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DETERMINANTS OF FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY AMONG YOUNG EMPLOYEES IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT: The vulnerable individuals are at certain risk of financial shocks due to, for instance, high debt low financial literacy, low income, or impactful changes in personal settings. Therefore, identifying determinants of financial vulnerability is an important among youths, and therefore, current study aims to distinguish the determinants of individuals' financial vulnerability. A sample of 1,100 respondents was selected through the systematic sampling method. The results revealed that financial behaviour, financial knowledge, self-coping, and self-efficacy are noteworthy factors of the financial vulnerability of the young employees, and have negative relationships with their financial vulnerability. The results might be of interest to the policy makers, and academicians in the field of family economics and management. Moreover, further understanding about the financial vulnerability determinants plays an important role to encourage youthful work force to arm with financial prudence, and over the long haul may diminish the suffering rate of Malaysians with financial shocks.

KEYWORDS: financial behaviour; financial knowledge; financial vulnerability; self-efficacy; self-coping; young employees

I. INTRODUCTION

In the first quarter of 2020, most of the working population was in 25 - 34 age group, [1] and they are plunge into youth categories. According to Institute for Youth Research Malaysia, individuals between 15 and 40 years old are defined as youth. Financially, 80.4% of youth do not have spending budget [2]. Malaysians, particularly youthful employees were engaged with debt, overwhelmed with money, and compromising their fulfilment towards finance. Likewise, in a national study was revealed that 1 in 3 Malaysians have not satisfied on their own financial knowledge [3]. So, it is not surprising when Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit (AKPK) data shows that 55.1% of young people aged between 20 to 40 years old involved in the debt management programme. The situation shows that many young people still lack financial management skills. Bankruptcy cases in Malaysia reported by the Department of Malaysia Insolvency shows that from 2015 to 2019, 51, 239 individuals aged from 25 to 44 years old were declared bankrupt, due to various reasons. A graduate who have been declared bankrupt will make them having difficulties to start working life. According to Murthy and Mariadas (2017), poor attitude towards money, poor financial planning, credit card, and some bank policies are the major factors that affect fresh graduates' bankruptcy [4]. The situation is alarming because these young individuals still have a long way to go in their life and will affect the well-being.

Financial vulnerability is the probability that an individual will encounter financial hardship. Moreover, it is the risk of a person putting into hardship, as opposed to a circumstance of living in a specific condition of neediness or need. In today's life, young employees facing numerous challenges to survived. Financial challenges are the vital challenges that needs to be address prudently. Inability to handle the situation can cause stress. In relation to that, Elliott and Lewis (2015) mentioned that anxiety might be higher in young adults due to the debt accumulation, expanding cost of education, lack of financial literacy, and uncertain employment opportunities [5]. Additionally, insufficient financial literacy levels among youthful employees prevent them on wise investments, in debt, and unable to survive successfully [6].

Throughout the last few years the property price in Malaysia is on its all-time high, bringing about challenges in any event, for youthful home purchasers and developing families to bear to own property, and therefore, some says that, it has become an impossible struggle with the increment of prices of the houses, and the reduction of the repayment period of the housing

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loans. Without enough financial knowledge, young employees failed to own property thus making their life harder, especially when married and having kids, as the expenditure will also increase. As the self-evident certainty, Lusardi and Mitchell (2014) asserted, financial illiteracy among youthful employees these days might direct them towards the troublesome circumstances once they start their retirement stage [6]. Youthful adults become to the vulnerable consumers, when they lack enough financial knowledge to take critical decisions on financial matters. Anderloni, Bacchiocchi, and Vandone (2012), have come out with the determinants of financial vulnerability index in reducing financial vulnerability; "(1) the level of debt servicing, with the effect thereof being more evident for households with unsecured debt, (2) the higher levels of financial vulnerability evident for impulsive individuals who adopt impatient, short-sighted behaviour patterns and (3) higher education levels" [7; p. 287].

Low financial literacy in young adults might affect negatively on their savings rate [8]. Further, they make their financial decisions alone, have lower degree of financial skills, and use fewer financial products [9]. Moreover, they rather live a day at a time, and therefore, do not set future financial goals, have lower income, do not save money, only few of them prepare budgets, live in smaller settlements, worsen their accomplishment with the financial difficulties, hence regularly feel anxious. The people who are having less reserve funds and investments are encountered with high level of vulnerability, and further, they are showing some characteristics such as, being less likely to save and invest out of each pay check, not having proper emergency savings, unable to pay credit card balances in full each month, and with being more likely to have encountered arrears or being in receipt of government assistance [10].

Therefore, the present study was conducted to find proper solutions and guidelines to the above mentioned issues, and therefore, the objective of the study is twofold;

1. To identify the relations between financial behaviour, financial knowledge, self-coping, and self-efficacy towards the financial vulnerability of young employees.
2. To identify whether financial behaviour, financial knowledge, self-coping, and self-efficacy predict the financial vulnerability of youthful employees.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Financial Vulnerability

In the diverse and growing body of literature in family economics and management, various definitions of financial vulnerability are found. Indeed, the term "financial vulnerability" is applied interchangeably with financial distress, financial fragility, financial over indebtedness, and financial debt burden, it is most regularly defined as when individual has high debt comparative with income, explicitly, if the cause of the debt is unsecured consumer credit or loans [7, 11]. Researchers in health economics use the term "financial vulnerability" to individuals that are experiencing serious health problems or worrying conditions because of high debt gathering [12]. The financial vulnerability is commonly found among the people those with excessive debt, but weak repayment capacity [11]. Yet, it is not essentially associated to having high debt. If people are unable to do what they want might likewise be characterized as vulnerable or stressed, for example, taking a vacation, leisure activities, and having a good meal with family or friends from a good restaurant [13]. Moreover, individuals are likewise regarded vulnerable and fragile, when they are failure to pay their monthly basic expenditure or have unsettled utility bills, unable to make ends meet, and particularly low-income individuals [14, 15].

The financial vulnerability is specified in some of the existing studies as an inability to confront unexpected expenses, an inability to maintain expenditures, and an indebtedness or a decreasing real family net wealth to disposable income ratio [16]. Further, financial vulnerability occurs as a result of unmanageable borrowing habits, which direct people to accumulated debts that are excessively high comparative with their current and future earning capacity [7]. Vulnerability at a family unit level is linked not only with their present state of well-being, yet in addition with the family's exposure to undesirable incidents, and more precisely the ability to adapt to [17].

Moreover, consumer financial vulnerability is an individual inclination of being in a financially unsteady circumstance, and shown that this inclination is an initial display of financial strain in families. It is also a provision that describes the capacity of a family unit to recuperate from unexpected financial shocks. This incorporates unexpected income loss, because of joblessness or increment in consumption because of uncontrollable factors [18]. Whether or not the vulnerability is because of high non-debt or high debt commitments, these families are vulnerable and fragile to financial shocks initiated by an altering environment, for example, variations in GDP or income, fluctuations in rates of bank interests, deviations in asset prices or unexpected job loss [11]. Vulnerable households typically experience deprivation [19], which might result in

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absenteeism, financial exclusion, and low workplace productivity levels. Youthful individuals who have a lower level of education are the most financially vulnerable group in the society, and lead to poor money management skills [20].

The most widely recognised indicators applied as financial vulnerability measurements are ratios that evaluate the capacity of family units to resettle their debts. The absolute value of debt is less significant for estimating family unit fragility, except if it is contrasted with income or assets in the form of ratios, for example, the unsecured "debt service-to-income ratio", "debt service to-income ratio", "debt-to-assets ratio", "debt-to-income ratio", and "mortgage income gearing" [21, p. 13]. Anderloni et al. (2012) observed that the families' financial vulnerability is increased along with the increasing level of the ratio of the debt service-to-income [7]. According to The Bank of Italy, a family is considered as financially vulnerable, when their debt service-to-income ratio exceeds 30%, and the individual's income is lower than that of the median population. While Kim et al. (2016) characterized financial vulnerability as a debt that is in arrears for over 90 days [11]. Other indicators are called as non-ratio estimates which are depended on income, expenses, and wealth [22]. Self-reported household survey data on the quantity of credit responsibilities, financial difficulty, and overdue debt have additionally been utilised to evaluate family financial vulnerability [11].

Financial Knowledge

Hilgert, Hogarth and Beverley (2003) characterized financial literacy as financial knowledge [23]. Financial literacy is defined as "the ability of an individual to plan their finances, plan for debt and retirement and maintain wealth" [6, p. 19]. Financial knowledge comprises of attitude, behaviour, and awareness skills important to take sound financial decisions. It is statistically associated to financial practices; the individuals who realized more were bound to take part in recommended financial practices. Furthermore, it is associated to the capacity to settle on financial decisions on planning, budgeting, spending, saving, borrowing, and investing for the future [6].

Financially knowledgeable people make informed financial decisions throughout their life stages, and are bound to invest in stocks, and have a higher affinity to anticipate retirement, which directs to sustained enhancements in their way of life [24]. The financial knowledge is important for better financial behaviour and planning and consequently, its positive consequences and assessing methods were revealed by several researchers [8]. Individual's financial knowledge and financial planning capabilities are solid indicators of one's financial satisfaction [25]. Furthermore, high financial knowledge can empower youths to take advance financial choices and further leads to encourage budgeting, savings, smart usage of credit cards, and improved financial planning [26]. Ward and Lynch (2019) revealed that financial knowledge can assist people with settling on their financial choices [27], and income wisely, thus reduce the financial vulnerability, and contribute to the financial well-being among young employees [28, 29]. Therefore, we can develop a hypothesis;

H_a1: A negative relationship may exist between financial knowledge and financial vulnerability of young employees.

Financial Behaviour

Financial behaviour alludes to human behaviour's pertinent to money management behaviours associated with earning, spending, borrowing, saving, and protecting [30]. Furthermore, Xiao, Ahn, Serido, and Shim (2014) refers financial behaviour as each individual behaviour which might be pertinent in personal finances [31]. With respect to borrowing choices, individuals who are financially literate are bound to know about their optimal debt level, and have lower cost debt [32].

Young individuals' degree of confidence in financial knowledge is related with their positive financial behaviour. Expanding of a person's degree of confidence in the finance management might assume a significant role in altering their financial behaviour [33]. Financial behaviour and attitude are considered as the elements prompting high debt burden among people [34]. Financial behaviour is one of the elements that contribute to financial satisfaction [35]. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis is;

H_a2: A negative relationship may exist between financial behaviour and financial vulnerability of young employees.

Self-Efficacy

In personal finance context, people who have a more noteworthy feeling of self-assuredness in their financial management capabilities are bound to move toward any financial shocks they experience as "challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided" [36, p. 31]. It is the most significant determinants of the behaviours that individuals decide to take part in and the amount they endure in their endeavours even with obstacles and challenges. Such a mentality is probably going to bring about achievement and, thusly, progressively great individual financial outcomes. Self-efficacy is "the belief

we have in our own abilities, specifically our ability to meet the challenges ahead of us and complete a task successfully" [37, p. 4].

High level of financial self-efficacy is accompanying with financial happiness, lower financial stress, less financial problems, lower debt, and higher savings [38]. financial literacy is considered as another key risk factor for financial vulnerability which is associated with financial self-efficacy [39]. It demonstrates that consumers confronting troublesome financial circumstances might encounter financial, as well as psychological consequences. In addition, expanding financial self-efficacy might be a successful method to develop individuals financial well-being, because it prompts looking for financial help [40]. Moreover, people who are having high self-efficacy are bound to make preparatory activities to evade financial distress [41]. Additionally, a worker with high self-efficacy can elevate the degree of their financial well-being [42]. In this manner, in light of above direct and indirect facts, the formulated hypothesis is;

H_a3: A negative relationship may exist between self-efficacy and financial vulnerability of young employees.

Self-Coping

Financial vulnerability is affected by the kinds of capital available to the people at different stages of their life, which might let them to move through life changes without major financial or emotional shocks. Some of the occasions that because financial vulnerability is simultaneous and not under control, from macro events for example, a financial crisis or changes in the labour market, to personal life-changing events for example, losing the job [43]. Self-coping mechanism involves the changing of behaviour in financial matters such as working longer hours, avoidance of financial problems or crisis, taking on extra jobs, reducing the financial concerns by actively participating in labour market, delaying retirement, and also shifting the financial strains by getting financial products such as mutual funds, insurance and defined-benefit pension plan [44].

A study by Fraczek and Klimontowitz (2015) suggested that financial vulnerability among young consumers occur as a result of financial decisions made based on emotions and not on the skills and knowledge [45]. Individuals with better self-control are felt less anxious about financial shocks, save money from each pay-check, have better overall financial behaviour, and feel more secure in their current and future financial situation [46]. Hence, the below hypotheses can be formulated;

H_a4: A negative relationship may exist between self-coping and financial vulnerability of young employees.

H_a5: Financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-coping and self-efficacy are significant determinants of young employees' financial vulnerability.

Therefore, in the current study, in addition to studying socio-economic variables, four determinants; financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy and self-coping were used as the determinants of financial vulnerability among Malaysian young employees. The latter two determinants are rarely integrated into the frameworks on consumer vulnerability studies, and therefore, current study is able to provide a more comprehensive literature on financial vulnerability that has not been studied in the previous research.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique that employed in this research is systematic sampling. Total of 1,100 young employees were sampled from 11 Credit Counselling and Debt Management (AKPK) branches throughout the Malaysia. About 100 respondents will be targeted to obtain from each branch. The respondents were Credit Counselling and Credit Management (AKPK) participants and walk-in customers, including those who seek for credit counselling services, advice for debt management, and who attended financial education programme. Respondents should age between 18 years old and above. Every 3rd participants and walk-in customers will be chosen as a respondent. However, to fulfil the purpose of this article, we selected 18-40 years old respondents only.

Variables and Measurement

The questionnaire was comprised of six main sections. The first section captured respondents' demographic information, for example, age, gender, & marital status and socio-economic profiles, for instance, job, saving-earning ration, & number of dependents). The following sections featured questions for each constructs, namely financial vulnerability, financial literacy, financial behaviour, self-efficacy, and self-coping.

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Financial vulnerability was estimated utilizing 14 measurement items adapted from Anderloni et al. in 2012 [7], measured in 10-point scale of 1 = very stable/not vulnerable finance to 10 = unstable/vulnerable.

Financial literacy was measured through 28 statements presented in true/false format, adopted from Malaysian Financial Planning Council in 2018 [47]. The questions covered several domains such as, debt management, cash flow management, saving and investment, taxation and estate planning, retirement planning, Islamic products, risk management, and general questions on the Malaysian financial system.

Financial behaviour is manifested in five sub-dimensions with 28 items, namely retirement planning, risk management, credit management, estate planning, and cash management adopted from Rajna, Ezat, Junid, and Moshiri in 2011 [48], measured in 5-point of Likert scale, ranging from "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree". The measurement scale of self-efficacy was contained 15 items adopted from Chen, Gully, and Eden in 2001 [49], measured in 5-point Likert scale, "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree".

Data Analyses

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 13 was utilised to analyse the data, and descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics for example, T-test, Pearson's correlation, ANOVA, and multivariate analysis were applied.

The Cronbach's Alpha analysis results for both pilot test, and actual data are given in the Table 1, and high values were recorded which are ranging from 0.68 to 0.93. This is consistent with the point of reference that any measure with coefficient of 0.60 is established to have an average reliability, while the coefficient that exceeds 0.70 and above explains that the reliability standard of the instrument was high [50].

Table 1: Reliability analysis of scales

Instrument	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot) (n=30)	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha (Actual) (n=790)
Financial vulnerability	14	0.912	14	0.928
Financial knowledge	27	0.689	27	0.721
Financial behaviour	28	0.908	24	0.925
Self-efficacy	15	0.909	12	0.930
Self-coping	4	0.725	4	0.753

Descriptive univariate analyses were used to describe patterns of response. The demographic, and socioeconomic profiles of the respondents were described in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Pearson Correlation was applied to determine the relationships for bivariate analyses. Finally, multivariate analyses such as multiple regression were implemented to recognize the determinants of young employees' financial vulnerability, and variables such as financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy, self-coping and financial vulnerability were entered to the regression analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent's Profile

Out of 790 respondents number of female respondents was slightly lower (47.4%) than that of male respondents (52.3%). The participated respondents were categorized in to two groups according to their age, and the first group of was aged between 20 and 29 years, and the percentage was 38.3%. Next group was aged between 30 and 39 years (61.7%).

Most of the respondents were married (63.8%), and the highest number of respondents were Malay (76.5%), followed by Chinese (10.9%) and other ethnicities (7.0%). In terms of education level, 65.1% was completed their tertiary education. On monthly income, 52.4% of the respondents earned less than Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 3000, followed by 32.9% respondents who earned between RM 3000 - RM 4999. The respondents who were participated in this study came from numerous sectors. A total of 340 respondents (43.6%) were from the private sector, 239 (30.6%) were from the public sector, and 102 respondents (13.1%) were self-employed while the remaining were from others sectors (Table 2).

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Table 2: Respondent's profile (n=790)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	409	52.3
Female	373	47.4
Age (years)		
20-29	303	38.3
30-39	487	61.7
Ethnicity		
Malay	598	76.5
Chinese	85	10.9
Indian	44	5.6
Others	55	7.0
Marital Status		
Single	285	36.2
Married	502	63.8
Education Level		
Primary	17	2.3
Secondary	257	32.6
Tertiary	514	65.1
Income (RM)		
< 3000	364	52.4
3000 - 4999	229	32.9
5000 - 6999	72	10.4
> 7000	30	4.3
Employment		
Private sector	340	43.6
Public sector	239	30.6
Self-employed	102	13.1
Others	99	12.7

The Table 3 displays the analysis results of the relationship between the variables.

Table 3: Pearson's correlation matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Financial vulnerability	1.000				
2. Financial knowledge	-.125**	1.000			
3. Financial behaviour	-.484**	.080*	1.00		
4. Self-efficacy	-.320**	.033	.350**	1.000	
5. Self-coping	-.075*	.147**	.194**	.291**	1.000

Notes: $p \leq 0.01$

H_a1: A negative relationship may exist between financial knowledge and financial vulnerability of young employees.

According to the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient analyses, a significant negative relationship was found between financial vulnerability and financial knowledge ($r = .125$, $p \leq 0.01$) which was suited to the research hypothesis (H_a1). The strengthening in financial knowledge in young people will reduce the chances to get a hold of financial vulnerability. For example, financially knowledgeable individuals will have increased their savings [26], do budgeting, have prudent financial planning, and use credit cards judiciously and as a result of that financial vulnerability will be decreased.

H_a2: A negative relationship may exist between financial behaviour and financial vulnerability of young employees.

The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient results showed that there was a significant negative relationship between financial behaviour and financial vulnerability ($r = -.484$, $p< 0.01$), and the hypothesis (H_a2) was accepted. The practices of financial activities such as borrowing and spending money for unnecessary things will increase the financial vulnerability when the debt obligation is elevated [34].

H_a3: A negative relationship may exist between self-efficacy and financial vulnerability of young employees.

The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient analysis has been indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and financial vulnerability ($r = -.320$, $p< 0.01$), hence, H_a3 was accepted. Young people with a greater self-efficacy will have a lower chance to involved in financial problems. As mentioned by Bandura in1994 [36], individuals with financing difficulties will pass through the disputes and this attitude expected to result in financial well-being, including lower financial stress and gaining a lot of savings. The findings support previous studies by Kuhnen and Melzer in 2018 [41].

H_a4: A negative relationship may exist between self-coping and financial vulnerability of young employees.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient results indicated that the correlation between the variables, self-coping and financial vulnerability was negative ($r = -.0.75$, $p \leq 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis H_a4 could be accepted. The less self-coping practices among the respondents will increase the risks to trapped in financial problems, and the findings were parallel with the study of Fraczek and Klimontowitz in 2015 [45].

Determinants of Young Employees' Financial Vulnerability

Table 4: Multiple regression results for determinants of young employees' financial vulnerability

Variable	b	Beta (β)	T	Sig.
(Constant)	27.458		3.756	0.000
Financial knowledge	-.816	-.105	-3.250	0.001
Financial behaviour	-.599	-.434	-12.703	0.000
Self-efficacy	-.515	-.185	-5.302	0.000
Self-coping	-.856	-.100	-2.973	0.023

Notes: R=0.526; R^2=0.276; Adjusted R^2=0.272; F=68.730; Sig. F=0.000; $p \leq 0.01$

H_a5: Financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy and self-coping are significant determinants of young employees' financial vulnerability.

The multiple regression analysis indicated that the model clarified 27.2% of the variance in financial vulnerability by the determinants; financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy and self-coping, which was predicted significantly by the model (F=68.730, p=0.000).

In accordance with the attained results, all independent variables; financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy, and self-coping were negative significant determinants of young employees' financial vulnerability. Financial knowledge (β=-.105), financial behaviour (β=-.434), self-efficacy (β=-.185) and self - coping (β=-.100) contributed significantly to the dependant variable, and all the factors were the significant determinants of financial vulnerability among young employees in Malaysia. Financial behaviour was the greatest negative predictor of financial vulnerability among young employees in Malaysia (β= -.434), followed by self-efficacy, financial knowledge and self-coping. Therefore, the hypothesis H_a5 was accepted.

This finding broadly supports the work of other studies on financial vulnerability contributing factors. Financial attitude and behaviour is the principal causes of high debt burden and eventually leads to financial vulnerability [34]. In addition, as young employees, the ability to control the salary into purchasing unnecessary things is vital. Even though, self - control is not the strongest predictor of financial vulnerability, one's current and future financial security was determined by it [46]. For example, even having a life challenging events such as divorce, or diagnosed with critical illness, individuals with better self-coping strategies will have better solutions to reduce the effect of financial difficulties that they might face in the future.

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V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In conclusion, there is a negative significant relationship between financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy, and self-coping towards financial vulnerability of young workers. The result also indicated that the financial knowledge, financial behaviour, self-efficacy and self-coping are significant determinants of young employees' financial vulnerability and the 27.2% of the variance in financial vulnerability was explained by the regression model.

The findings of this research provide insights in terms of the holistic preparation for young people entering the workplace. For the employer, it may suggest that financial management topic need to be included in the orientation programme, or continuously having financial education at workplace, formally or non- formally. Nevertheless, the awareness on financial management might support in increasing the financial well-being, and decreasing the amount of debt of the young employees.

Furthermore, the outcome that more youthful individuals will in general be all the more financially vulnerable is of worry as financial issues at a youthful age could be exorbitant, and can unfavourably influence a person's lifetime financial welfare. Therefore, the government should make necessary actions to promote financial education in schools through the incorporation of financial subjects in their curriculum might be essential with unique reference to their ethnicity and gender, and continued to reduce the financial vulnerability of the Malaysians.

Without a doubt, there is evolving proof that even short financial related educational programmes in secondary schools able to expand adolescents' financial knowledge, and reduce the frequency of impulse purchases [51]. With respect to improve purchasers' financial self-efficacy, policy makers or financial advisers are prescribed to look at consumers' trust in executing financial tasks, and practice role-modelling to develop confidence when required, in addition to giving education concentrated on developing skills-based financial capability [52].

Especially, the financial vulnerability of low income earning youths require consideration. As substantiated by Hussein (2013), majority of the low-income receivers have higher influence, and acquire their credit from non-bank organisations which are not under the administrative extent of the Bank Negara, Malaysia [53]. Therefore, "one size fits all" financial training programme is obviously not appropriate as the difficulties faced by low-income receivers might be totally dissimilar from other income groups, especially due to their limited access to the financial facilities.

Moreover, while income creates a financial limitation on people, it is basic that people should be taught on the significance of living within their means, and having a responsible financial attitude. Though, the micro-prudential guidelines released by Bank Negara Malaysia is to alleviate the matter of increasing family unit debt, it might have made it increasingly hard for low income receivers to gain admittance to credit facilities from banks and financial organisations. Therefore, these findings are important for the relevant authorities that are required to examine further.

Several policy implications are associated with the findings. Firstly, policies that integrate financial literacy and inclusion are required, as well as endeavours to expand savings in the households to decrease the degree of the financial vulnerability of this sector, especially among the middle-income group. In addition, our findings are significant for business practitioners and policy makers, who can apply our instrument of financial vulnerability to recognise to what magnitude their target clusters are "at risk" of financial detriment. Such information would then be able to be utilised to figure out what support systems and resources ought to be set up to guarantee people are assisted with appropriate levels of care.

Secondly, financial advisors or counsellors ought to know about the connection between financial self-efficacy and vulnerable individuals' financial outcomes. Specifically, they must understand that people with lower degree of financial self-efficacy are most probably require additional assistance, support, and suggestions to achieve specific tasks, and accomplish their financial goals [53].

Finally, in the more challenging life, the young employees need to have financial stability and more savings for the future. Economic uncertainty due to financial crisis and current COVID 19 pandemic have given a huge impact on daily lives of the people, as well as their finance. Again, enough financial knowledge, practising good financial behaviour, as well as having high self-efficacy and self-coping is significant to evade from the financial vulnerability. As a young employee, high expectations are given by employer to successfully accomplish assigned task productively. Thus, psychological well-being as well as financial well-being is crucial to attain the maximum triumph in career and have an eloquent life.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Several limitations are encountered with the current study. The study is limited to the respondents from 11 Credit Counselling and Debt Management (AKPK) branches in the Peninsular Malaysia, and thus, it has confronted the constraint of location-feedbacks. Therefore, a nationwide study would be ideal to acquire a more representative outcome of the status of financial vulnerability among Malaysians. Moreover, future studies would acquire data on the work status of the participants with respect to whether the respondent is a permanent employee or is a fixed-term contract employee as this might be effect on respondents' financial vulnerability.

Sampling errors could be occurred when a systematic sampling strategy was used to choose a sample, however, that sample does not represent the appropriate population or general population concerned, and recognised as "sample bias" or "selection bias". Moreover, to gather quantitative information, close ended questionnaire will be used, and it may drive respondents to choose a specific response which was not characterise their real output. Further, due to the self-administered questionnaire, some kind of biasness might be happened. Hence, there is an opportunity to choose the right answer or whatever other answer that reflect their favour as opposed to the genuine practice.

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