

EDUCATION AND CHALLENGES AFFECTING SUB-URBAN YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT: A CASE STUDY IN HULU TERENGGANU, TERENGGANU, MALAYSIA

EDUCAÇÃO E DESAFIOS QUE AFETAM O ENVOLVIMENTO DE JOVENS SUBURBANOS NO EMPREGO: UM ESTUDO DE CASO EM HULU TERENGGANU, TERENGGANU, MALÁSIA

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ABSTRACT

The education of youth employment is a global challenge. This study delves into the intricate education of youth unemployment within suburban areas of Terengganu. The study aims to comprehensively analyse the underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon, exploring the socioeconomic dynamics that shape the employment landscape for young individuals in suburban regions. Through an academic lens, this study examines the multifaceted educations and challenges affecting suburban youth involvement in employment, including personal factors, family influence, and environmental influence. The study employed a qualitative approach, which involved ten informants of youth in Hulu Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia. Drawing upon existing literature and statistical data, the study proposes potential strategies and interventions to mitigate suburban youth unemployment, fostering sustainable economic growth and inclusive development.

Keywords: Education, Youth, Employment, Suburban.

RESUMO

A educação para o emprego dos jovens é um desafio global. Este estudo investiga a intrincada educação sobre o desemprego juvenil nas áreas suburbanas de Terengganu. O estudo visa analisar de forma abrangente os factores subjacentes que contribuem para este fenómeno, explorando as dinâmicas socioeconómicas que moldam o cenário de emprego dos jovens nas regiões suburbanas. Através de uma lente académica, este estudo examina as educações multifacetadas e os desafios que afetam o envolvimento dos jovens suburbanos no emprego, incluindo fatores pessoais, influência familiar e influência ambiental. O estudo empregou uma abordagem qualitativa, que envolveu dez informantes de jovens em Hulu Terengganu, Terengganu, Malásia. Com base na literatura existente e em dados estatísticos, o estudo propõe estratégias e intervenções potenciais para mitigar o desemprego juvenil suburbano, promovendo o crescimento económico sustentável e o desenvolvimento inclusivo.

Palavras-chave: Educação, Juventude, Emprego, Suburbano.

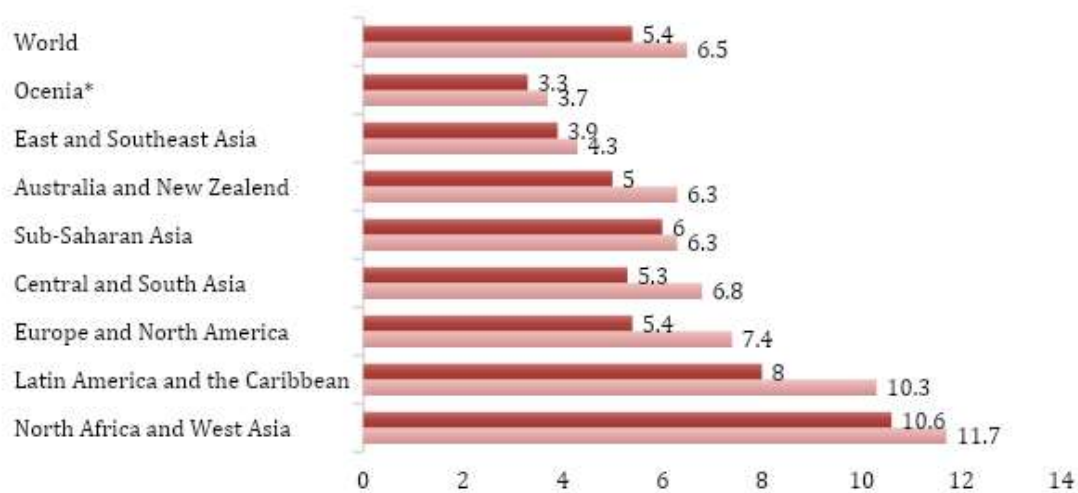
Introduction

Individuals possess distinct aptitudes, talents, and proficiencies that can be harnessed to improve society and the economy. Likewise, it is imperative to consider the plight of the unemployed youth, enabling them to realize their complete capabilities and make valuable contributions to advancing economic growth and development. Young individuals are regarded as invaluable resources for every nation. Therefore, allocating resources towards increasing their development is imperative to guarantee the nation's enduring advancement. The United Nations designates those between the age range of 15 to 25 as youth. However, according to the National Youth Development Policy (1997), the youth age range is 15 to 40. In the context of Malaysia, the demographic segment commonly referred to as "youth" encompasses those between the ages of 15 and 40. However, it is noteworthy that most youth development initiatives and endeavours within the country predominantly target individuals aged 18 to 25.

Based on a 2022 study published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the process of employment recuperation among the youth demographic continues to face delays due to the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2022, the global population of unemployed young individuals is projected to reach 75 million by 2021. This is a notable increase of 6 million compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Furthermore, this figure is anticipated to continue to rise for a minimum of 15 years. The variation in recovery rates among young individuals is contingent upon regional disparities observed among high-income, medium-income, and low-income countries. Based on the Department of Business and Social Affairs (2021) findings, there has been a notable increase in the global unemployment rate, reaching 6.5 percent in 2020. This is a 1.1 percent jump compared to the preceding year (see Figure 1).

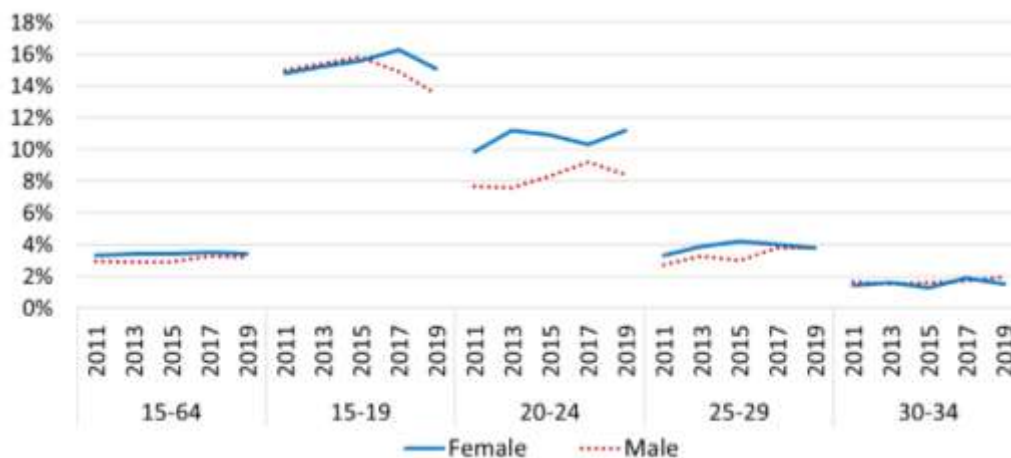
Figure 1 – Youth Unemployment Rate 2019 and 2020 by Continent (%)



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2021).

The youth unemployment rate in Malaysia is significantly above that of other age cohorts. In 2019, the unemployment rates for individuals aged 15-19 and 20-24 were recorded at 14.4% and 9.5% respectively. These rates subsequently decreased to 3.8% for the age group of 25-29 while remaining below 2% for all other age cohorts. The severity of the education is emphasized by the extent of youth unemployment and its significant disparity compared to other demographic groups. The examination of gender and regional determinants unveils additional critical dimensions of unemployment. The unemployment rates for males and females exhibit a notable similarity, except for the 20-24 age range among youth, where a distinct gender disparity becomes evident (see Figure 2).

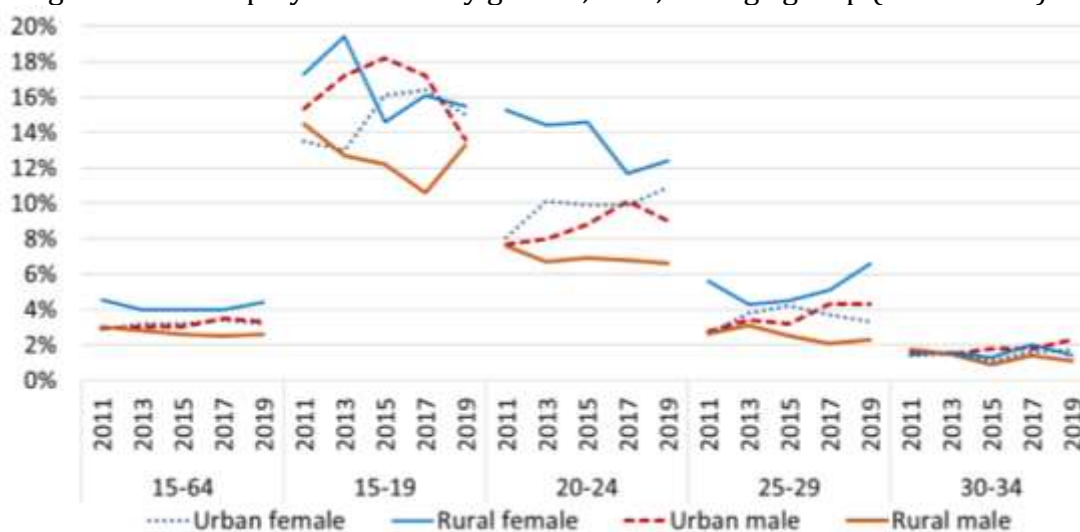
Figure 2 – Unemployment rate by gender and age group (2011-2019)



Source: Department of Statistics (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020).

Regarding spatial distribution, over 80% of Malaysia's labor force resides in urban areas, slightly surpassing the urbanization rate of 76% among the country's total population. There exists a disparity in the levels of youth unemployment observed in urban and rural regions. The trends among those aged 15-19 are not as easily discernible. However, within the age group of 20-24, there has been a noticeable decrease in rural unemployment, accompanied by a simultaneous increase in urban unemployment (see Figure 3). This pattern applies to both males and females.

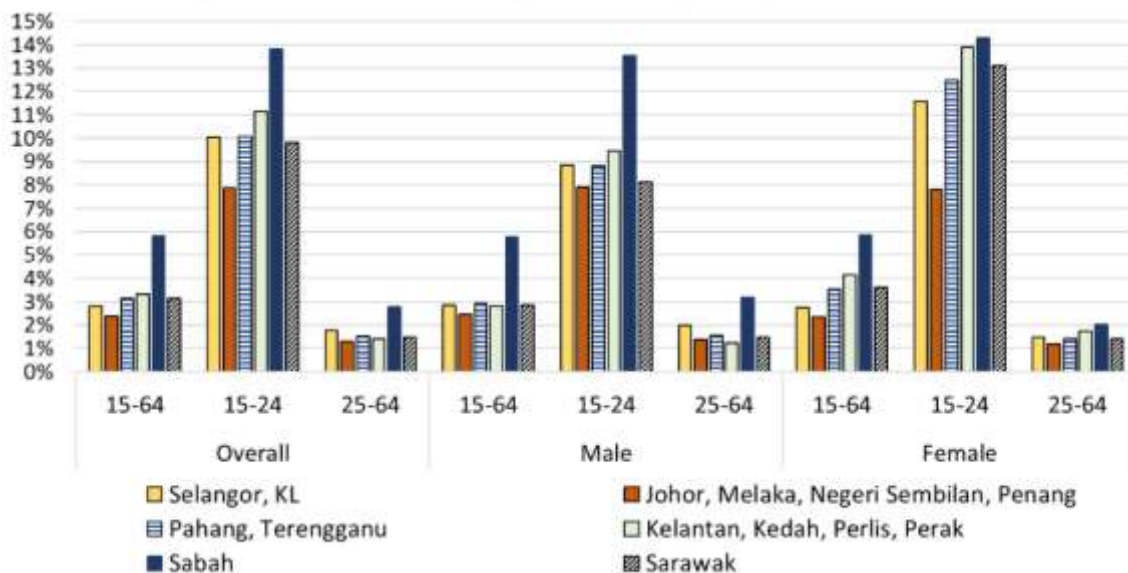
Figure 3 – Unemployment rate by gender, area, and age group (2011-2019)



Source: Department of Statistics (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020).

When examining the labour force distribution across states, some trends become apparent when considering income level and geographic region (see Figure 4). The prevalence of youth unemployment is highest in the state of Sabah, with a rate of 14%. This is closely followed by the Northern Peninsular states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perak, and Perlis, where the rate is 11%. Notably, the Peninsular Southern states and Penang, categorized based on their economic similarities, have the lowest unemployment rates, with an average of approximately 8%. The unemployment rate among young individuals in various regions, including the prominent economic centres of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, is approximately 10%. The province of Sabah exhibits a significantly greater rate of unemployment among males. Conversely, female youth unemployment is observed to be distributed among multiple locations, including the Northern Peninsula and Sarawak. Notably, Pahang, Terengganu, Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur follow in close succession as areas where female youth unemployment is prevalent.

Figure 4 – Unemployment rate by region, gender, and age group (2019)



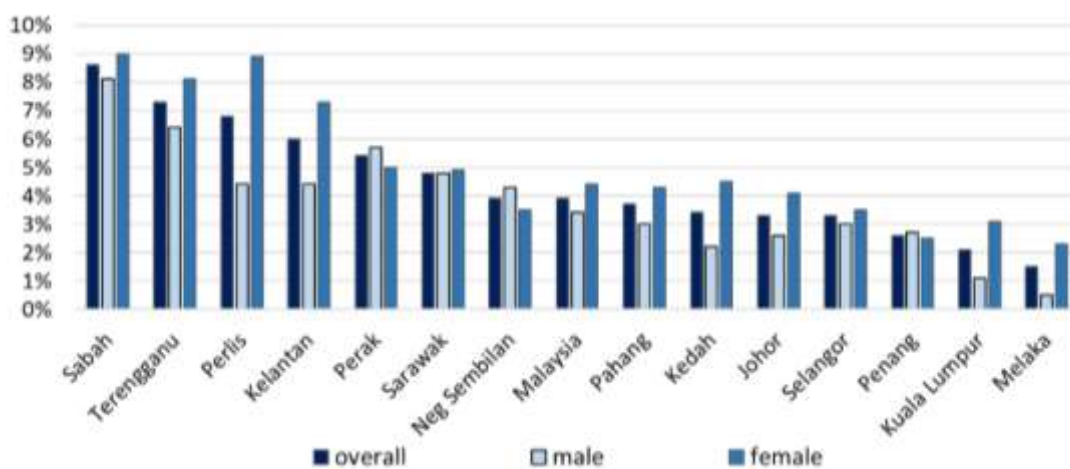
Source: Department of Statistics (2020).

In the subsequent analysis, we will further explore the relationship between unemployment and educational attainment, as depicted in Table 1, from a macroscopic viewpoint (Figure 5). The labour force data from official statistics needs to provide a breakdown based on education and age categories. Therefore,

our analysis is limited to considering graduates as a collective group, regardless of age. However, we can analyse the data based on gender and state, allowing us to identify significant outcome variations. Sabah exhibits the most incredible unemployment rates among graduates, encompassing both males and females. However, it is worth noting that women in Terengganu, Perlis, and Kelantan also have significantly elevated levels of graduate unemployment.

The dynamics of youth employment in suburban regions are influenced by factors such as proximity to urban centres, educational opportunities, skill development, and sociocultural influences. In the case of Hulu Terengganu, a region within the state of Terengganu characterized by a combination of rural and suburban characteristics, there are interesting aspects to explore. This article examines the complex factors hindering or supporting youth employment in Hulu Terengganu.

Figure 5 – Unemployment rate of graduates, by state and gender (2018)



Source: Department of Statistics (2019).

The concept of suburban youth employment refers to the participation of young persons in economic endeavours in suburban areas (BUTLER, 2020). Suburban regions are distinguished by their proximity to urban centres while maintaining specific rural characteristics. Therefore, employment dynamics in these contexts are shaped by a multifaceted interaction of several elements, including the availability of jobs, the quality of educational facilities, the efficiency of

transportation systems, and the prevailing sociocultural norms (VITALE & COTELLA, 2020).

Hulu Terengganu, a suburban region inland from the coastal parts of Terengganu, is a prime example of such a locale. The region's geographical proximity to the state capital, Kuala Terengganu, and the combination of agrarian and industrial activities create a convergence of favourable and limiting factors for young employment. The current economic activities consist of agriculture, fishing, small-scale industry, and retail, which provide unique opportunities for the involvement of the younger population.

The young job environment in Hulu Terengganu is significantly shaped by cultural norms and societal expectations, which play a crucial role in influencing professional ambitions and choices. The transfer of traditional values between generations and the changing paradigms of modernization contribute to a dynamic conflict that influences the professional paths of young individuals in the region.

Literature Review

According to mounting evidence, youth unemployment is becoming a more significant education and challenge than adult unemployment (MANPOWER GROUP, 2012). While both adolescent and adult labour participants may have similar possibilities and challenges to employment, youth may encounter these barriers more significantly and face extra restraints. The global education of youth unemployment is increasingly manifesting in suburban areas, warranting comprehensive scrutiny. While urban unemployment has often dominated discourse, the unique intricacies of suburban youth unemployment demand a distinct analytical lens. This article investigates the educations that limit young people's access to job prospects in Hulu Terengganu, Terengganu.

Most of the material is in Africa. Much of the African literature agrees that slow progress in the economy's structural transformation toward a modern, export-oriented enterprise sector has resulted in limited economic opportunities and weak job creation (BAAH-BOATENG, 2016; FOX & THOMLIN, 2016; BETCHERMAN &

KHAN, 2015). According to Baah-Boateng's (2016) African study, the quality of economic growth (as assessed by the share of agricultural and manufacturing value added to total national output) has a considerable negative effect on youth unemployment. Growth is mainly driven by natural resource exploitation and capital-intensive service sectors that do not promote labour absorption or youth employment (BAAH-BOATENG, 2014).

Compared to Asia or Latin America, a low proportion of the labour force is employed in private enterprises (FOX & THOMAS, 2016). East Asia has undergone a more labour-intensive transformation, with labour-intensive manufacturing and services accounting for a more significant part of national production and providing adequate employment (BETCHERMAN & KHAN, 2015; GRANT, 2012). Literature from various parts of the world (Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa; Eastern Europe, and Central Asia) finds that a lack of formal jobs (due to economic structures that do not encourage job creation) is a significant barrier to youth economic opportunities (SEE MORRE, 2015; MALÍK & AWADALLAH, 2013; NKECHÍ ET AL., 2012; ELDER ET AL., 2015). Although the degree of influence may vary (BAAH-BOATENG, 2016), this young employment education is considered a component of overall employment educations (FOX & THOMLIN, 2016).

To differing degrees, nations have challenges related to unemployment, job quality, and working poverty. These challenges are compounded by technological advancements and shifts in labor markets, which create new prospects primarily for skilled young workers. However, these developments also contribute to general uncertainty and insecurity (ILO, 2017). In recent years, the global youth unemployment rate, referring to individuals aged 15-24, has remained at approximately 13%, roughly three times higher than the jobless rate observed among adults aged 25-64. The Southeast Asia and Pacific regions exhibit a relatively lower level of young unemployment, averaging around 12%. However, compared to the adult population, the youth unemployment rate is over six times higher, indicating a more unfavourable situation in relative terms.

In 2019, Malaysia resembled the regional trend by experiencing a youth unemployment rate of 10.5%, which surpassed the adult unemployment rate of

1.7% by more than sixfold. The young unemployment rate has had an upward trend relative to the national average during the past decade. Historical evidence indicates that the younger demographic has experienced a more pronounced impact on job losses during prior economic downturns. Specifically, during the recessions in 1985-86, 1997-98, and 2008-09, youth unemployment rates exhibited a more substantial surge than the overall average (CHENG & WELSH, 2020). Young people are more likely to have adverse effects due to the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Location and Work Mobility

Rural youth face several challenges, including limited career prospects, financial disparities, and gender-based employment barriers compared to their urban counterparts. In rural areas, those belonging to the B40 socioeconomic group (earning less than RM4,850) tend to constitute the majority. These individuals need help with attempting to enter the labour market, including limited access to information regarding job prospects, a need for more personal connections for employment chances, and comparatively lower salaries. According to Shakur et al. (2020), individuals from rural areas with lower education levels tend to secure jobs earlier than their urban counterparts. There is a stronger propensity among urban adolescents to pursue post-secondary education to enhance their long-term employment prospects, particularly in managerial and professional positions.

The dearth of employment prospects and the prevalence of rural poverty contribute to a proclivity among young individuals with productive capacities to seek labour mobility or migrate toward larger urban centres. The occurrence of active youth groups migrating from rural to urban regions in pursuit of employment opportunities is a well-established phenomenon. The rural-to-urban movement originated during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. The phenomenon of population movement to urban centres, particularly Kuala Lumpur, has witnessed a steady rise in Malaysia from the 1980s to the present, as Hussain et al. (2018) noted.

Work mobility is a phenomenon that arises in reaction to emerging employment prospects, particularly with the availability of social networks.

According to Estruch et al. (2019), the migration of young individuals to urban areas can be attributed to limited employment opportunities and inadequate earnings in rural regions. According to Shakur et al. (2020), the fast urbanization process has resulted in a notable rise in the influx of migrants to metropolitan areas. Migrants residing in urban areas possess significant characteristics that differentiate them from rural youth immigrants with little educational attainment and lack adequate skills. According to Ramos (2019), the movement of urban youth is driven by the desire to enhance their social standing and personal development over an extended period. In the European context, there has been a noticeable shift in recent times when women exhibit a higher propensity for emigration than men, as highlighted by Williams et. Al (2018). This tendency represents a departure from previous periods, as Kyrou et al. (2020) indicated.

Age, Gender, and Marital Status

The study conducted by Paulos et al. (2012) examined many variables related to employment, including demographic parameters such as gender, age, nationality, marital status, and dependency, as well as job experience and job-seeking activities. There is a disparity in age between individuals who enter the workforce at 18 after completing their education and those who possess seven years of job experience.

In the meantime, individuals who discontinue their education at 23 possess two years of professional experience (APRILINDA ET AL., 2020) should they pursue employment in the same occupational domain at 25. Furthermore, Tåhlin and Westerman (2020) assert that the assessment of job competitiveness based on age disparity can be effectively conducted by considering the candidate's work experience and job position as a reliable indicator. Regarding gender, the Ministry of Finance (2019) has expressed the need to enhance women's labor participation rates to address labour shortages and achieve a more balanced workforce. Previous studies (WULANDARĪ & KASSĪM, 2019; KAMARUDDĪN ET AL., 2021) have indicated that women are more likely to participate in the labour force when confronted with familial obligations. Therefore, it may be argued that demographic variables such as age, gender, and marital status have the potential to influence unemployment.

Family Background

The determination of the socioeconomic status of young individuals is frequently based on factors such as their parents' occupational standing, educational attainment, or income level (LÖGDBERG ET AL., 2018). According to the research conducted by Zwysen and Longhi (2018), a family's socioeconomic status can be determined by four distinct occupational categories. These categories include high-class jobs such as management and professional roles, middle-class jobs such as supervisory and technical positions, working-class jobs such as part-day or daily work, and self-employment.

Moreover, parents' socioeconomic status has the potential to exert both direct and indirect effects on the labour market. For instance, parents with higher incomes are more likely to impart their "soft skills" to their children, which can subsequently influence their evaluation in the labour market. According to Lee et al. (2019), young parents' social networks and socioeconomic standing can influence the employability of individuals engaged in job searching. The perspectives presented by Lee et al. (2019) continue to hold significance within the Malaysian context, particularly concerning unemployment among academically qualified youth of working age. Notably, a significant proportion of individuals belonging to the B40 (low-income) category who have completed their education face unemployment in Malaysia (MOF, 2019).

Education, Training and Work Experience

The job vacancy-to-job seeker ratio for individuals with university and college degrees has demonstrated improvement, albeit needs to be improved. Many individuals have completed their education yet still need employment opportunities (SHAKUR, 2020). Based on a report published by the Ministry of Finance in 2019, the total number of job vacancies in Malaysia amounted to 1.4 million. These vacancies were categorized into two main types: unskilled employment, which accounted for 86.9% of the total, and semi-skilled positions, which constituted 8.4%. In contrast, the proportion of job openings available to individuals possessing

university qualifications and belonging to skilled groups was a mere 4.7%, representing 64,402 out of the total.

According to Tåhlin and Westerman (2020), the recruiting criteria exhibit variability based on the skill level of each participant. The individuals are specifically requested to emphasize the significance of education and job experience as the fundamental factors informing their decision-making process. Employers strategically assign prospective employees based on their suitability for fulfilling job requirements. Work transitions generally occur when individuals endeavour to secure a position that aligns with their specific abilities or knowledge (BOWYER ET AL., 2023). Tåhlin and Westerman (2020) suggest that disparities in educational classifications are frequently regarded as markers of productive capability, influencing individuals' positioning about job candidates. The maintenance of comprehensive data records about access to resources and economic factors is of utmost importance to facilitate the recognition of both present unemployment rates and work experience acquired during university studies by employers as points of reference (MIAN, 2019). Stuth and Jahn (2020) assert that a significant barrier impeding young individuals from securing employment is the absence of work experience. In this context, a trend exists where many young individuals are discontinuing their educational pursuits to pursue opportunities for practical work experience.

According to Trusty et al. (2019), businesses need help in accurately assessing the productivity of potential job applicants during the hiring process. This is due to their reliance on interpreting unemployment as an indicator of weak productivity rather than having direct visibility into an applicant's productivity. According to Ostermann et al. (2022), employers tend to prefer job applicants who possess work experience when comparing them to unemployed job seekers. The significance of work experience cannot be understated as it significantly impacts an employer's inclination to hire individuals as part of their workforce.

In addition to prior experience, skill proficiency is also a significant contributor to the prevalence of unemployment among individuals who have completed university education. According to a study conducted by the World Bank

and the Talent Corporation, it has been shown that only 10% of enterprises possess the expertise required for the development of a university curriculum or program (MoF, 2019). Kruppe and Lang (2018) have reported introducing various public sponsorship training programs designed to enhance the human capital of job seekers and facilitate their reintegration into the labor market. The job seeker participating in this program will decide the most suitable employment for their circumstances. Furthermore, individuals currently without employment and seeking job opportunities should prioritize examining job and industry attributes to enhance the demand for competent labor. This approach will ultimately facilitate the successful acquisition of new employment positions upon completing relevant courses or training programs. Tåhlin and Westerman (2020) assert that low-skilled employment holds significance for young individuals as it serves as a means for them to enter the labour market.

Regarding job acquisition, unemployed individuals and those with prior work experience possess a considerable reservoir of information, skills, and talents, sometimes called "skills." The amalgamation of individual decision-making about education, training, and work experience is a critical factor in this phenomenon (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2014). The labour market is increasingly intensifying the commercialization of skill demand, not only in the private sector but also in the government sector, to tackle employment difficulties (SCHOTTER, 2022).

Other factors, such as a deficiency in career training, can impede the ability of a job seeker to secure a suitable employment opportunity after completing their education. Additional variations in the competitiveness of minority graduates, which are not accounted for in this study, include factors like participation in co-curricular activities and the development of intangible talents that may not be readily observable (ZWYSEN & LONGHÍ, 2018). Before entering the profession, it is crucial to undergo training to get work experience relevant to one's desired occupation.

Methodology

A. Location

This study was conducted around the Hulu district of Terengganu, Terengganu. To protect privacy rights, all informants identified in this study have been coded as IR01, HT; IR02, HT; IR03, HT; IR04, HT; IR05, HT; IR06, HT; IR0, HT; IR08, HT; IR09, HT dan IR10, HT.

B. Sample

A total of ten youth who are not involved in work, local leaders, and agencies involved with youth were selected to be interviewed in this study. They have different educational backgrounds. All informants are Malays between the ages of 15 and 40. Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics about informants. Most of them do not have a permanent job and are unemployed.

Table 1 – Summary of descriptive statistics about informants

No.	Informant	Name	Age	Status	Employment Status	Education Level	Skill and Training
1	<i>IR01, HT</i>	Muhammad Fakhrul	25	Single	No Permanent Job	SPM	Akademi Bina Malaysia (ABM)
2	<i>IR02, HT</i>	Aina	26	Single	No Permanent Job	Bachelor's Degree	Some
3	<i>IR03, HT</i>	Arif	20	Single	No Permanent Job	SPM	None
4	<i>IR04, HT</i>	Muhammad Fadhil	26	Single	No Permanent Job	SPM	Akademi Bina Malaysia (ABM)
5	<i>IR05, HT</i>	Mohammad Faris	24	Single	Unemployed	SPM	Akademi Bina Malaysia (ABM)
6	<i>IR06, HT</i>	Muhammad Hafizi	17	Single	Unemployed	UPSR	None
7	<i>IR07, HT</i>	Alya	20	Single	No Permanent Job	Diploma	None
8	<i>IR08, HT</i>	Nurleen Husmaira	23	Married	Unemployed	STPM	None
9	<i>IR09, HT</i>	Mohamad Fahmi	27	Married	No Permanent Job	SPM	None
10	<i>IR10, HT</i>	Wan Mohamad Izzat	20	Single	Unemployed	SPM	Some

Source: Authors results.

A. Research instruments and data collection procedures

Semi-structured questions for focus group discussions were used in this qualitative study. The interview session was conducted in one month and was located around the Hulu Terengganu area. An estimated time of one and half hours was used for this focus group discussion interview session. However, it depends on the informants' responses to the research questions to encourage them to comment further on their answers. All interview responses were written and audio recorded

to obtain as accurate information as possible when reviewing the data and writing the final report.

B. Data analysis

The researcher manually translated the voice recordings collected during the interview session into written form in Microsoft Word software. Before assigning the appropriate codes, each transcription needs to be read repeatedly to understand the informant's statements in the interviews that have been held. The data were classified to determine themes. Some of the best transcriptions have been selected for reporting.

Result

Overall, the data collected resulted in three main themes, described in detail as follows:

A) Theme 1: Personal Factors

Based on the script presented, the informants facing problems engaging in work are caused by themselves. Examples of the following scripts:

Researcher: Is it because you need to know and have information about the latest job opportunities or vacancies you are not working on?

IR01, HT: Yes, that is right, I do not know where to look for job opportunities.

IR03, HT: I am the same. I have been looking for work but cannot find it. I need to find the right platform to find a job.

Researcher: Have you ever felt discriminated against regarding your level of academic achievement in getting a job, such as interviews and so on?

IR02, HT: Yes, it is true, during the interview, it is challenging. Most employers want people with work experience.

IR04, HT: Yes. once. Employers often ask about work experience when we are fresh graduates and have no work experience. It takes much work to get a job today.

Researcher: Have you ever been involved with a training or skills course from any agency? Do you need more training and skills to perform work?

IR06, HT: Yes. I do not choose a job too much, but due to the lack of training and skills, I am afraid and embarrassed when the task given exceeds my ability level.

IR08, HT: Before I got married and after finishing STPM, I worked in my aunt's restaurant for more than a year. Regarding training or skills, I never participated in any course.

IR09, HT: Never engaged with skills. I used to feel that I needed more training and skills, making it difficult to do a job.

Researcher: In your opinion, is educational qualification the main factor in finding a job that suits you?

IR02, HT: Yes, it is true that now people look at the high academic qualifications. If the certificate is low, there is much competition.

IR09, HT: Yes, that is right. Considering the high cost of living today, this has forced me to choose a suitable job that matches my educational qualifications.

Researcher: What challenges or constraints do you usually face while applying for a job?

IR01, HT: My challenge, which makes it difficult for them to get a job now, is that employers want those with high experience and certificates. I usually ask for a job, and most of the time, I find an employer who wants something like that.

IR02, HT: Like me, only a few people want to give jobs if they do not have experience. In addition, the certificate could be better. I even asked for a KAFA job once. Still, it was hard to get it because there were many competitors, and the certification needed to be higher.

IR04, HT: I have tried looking for a job, but there is none. The challenge is interview time. Employers indeed want a higher certificate with experience.

IR09, HT: The challenge of getting a job is a competitive culture in the world of workers. For example, the level of education or experience that an individual has.

This explains that the informants in this study have various personal factors that can influence why some do not have a permanent job.

B) Theme 2: Family Influence

Overall, informants face problems engaging in work due to the influence of their families. Examples of the following scripts:

Researcher: In your opinion, does the family's socioeconomic status affect the field of work you engage in?

IR08, HT: It depends, and it most likely affects the current times because, even if we look at the current situation, it is true that someone, especially a young person, wants to work in a field that suits their family's economic level. So, it really affects.

Researcher: Do you get encouragement and support from your family to get or find a suitable job?

IR08, HT: God willing, if permitted, I will look for a suitable job, but for now, I am more comfortable being a full-time housewife. I have a small child and want to focus on caring for him. In addition, my husband works as a truck driver, so I need more time to work and care for the children simultaneously. After all, according to my husband, he can still care for and provide for my family. Therefore, my husband does not like me to work.

Researcher: Okay, the next question is about work and family. In your opinion, does your parents' education level affect the field of work that suits you?

IR09, HT: Yes, my parents influenced my field of work. Since childhood, I have been sitting with my grandmother, but my mother and father have good jobs.

Researcher: Does your lifestyle in the family influence you to find a job?

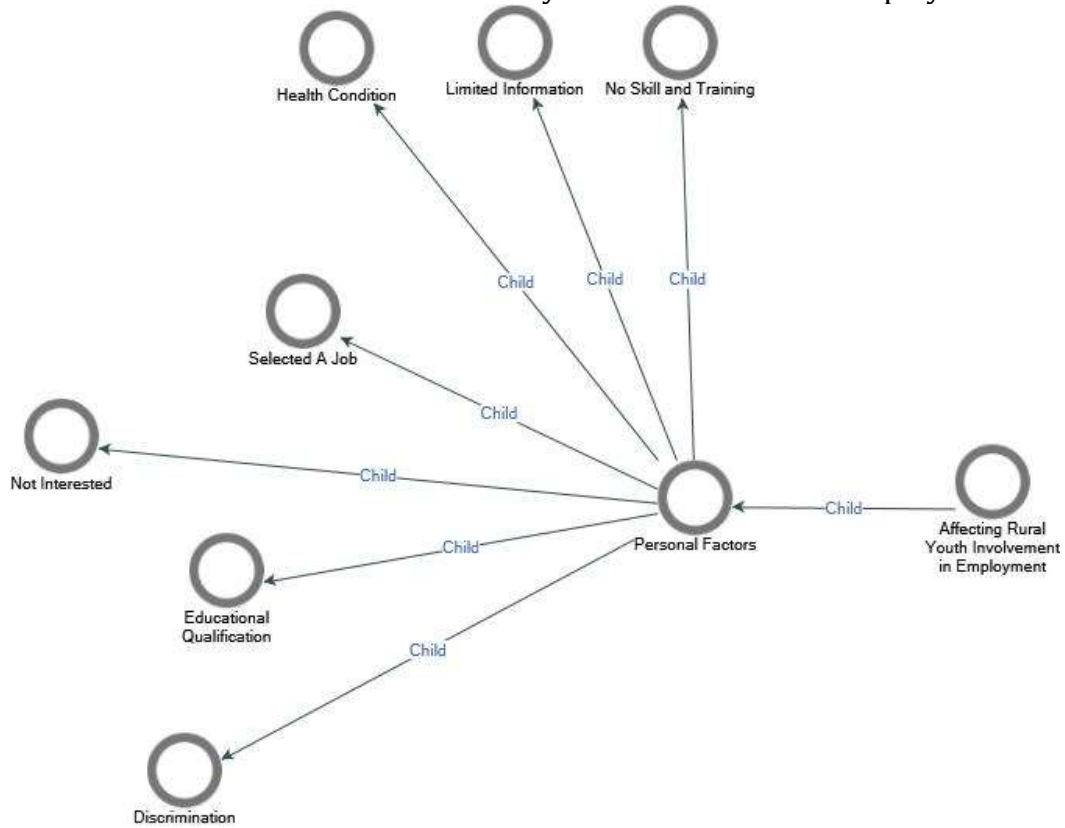
IR01, HT: It is also possible to influence. Family is also challenging for people. So, it affected my work.

IR02, HT: Yes, influence. With a job, I must help my family.

IR04, HT: Yes, I must help the family with a job.

IR09, HT: Yes. The luxurious lifestyle influenced me to find my own money and have a decent spending income.

Figure 6 – Personal factor that affects rural youth involvement in employment



Source: Authors results

C) Theme 3: Environment Influence

The environment also has an impact on their decision to work, according to the script analysis. Examples of the following scripts:

Researcher: How does the family trust you in finding a job?

IR09, HT: My relatives don't believe I can work because they only give my mother and father lousy news.

Researcher: In your opinion, do the cultural factors of the place of residence influence your decision to look for a job?

IR09, HT: Yes, in rural areas, it is challenging to get a job because there is no developed infrastructure like in the city.

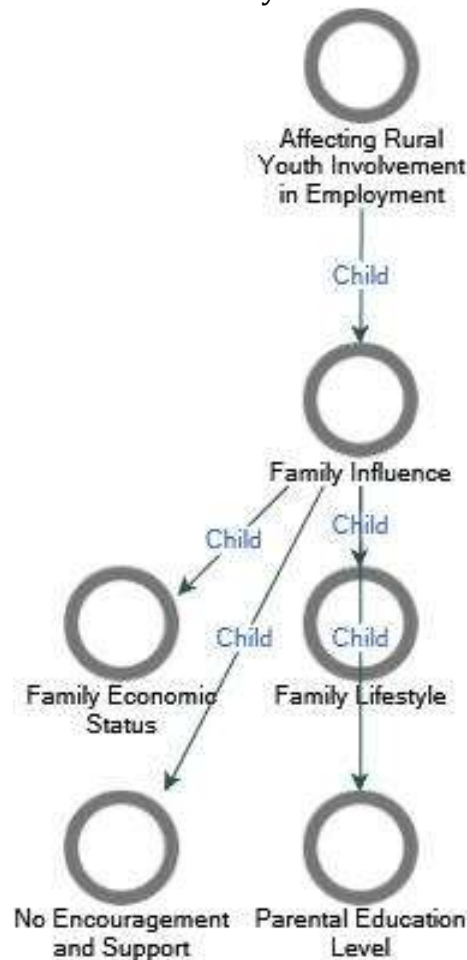
Researcher: Does your family not encourage you to find a proper job?

IR09, HT: Yes. The attitude of people around me is always dissatisfying because I have experience getting an easy job. So, I was often beaten, which ultimately affected my mental health.

Researcher: Next, in your view, are infrastructure facilities such as transport system facilities a factor in finding a job?

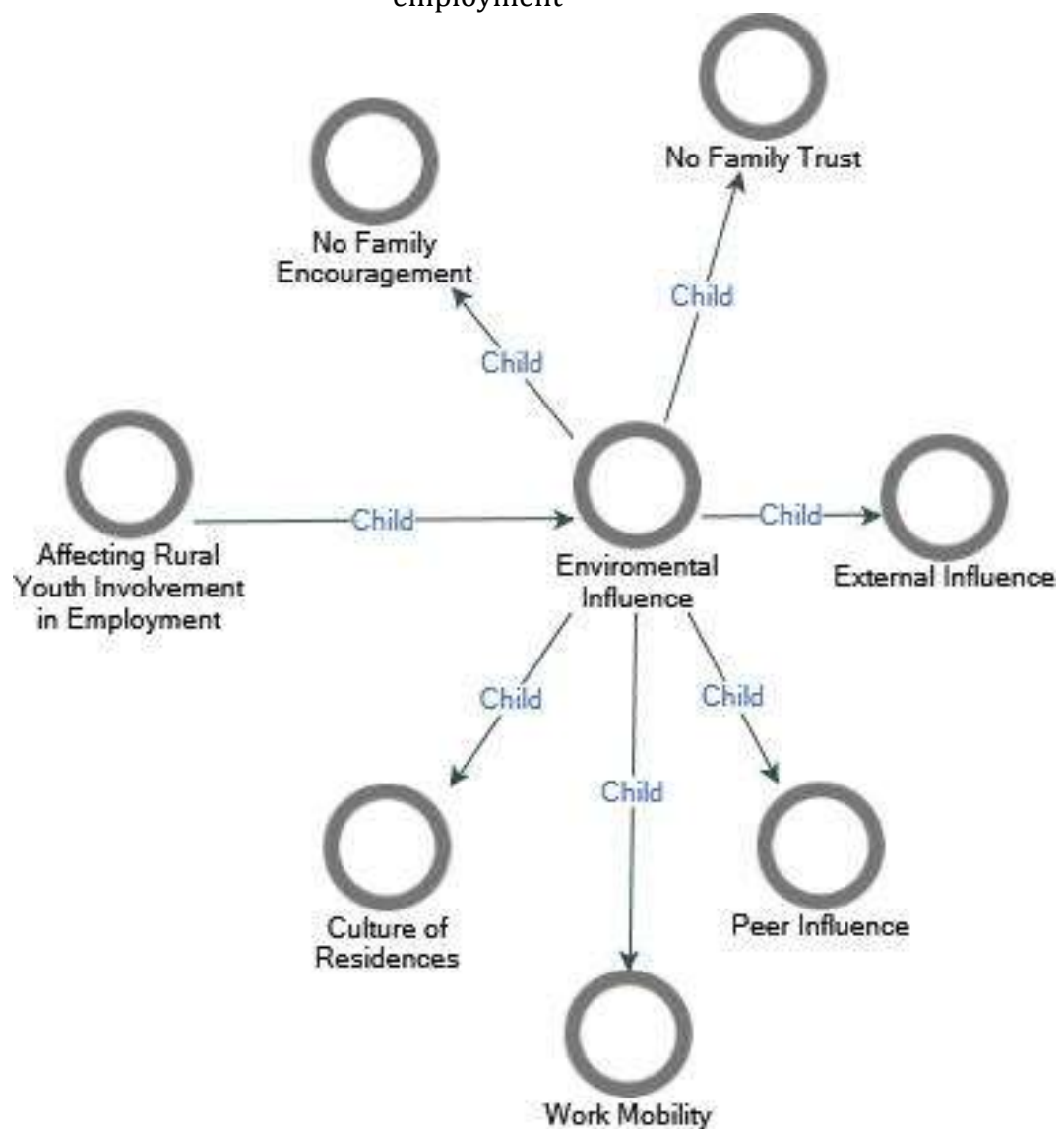
IR09, HT: Yes. There needs to be transportation to work. So, I need help to move in and get a job.

Figure 7 – Family influence that affects rural youth involvement in employment



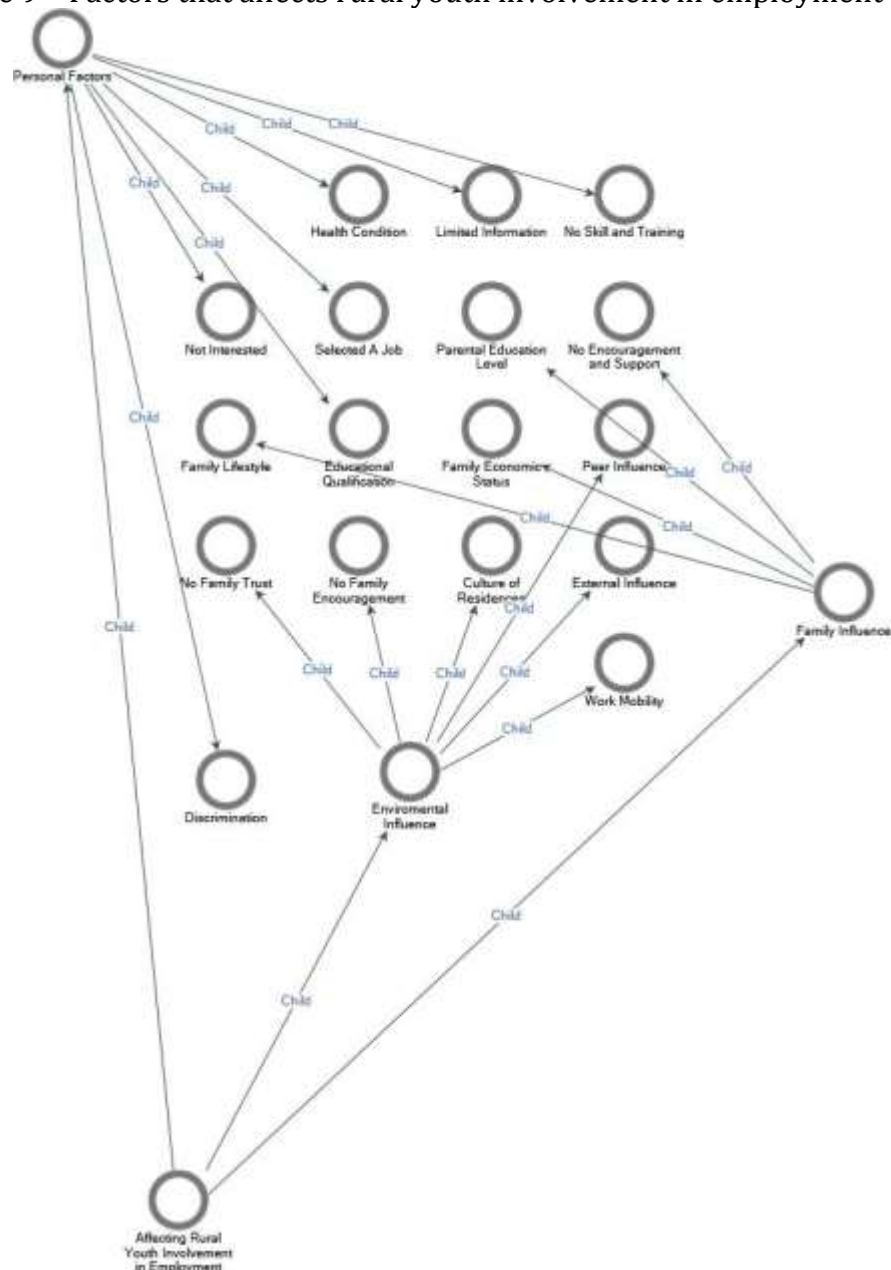
Source: Authors results.

Figure 8 – Environmental influence that affects rural youth involvement in employment



Source: Authors results.

Figure 9 – Factors that affects rural youth involvement in employment



Source: Authors results.

Discussion

One of the pressing concerns in Hulu Terengganu is the high rate of youth unemployment and underemployment. A deeper exploration of the underlying causes, such as inadequate skills, limited access to quality education, and a lack of professional development opportunities, is crucial. By gaining insights into these factors, policymakers and stakeholders can design targeted programs that bridge the skills gap and ensure that the youth are better prepared for the job market.

Educational disparities further exacerbate the challenges faced by the youth in Hulu Terengganu. Limited access to quality education due to economic constraints, geographical remoteness, and inadequate infrastructure creates a divide that hinders young individuals from acquiring the necessary skills for gainful employment. Recognizing these disparities is a pivotal step toward implementing initiatives that promote equitable access to education and consequently enhance the employability of the region's youth.

The reliance on specific industries within the region can lead to a need for more job opportunities for the youth. Furthermore, a disconnect between the skills imparted through education and the local job market demands adds to the employment challenges. A thorough examination of this education can guide efforts to diversify the economy and align educational curricula with industry needs, fostering a more balanced and adaptable workforce.

Gender and cultural dynamics often play a significant role in shaping employment opportunities for the youth. Young women may encounter unique barriers stemming from traditional norms, societal expectations, and restricted access to specific sectors (ABU HASSAN, 2019). Acknowledging these influences is vital for formulating policies that empower all youth, regardless of gender, and enable them to contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

The digital age has transformed the job landscape, requiring individuals to possess digital literacy skills. However, many young people in Hulu Terengganu need access to digital resources and training, creating a digital divide that hampers their job prospects. Recognizing this divide and implementing measures to enhance

digital literacy is imperative for ensuring equal access to employment opportunities and equipping the youth with skills relevant to the modern job market.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the challenges faced by the youth in Hulu Terengganu regarding employment opportunities are multifaceted and interconnected. Recognizing the significance of understanding these challenges cannot be overstated. By gaining insights into the factors contributing to youth unemployment and underemployment, stakeholders can collaboratively work towards developing solutions that encompass improved education access, industry diversification, gender empowerment, and digital inclusion. In doing so, Hulu Terengganu can harness the potential of its youth population, driving local development and contributing to the broader growth of the region and the nation.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) (FRGS/1/2021/SS0/UNISZA/03/1/RR423).

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