kitaorang akan ambik peluang untuk balik. Pastu contoh kalau cuti seminggu time raya, kita orang akan balik— time raya jugak kite orang akan balik. Seminggu awal dengan minggu lebih sikit lah. Cuti antara sem 1 dengan sem 2, takda la panjang sangat... macam sebulan lebih, itu pun kitaorang tak balik. Sebab tu bila ada masa cuti seminggu lebih sikit kitaorang akan ambil.

Apa cabaran-cabaran awak hadapi selama awak duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Cabaran dia bila kena nak kena adapt benda baru la. Contoh mcm tak pernah naik bas sendiri, kena belajar sendiri naik bas, beli tiket kapal terbang sendiri... pastu mungkin dulu kalau nak pergi beli apa-apa barang kat luar pun, even parent teman ataupun nak gi klinik gigi ke PKU ke memang ada penjaga la teman. Tapi sekarang kena berusaha and berdirikari sendiri.

Kalau pasal perbezaan culture/social/bahasa ada tak awak rasA sejak awak pindah ke sini?

-Setakat ni... masih dalam lingkungan semenanjung lah tapi pernah jumpa dengan counsellor tu. counsellor tu sendiri macam susah nak faham bila kita cakap semenanjung sebab biasanya client dia antara cakap sarawak atau english. So bila saya cakap terlalu semenanjung guna perkataan-perkataan agak ber-loghat la kan, dia macam “hah? apa dia? ulang balik” macam tu. dia macam kurang paham la.

Awak ada hadapi masalah kekurangan duit tak bila pindah sini? Contoh tiket nak balik mahal ataupun harga makanan sini mahal ke?

-Untuk tiket itu kadang-kadang ada jugak consider macam takleh balik ni ataupun kan kita beli tiket two-way kan, kadang-kadang terpaksa beli one-way dulu sebab tiket balik sini mahal. So kena tunggu masa yg sesuai untuk balik. So sebab tu kadang-kadang terlajak sikit waktu cuti

sebab tiket mahal. Untuk makanan, setakat ni, takda la nak tangguh-tangguh makan pun. Masih boleh hadap lagi.

Sejak pindah sini, awak rasa ada tak perbezaan dalam mental health atau emotional well-being awak?

-Saya rasa saya jadi lagi positif sebab time dulu dekat semenanjung, lagi-lagi covid, memang sangat tak bergaul dengan orang kecuali memang dalam telephone je. Kalau tak ada kawan, tak ada la nak cakap apa-apa. Memang cakap dalam rumah dengan family dan parent dengan adik beradik je. So bila pindah sini kita memang lagi terdedah dgn kawan-kawan so lagi banyak kite bersosial dan rasa lebih suka macam tu. lagi suka bersosial dgn orang-orang kat sini.

Awak rasa ade tak aspek positif awak datang ke sini?

-Dapat banyak kawan baru dari pelbagai bangsa. Daripada dulu, saya memang tak pernah keluar daripada circle sekolah agama so jadi circle kebanyakannya yang Melayu dan Islam saja. Jadi bila pindah ke Sarawak ni, kepelbagaian rakan-rakan jadi sangat banyak lah. Jadi saya rasa benda ni satu yang bagus untuk saya sama ada daripada belajar untuk berkawan dengan orang lain bangsa dan lain agama sendiri. Jadi, saya suka la benda tu.

Ada rasa homesick tak?

-Homesick tu jadi bila saya kurang keluar daripada rumah. Pastu bila tiket mahal, orang lain semua dah balik, lepastu kita pulak tak dapat, duduk sorang-sorang time tu baru rasa homesick.

Macam cara awak cope atau mengatasi masalah-masalah yang awak cerita tadi?

-Kalau masalah homesick tadi, saya akan video call dengan parent. Setiap kali saya rasa homesick akan video call dengan parent supaya rasa kurang sikit lah. At least boleh nampak muka dengan suara apa semua. Sebenarnya, saya masuk PALAPES untuk kurang kan sendiri rasa homesick tu. sebab bila kita masuk aktiviti-aktiviti macamt, kita akan lebih bersosial dan lebih busy untuk fikir kan masalah homesick tu.

Kalau macam awak mention tadi awal-awal tu susah nak adapt kan dengan environment baru. Macam mana awak atasi benda tu?

-Mula-mula dalam seminggu tu, saya berkurung je dalam rumah sebab takut tak boleh terima dengan budaya luar. Lepas tu disebabkan bekalan makanan dah habis, saya terpaksa keluar dan berinteraksi dengan orang, berinteraksi dgn mak cik kafe so daripada situ saya mula belajar sikit-sikit bahasa Sarawak. Belajar sikit-sikit cara nak cakap dengan orang ni, orang tu.

Siapakah sistem sokongan awak semasa hadapi cabaran-cabaran semasa berada jauh dari tempat asal?

-Dekat dalam PALAPES, kitaorang ada sistem buddy-buddy dengan buddy partner. Maksudnya buddy-buddy tu perempuan dengan perempuan lah. Jadi memang nak tak nak kia memang kena ada sorang kawan rapat. Lepas tu, kitaorang punya rumah atau pun kolej ni, dalam kolej ada rumah lepas tu kitaorang dibenarkan untuk pilih kitaorang punya housemate sendiri so siapa-siapa kitaorang rasa selesa, kitaorang jadikan satu rumah. Jadi benda tu lah yang jadi support untuk saya sepanjang saya kat Sarawak ni.

PARTICIPANT 5

Boleh kenalkan diri? Nama pendek, umur dan asal dari mana?

-Nama saya XXX, asal daripada Semenanjung, Perak. Umur 21.

Apa sebab awak pilih untuk pergi sambung belajar jauh dari rumah

-Bagi saya lah sebabnya sebelum ni memang mak saya nak hantar anak dia jauh so saya chooselah sebabnya kita kan saya macam dari sekolah rendah, sekolah menengah, sekolah yang full agama and then my parents pun kata kena lah keluar dan keluar jauh tapi mak ayah saya nak pergi negara yang macam arabic lah macam Jordan semua tu and then saya fikir macam berdakwah lah jugak macam tu. Tapi saya fikir macam ni, kalau saya ada dalam satu circle

yang sama je, which is agama je.. dekat luar nanti kerja dah tak sama sebab saya tak akan ada dalam satu kelompok yang semua macam agama, macam tak akan bercampur, macam attitude kita semua akan berbeza so untuk bagi biasa dengan benda tu, bila dapat sini saya pun macam, why not kita pergi je. Maybe tak tentu sama kan, semenanjung macam ni, sarawak macam ni. Takpe, kita stay dulu kat sini sebabnya saya pun cadang kalau nak pergi luar negara, nak pergi tempat yang bukan majoriti muslim.

Ini pun memang first time datang Sarawak la?

-Ya, first time.

Next, apa perasaan awak lepas datang ke sini? Macam, mostly happy/sad?

-Dia macam agak sedih, bukan agak sedih, sebab dia macam dah biasa duduk berjauhan dengan family. Tapi dia macam rasa, excited pun ada sebab kita belajar benda baru. Dan saya memang decide, after habis belajar nak pergi jauh.

So berapa kerap awak balik ke rumah dan kenapa?

-Rasanya tak kerap pun. Memang kita akan balik hujung macam benda final semester. Hari tu pun, waktu raya je balik. Macamtu lah. Cuti panjang je balik.

Apakah cabaran-cabaran yang awak hadapi selama awak duduk jauh dari rumah?

-First communication kot, sebabnya dekat sini mungkin kita punya bahasa sikit berbeza. So tu first yang susah. And then, saya bukan jenis orang yang suka communicate sangat dengan orang. Plus dalam course saya sendiri, kena ada banyak jumpa orang. Tapi macam benda tu tak selesa la. Tapi lama, didik diri ada masa okay je, ada masa.. tak sangat..

Awak ada hadapi masalah kekurangan duit ke kat sini?

-So far adalah sebab kat ni macam a bit pricey daripada biasa tapi kena pandai manage la benda tu.

Sumber kewangan awak, mostly datang dari siapa? Scholarship ke parents ke?

-Before ni, semester 1 memang 100% parents. Semester 2 ni ada lah PTPTN jugak.

Sejak pindah ke sini, awak ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam mental health ataupun awak punya emotional well -being? Contohnya jadi macam lebih positif atau macam lebih cepat marah ke?

-So far, lebih positif lah rasanya sebab kalau sebelum ni apa benda je orang buat, kita terasa. Lebih kepada sebab sekolah menengah, dia lain. Kat sini dah jauh, dia lain. Bila macam walaupun baru semester 2 kan tapi dah macam -macam perangai manusia kita dah nampak and dia macam realise macam oh maybe ada sebab maybe ada sebab jadi positif lah.

Awak baru first year kan, tapi awak ada rasa homesick tak?

-So far, takde.

Next part, tentang coping strategies. Jadi, macam mana cara awak cope atau mengatasi masalah-masalah awak tu. Contoh, tentang language barrier tadi kan?

-Cuba communicate la. Sebab macam kalau Semenanjung, ada yang satu satu kelompok je Semenanjung. Tapi bila saya fikir, tak boleh jugak macam tu sebab kita dekat tempat yang berbeza. So, kawan itu kena berbeza lah. Memang kawan saya ada orang Sarawak. Diorang pun sometimes memang cakap Sarawak, jadi saya try untuk faham jugak.

Siapakah sistem sokongan awak semasa awak menghadapi cabaran -cabaran semasa berada jauh di rumah?

-Saya tak ada lah sangat, tapi majority kawan. Saya memang jenis yang sedikit memilih lah sebenarnya kalau nak ada kawan. Tapi kalau ada apa-apa, kawan saya, best friend tapi orang Semenanjung, dia macam apa-apa pun cerita lah. Ada masa kita cerita tapi takdelah semua benda. Tapi time yang kita perlukan, saya cerita lah kat dia, lepastu dia bagi semangat semua. Banyaklah diorang tolong.

PARTICIPANT 6

Boleh perkenalkan diri?

-Nama saya XXX. Saya berumur 21 tahun. Saya berasal dari Alor Setar, Kedah.

Apa sebab awak pilih untuk pergi sambung belajar jauh dari rumah?

-Sebenarnya nak apply jugak universiti dekat area -area Semenanjung tapi waktu itu merit untuk Semenanjung terlalu tinggi. Jadi saya pilih untuk sambung belajar dekat Sabah dengan Sarawak. Masa itu kebetulan Sarawak, ada kos yang saya nak. Jadi saya pilih untuk datang ke sini

So basically, sebab nak try explore juga lah?

-Sebab saya first time datang Sarawak, jadi banyak benda yang Sarawak ini banyak yang menarik. Dari segi makanan dia, jadi macam sini kan awal dia punya waktu. Macam semenanjung lambat, jadi agak kena sesuaikan diri juga lah.

Apa perasaan awak lepas datang ke sini? Mostly, happy/sedih?

-Mula-mula datang sini tu, happy tapi lama -lama itu dia agak homesick juga sebab saya first time datang tempat jauh macam ni tak ada family dekat sini jadi untuk datang sini dia ambil masa nak kenal kawan untuk sesuai belajar dalam English jadi agak sedih juga lah tapi lama - lama dia boleh sesuaikan diri.

Berapa kerap awak balik kerumah dan kenapa?

-Kalau saya balik 2 bulan sekali, tu pun kalau macam ada cuti je, macam cuti midsem ke hari raya.

Selain awak kata awak homesick kan? Apa cabaran -cabaran yang awak hadapi selama duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Cabaran saya, satu di sini dari segi pembelajaran lah sebab saya ini tak pandai sangat dalam bahasa Inggris dengan matematik jadi dalam kos saya ni dia banyak gunakan dua bahasa ni

jadi bila first time saya dengar lecturer cakap bahasa Inggris, saya rasa macam nak berhenti lah sebab sebab penuh dia orang cakap Inggris itu lama -lama bila saya jumpa kawan saya, dia dah boleh terima lah juga Inggris itu dekat sini jadi segi cabaran saya dekat sini, pembelajaran lah.

Kalau macam tentang perbezaan culture/social/bahasa awak ada rasa tak kat sini?

-ada tu ada, kalau macam dia orang buat communication dalam group dia orang jumpa circle dia orang sarawak, dia orang just cakap bahasa sarawak. jadi dia orang tak fikir orang semenanjung yang ada dalam tu jadi susah untuk saya faham, saya akan tanya kawan saya yang lain yang dari sarawak apa dia orang cakap. jadi nak buat, dah tegur dah cuma jadi nak buat group assignment tu susah sebab tak faham dia orang cakap sarawak.

Kalau tentang masalah kekurangan duit ada tak? Contoh, tiket nak balik mahal atau harga makanan mahal di kat sini.

-Mostly itu adalah. Tiketlah selalu. Tiket flight kadang -kadang kena beli awal, kadang -kadang tak dapat balik cuti sebab mahal. Dalam segi makanan itu kena jimatlah banyak. Sebab sini dia pindah kos makanan tinggi sedikit sarawak.

Awak punya sumber kewangan mostly dari siapa?

-Dari parents, sebab saya tak ambik PTPTN.

Sejak awak pindah ke sini, awak ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam mental health atau emotional well-being. Contoh, lagi senang moody ke atau jadi lagi positif?

-Saya datang sini, sedih lah sebab kadang -kadang sebabkan assignment terlalu banyak sebab dulu kan tak ada jadi bila datang sini tiba -tiba banyak assignment kena bagi dengan saya tak faham English kemudian kadang -kadang ada yang kawan macam ni, macam tu jadi datang sini sedih lah, moodylah jugak.

Selain itu, ada tak awak rasa aspek positif datang ke sini? Contoh macam dapat buat kawan baru, dapat belajar jadi independent, dapat new experience kat tempat baru?

-Kalau aspek positif tu, banyak berdikari lah dekat sini daripada bergantung dengan family. Lepastu, kebanyakan adalah juga kawan -kawan yang kita tengok perangai dia macam ni. Kita jadi belajar, oh tak semua orang kita boleh percaya. Macamtulah.

Next part tentang coping strategies. Macammana cara awak cope atau mengatasi masalah-masalah tersebut?

-Kalau saya sedih, malam -malam tu saya akan selalu VC la dengan family saya. Lepas tu kadang -kadang pergi keluar daripada university ke, healing sekejap. Tak terlalu tengok assignment. Macamtulah cara saya sesuaikan diri saya di sini.

Siapa sistem sokongan awak bila awak menghadapi cabaran -cabaran ini semasa berada jauh dari rumah ?

-Kawan saya. Kawan saya sorang tu banyaklah tolong saya di sini. Dia banyaklah bagi kata-kata semangat kat saya di sini sebab dia pun daripada Sabah. So kadang -kadang dia lah dengar saya punya luahan, kemudian dia lah yang naikkan semangat saya. Selain itu, mak saya la yang saya banyak kongsi.

PARTICIPANT 7

Boleh perkenalkan diri?

-Nama saya XXX dari Kos HRD, dari negeri Johor.

Apa sebab awak pilih untuk pergi sambung belajar jauh dari Rumah?

-Okay, first of all sebab untuk saya sambung belajar di Sarawak adalah saya inginkan kebebasan. saya rasa bila saya keluar daripada comfort zone saya sebab selama ini saya tak pernah pergi berjauhan dengan keluarga, like macam pergi kedah ke perak ke ataupun luar daripada johor sebab selama ini saya belajar dari sekolah menengah, sekolah rendah, semua saya dekat dalam johor dan saya nak cuba benda baru, saya nak cuba explore culture baru dekat

Sarawak ini so bila dapat Sarawak terus saya terima. Memang first choice untuk datang ke Sarawak. Kiranya sebab saya nak timba benda baru, pastu saya nak kebebasan, like macam kalau kat sini bukan kata parents tak jaga. Tapi, kita boleh buat and kat sana my parents very strict. So bila saya dekat sini Saya boleh independent. Saya boleh tahu macam mana saya nak, apa yang saya nak, apa yang saya tak nak. Improve my interpersonal, something like that? Saya punya kelemahan dalam diri saya boleh improve. Macam tu la. Dari segi communication, dari segi macam -macam.

Apa perasaan awak lepas awak datang ke sini? Mostly happy/sedih?

-Selepas saya datang sini, saya gembira dan lepas dalam seminggu, saya rasa sedih sikit sebab dah berjauhan dengan parents. Tapi benda itu sekejap dia rasa dia. Saya rasa benda itu sekejap, lepas itu saya lama2 dapat adapt dengan kawan baru, suasana baru. So saya suka, sebab saya sebenarnya extrovert person. Saya suka bergaul, suka berkawan. So bila mula -mula saja saya rasa macam sunyi, lama -lama bila dah ada kawan yang saya rasa saya boleh rapat, boleh masuk air, saya rasa macam, oh aku dah boleh kat sini.

Selama datang ke sini, berapa kerak awak balik ke rumah dan kenapa?

-Saya Year 1, dah Semester 2. Semester lepas, saya balik sekali je. Tu pun balik masa mid semester. Sekali je. Semester 2 ni sekali jugak. So 2 kali je. Tak termasuk cuti semester. Satu semester habis, and then saya pun cuti. Kalau saya kat sini 5 bulan, 5 bulan lah saya kat sini.

Apa cabaran -cabaran yang awak hadapi selama awak duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Cabaran yang pertama saya hadapi masa di Sarawak ini adalah communication sebab saya sejujurnya tak faham, tak ada basic langsung dalam Bahasa Sarawak dan kemudian bila cakap Sarawak tu, kadang2 kawan kita yang cakap Sarawak tu macam “ha? apa dia cakap ni?” kan, tapi bila lama -lama tu saya dapat adapt. Tu pertama, communication. Yang kedua, maybe assignment tu, group assignment kadang -kadang kita kena, okay due date lambat dan macam

kita nak buat tapi tak nak buat macam.. kadang -kadang assignment tu jadi tangguh ataupun kadang -kadang assignment tu nak buat tapi tak tahu nak buat macam mana. Tapi kalau dah tanya kawan, dah boleh buat.

Kalau macam pasal hal kewangan ke ataupun homesickness ada?

-Oh, hal kewangan semestinya ada. Macam duit makan ke apa kadang2 dia tak cukup. Tapi kadang2 kita ikut perut juga lah. Lepas tu kalau ada segi homesick, saya rasa ada sikit. Masa semester kali ni. Masa semester 1 tak sangat, tapi kali ni semester 2 kerap. Tak tahu kenapa. Saya tiba -tiba malam -malam nangis. Ataupun Tiba -tiba macam mood swing Sebab macam tiba -tiba teringat dekat keluarga. Tapi benda tu sekejap je like macam sehari, pastu esoknya dah okay dah.

Sejak pindah ke sini, ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam mental health ataupun emotional well-being awak. Contoh jadi lagi senang moody ke? Atau mungkin jadi lagi positif?

-Okay, there is a mental health for me, saya masih dalam,masih tengah kuatkan mental, masih nak adapt situasi tu tengah nak kuatkan mental lepas tu tengah nak perbaiki diri macam tu

Sebab tu ada kaitan tak dengan sebab jauh daripada rumah?

-Bukan sebab jauh dari rumah sangat. Dia macam more kepada macam kawan, assignment, diri sendiri.

Selain daripada cabaran tu, awak ada rasa tak aspek positif datang ke sini?

-Ada, satu sebab saya dapat kawan baru, yang nombor dua saya dapat timba ilmu baru like macam bahasa sahawak, kemudian culture kita boleh tahu, lepastu kita punya soft skill kita, something like that.

Dengan cabaran -sabaran awak tadi tu, macam mana cara awak cope atau mengatasi cabaran tu?

-Contoh kalau waktu saya tak faham Bahasa Sarawak, kalau saya tak faham, saya terus terang dengan orang tu. Macam, “Saya tak faham benda itu, boleh tak awak terangkan balik?” Lepastu orang itu akan cakap, oh benda ini macam ni. Kalau assignment tu, kalau saya tak faham, saya refer balik arahan yang dibagi atau tanya dalam group.

Soalan last, siapakah sistem sokongan anda semasa menghadapi cabaran-cabaran semasa berada jauh dari tempat asal?

-Of course lah kawan kan. sebab kat sini saya tak ada saudara mara atau parents pun tak pernah pergi sini kecuali masa hari pendaftaran pertama saya dekat UNIMAS, hari tu dia datang. So dia ada orang itu adalah kawan rapat saya. Kawan sebabnya kawan -kawan rapat saya macam dua -tiga orang itu, kalau saya rasa down ataupun saya rasa saya perlukan seseorang untuk saya bercerita, Saya memang pergi dekat dia, dekat kawan saya dan saya cerita apa yang saya rasa. Dan dia orang pun, kalau dia orang ada rasa penat ataupun burnt out, dia akan cerita dekat saya, kira macam give and take. So macam di situ saya percaya kat kawan saya lah, so macma dia boleh dipercayai. Pasal kawan ni kena pandai pilih kawan juga. Tak semua like kita boleh cerita dekat orang itu, ada yang kita boleh just kawan je Ada yang kita boleh just kawan dan cerita. So kena pandai cari kawan yang boleh meluah lah, yang boleh dengar kita punya isi hati macam tu.

PARTICIPANT 8

Boleh perkenalkan diri sedikit?

-Nama saya XXX, saya asal Johor dan merupakan student kursus Psikologi.

Soalan pertama, apa sebab awak pilih untuk pergi sambung belajar jauh dari rumah?

-Pertama sekali, sebab saya nak cuba untuk belajar di kawasan baru. Bukan kawasan yang saya selesa. Macam kalau Johor kan, tempat yang kita dah biasa. Jadi macam, kenapa saya pilih

untuk belajar kat sini? Satu sebab saya nak cuba untuk belajar macammana cara kita hidup jauh daripada parents, family. Kedua sebab saya nak belajar budaya di Sarawak. Saya nak mengenali dan belajarliah di hidup Sarawak. Dan ketiga sebab saya nak belajar untuk berdikari sendiri.

Boleh awak describe perasaan awak lepas awak datang ke sini? Macam, mostly happy ke sedih ke?

-Sejujurnya, semasa saya datang sini, saya agak sedih sikit. Pertama, sebab jauh daripada keluarga. Dua, sebab perbezaan budaya dan bahasa yang kita gunakan macam kat sini kan mostly orang Sarawak. Jadi, mereka banyak bertutur dalam bahasa Sarawak, dalam dialek Sarawak. So agak sukar pada awalnya saya nak komunikasi dengan kawan -kawan. Jadi, itulah agak sedih rasa macam kita tak boleh nak jump in atau berkawan dengan orang Sarawak sebab tak faham kan mula -mula tu tapi sekarang okey dah lah.

Sejak di sini, berapa kerap awak balik ke rumah?

-Tak banyak kali, cuti semester je saya balik. Cuti semester yang panjang, dan raya.

So next pasal cabaran, apa cabaran -cabaran yang awak hadapi selama duduk jauh dari rumah?

-Rindu lah, perasaan rindu, homesick lah dekat family kan jauh rasa macam kalau makin kita jauh macam dia support sistem kita kan rasa macam kita terpaksa terpaksa call terpaksa mesej kalau dekat kan senang itulah satu. rindu lah homesick. Dua everything that going on here kita yang kena settle everything by ourselves tak boleh nak mengharapkan parents kita or adik beradik kita untuk tolong lah itu lah antara cabaran yang saya dah pergi kat sini. Salah satu cabaran jugak, cultural barrier lah. Sebab kalau kat semenanjung kita dah biasa kan cara cakap kita, kita faham macam lawak-lawak dia tu pun lain, lawak kat sini lain. Bercakapnya lain, budayanya lain.

Kalau tentang financial challenges awak ada?

-Sejujurnya, setakat ini, kalau financial challenges, setakat ini masih dalam kawalan sebab saya dapat berjaya untuk manage my money well la.

Boleh tak awak describe awak punya emotional wellbeing sejak pindah ke sini? Atau awak ada rasa tak perbezaan dalam emotional wellbeing? Contoh jadi lagi senang moody ke ataupun maybe jadi lagi positif?

-Pada saya, kalau nak cakap pasal perubahan tentang emosi, saya rasa saya lebih ada positifnya sebab saya rasa apa yang saya lalui daripada Johor sampai ke sini hari ini mematangkan saya, mematangkan cara fikir saya, mematangkan cara saya buat keputusan, mematangkan saya daripada segala aspek lah. Jadi kalau untuk emosi yang negatif, saya rasa tak ada sebab saya rasa homesick itu biasa kan. Itu semua tapi yang melampau tiada lah.

Awak rasa lebih positif tadi kan, apa yang awak rasa aspek positif datang ke sini?

-Satu, saya dapat belajar bahasa lain, bahasa Sarawak. Dua, kawan -kawan, tambah kawan -kawan.

Okay, next pasal coping strategies. Macammana cara awak atasi/cope dengan masalah2 tu?

-Pertama sekali, saya join persatuan fakulti untuk saya adakan kawan kat sini. Dua, saya cuba untuk bercakap ataupun saya cuba untuk belajar bahasa Sarawak. Saya belajar untuk, pertama saya belajar untuk faham bahasa Sarawak dulu, kedua saya belajar untuk bercakap dalam bahasa Sarawak untuk atasi masalah language barrier tu lah. Kalau macam masalah homesick, saya kerap call parents saya. Bukanlah call itu macam untuk mengadu masalah ke apa, tapi call itu macam supaya kita tak rasa jauh sangat.

Soalan last. Jadi siapakah sistem sokongan awak bila awak hadapi cabaran -cabaran semasa berada jauh dari rumah?

-Saya boleh katakan kawan -kawan saya lah, kawan -kawan memainkan peranan penting lah dalam keadaan saya kat sini, berada jauh daripada family.

Kalau macam hobi ke apa ada? Yang membuat awak cope better.

-Saya rasa sebab sekarang saya join persatuan kan, jadi saya sangat sibuk menguruskan aktiviti, menguruskan persatuan. Itu yang membuat saya macam dah tak fikir sangat dekat rumah. Itu adalah antara... Dan saya rasa yang memberikan impak positif adalah dengan saya masuk persatuan, saya banyak buat aktiviti di sini. Dan menyebabkan saya tak rasa macam nak homesick, nak balik selalu.