

Financial Stresses upon Urban Dwellers : Stipulations from Ipoh

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Abstract

The population in the urban setting has gone through numerous challenges and a primary example would be the financial constraints that were ingrained upon the population. This paper denotes the financial stresses that were inherent upon the population in Ipoh and several approaches were parlayed to decrease these financial stresses. The standpoints from the people from Ipoh were also acquired where countless quotations were recorded. These quotations were helpful in identifying the coarse reasons of the financial stresses that beckoned upon the population in Ipoh.

Keywords : Financial Stress, Urban, Income, Economy

Introduction

Financial stresses are a norm to individuals that are experiencing financial deficiencies due to their incomes which could not fulfill their wants and needs. The urban settings at prominent cities are harsh where food and daily expenses are high in contrast to rural settings. This had been a point of contention for city dwellers which had migrated to the cities from their original rural settings. According to Madhu and et. al., migrations toward the cities had posed several predicaments upon the cities such as rising crimes and over crowding [1]. Within this context, it is thus imperative for authorities to control such movements in order to mitigate the predicaments.

There were statistical delineations that indicated that crimes were caused by individuals that were deprived of adequate incomes and this had propelled them to acquire incomes by illegal means. Furthermore, this is a vicious cycle which was passed down to future

generations and breaking this cycle requires concerted efforts by numerous parties. Gumus indicated that there were several determinants of urban crimes and these determinants, such as inequality of incomes and overpopulated areas, should be dealt swiftly and intensely in order to grow the nation [2].

Harridon stated that communities in Kuala Lumpur had been induced with elongated financial stresses due to several factors such as unaffordable housings and high cost of living and it is the responsibility of the government to develop economic plans that are viable for the masses [3]. There were several initiatives by the authorities, but these initiatives should be elongated and able to reach the core communities of the urban settings.

Financial Stresses

Financial stresses are denoted as financial hardships that beckoned upon individuals or communities for a period of time. These financial stresses have been detrimental to the communities where the living standards at these communities were subpar and furthermore these stresses had affected the health and educational statures of the urban populations. There were individuals or families without proper healthcare insurance, and they could not afford to make the necessary payments to gain proper and adequate healthcare. There were also families that could not afford to send offsprings to educational institutions due to the financial stresses and this subsequently would degrade the future of these children as most employments require any form of educational experiences.

A study by Sabri and et. al. indicated that youths in the urban settings are left without prominent financial savings as they were not financial savvy [4]. This is a predicament that would be elongated if these youths were not educated at an early stage as financial wastages would perhaps be a norm to them and this should be avoided. The urban lifestyle is much more expensive than its counterpart which is the rural lifestyle. This plays a hand in depleting the incomes gained by the youths at the urban setting.

There were several programs that were introduced by governments throughout the world to alleviate the financial statures of the populations that lived in the urban settings. For example, Jung and et. al. indicated that the government of the United States of America had established several economic programs to aid the poor at several hot spots located at the southern parts of the United States of America [5]. These programs, while good in nature, had mixed results where some had not eradicated poverty in an effective manner. This distinctively posed a question whether due diligence was applied comprehensively to address the ineffectiveness of the programs.

Urban Setting

The populations in the urban settings were faced with numerous financial obstacles due to the inherent attributes of the urban settings. Urban settings usually offer jobs and employments which enticed rural folks and subsequently there were massive migrations from the rural areas to the urban areas. However, there was a mismatched between supply and demand. The demands of employment are inexistence but the number of job seekers originating from the rural areas had exceeded the demands and thus unemployment is on the rise. Without work, the unemployed individuals would be in financial distressed due to the high cost of living and these individuals do not have the income to facilitate the cost of living.

Saari and et. al. stated that migration from rural to urban areas does not guarantee employment and the increased of cost of living had impacted the urban dwellers even more [6]. Saari and et. al. also stipulated that there was an increase of urban-to-urban migration and this is due to several factors such as career progression, family, and environment. The urban setting is very competitive, and everyone is competing with each other to graze the hierarchical pyramid.

Harridon had stipulated that there were challenges in the rural setting and this had led to the migration of individuals to cities and towns, but the challenges still persisted even though there were alterations of the environments [7]. This begets the question : is migration a good approach to alleviate the economic stature of an individual? Several economic evidences pointed that, in totality, the results were mixed and a “successful” economic migration depends upon the confirmation that the employment was already reserved for the migrated individual. Migrating to the urban setting without any job reservation would leave the individual susceptible to the high cost of living and other harsh financial settings.

Urban Challenges

Economic challenges are detrimental to the holistic growth of the nation. Urban dwellers that are in constant economic constraints would actually contribute to the degradation of the cities in terms of environmental pollution, overcrowding, stiff competition to acquire employments, massive crimes, homelessness, panhandling, and other social ills. Obtaining abodes in the cities is expensive if one compares with the rural setting. According to Chen and et. al., the cost of housing differs from one area to another, and it is a norm for abodes to be more expensive in cities than rural locations [8]. The migration of individuals and families to cities had seen an increase of predicaments where hordes of the population

competed to acquire housings at bargain prices. There were those that were left homeless as they could not afford the rental fees let alone to purchase an abode.

The job market at certain cities is saturated and this had procreated an extreme oversupply of workers that could not obtain employments. Faced with this rigid predicament, there were individuals that resorted to gain employments in the gig economy, but this would not offer a long-term financial security as the jobs in the gig economy are usually within a temporary basis and there were no possible increments with regards to the salary. Hence, there were cases where those that had ended their tenures in the gig economy had a harsh and tedious time paying their rental fees, and eventually there were cases of mental degradation among them.

Some urban dwellers resorted to panhandling which is begging for money or food. This is a precarious situation where the individuals are perceived negatively, but prodding further one can identify the core reasons for panhandling which are distressed economic situation, unable to find employment, homelessness, health problems, simplistic way to gain financial means, and others. Hence, authorities should be vigilant of the core predicaments and devise a strategic approach to tackle the core reasons instead of focusing upon artificial reasons.

Standpoints from Ipoh

Data and information were collected from individuals residing in Ipoh. Ipoh is a city in the state of Perak, and it is one of the cities in Malaysia which has a vibrant economic stature. The data and information are tabulated in Table 1. 328 respondents had responded to the statements given to them. The responses were Likert Scale Responses with 5 options to choose upon. The options are : Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

The respondents are from various backgrounds and their age ranges from 19 years old till 67 years old. Their occupations are mixed, from professionals to gig workers, and also unemployed individuals. Business owners were also part of the respondents, where their businesses ranged from small to medium businesses. The respondents were males and females. The respondents residential stay at Ipoh ranges from 2 years till 67 years.

Table 1. Responses from Individuals Residing in Ipoh

| Statement | Responses | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 1. I am not financially stable | 294 | 16 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. I was able to save money every month | 0 | 85 | 16 | 14 | 213 |
| 3. Paying rent or mortgage is difficult | 267 | 12 | 45 | 4 | 0 |
| 4. There should be more economic and financial programs to aid the people | 298 | 16 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. Living in the urban setting is mentally challenging | 236 | 42 | 38 | 12 | 0 |

Several quotes from the respondents were gained and 5 quotes are stated in this paper as shown below. These quotes provided valuable insights upon the plights of the urban dwellers in Ipoh.

1st Quote - “Living in the city is arduous and I’m experiencing financial constraint constantly”

2nd Quote – “There should be more financial assistance to aid the population of the city”

3rd Quote – “We had gone through financial hardship, and we hope there are programs to help us”

4th Quote – “The assistance from the government had help me a lot and I’m thankful for it”

5th Quote – “I can clearly see the differences between the rural and urban environments, and the urban setting is fast paced which is mentally challenging sometimes”

With regards to Table 1, 294 respondents strongly agreed with statement 1 while no one disagreed with it. Statement 1 touched upon financial stability and almost all respondents indicated that they were not financially stable. The urban setting which is fast paced and expensive in terms of living and housings had degraded the financial statures of those living there. It is not surprising that the respondents responded in a negative connotation with regards to their financial stability.

Statement 2 prodded the respondents pursuant to their monthly monetary saving. Majority of the respondents were not able to save their monetary acquirements monthly, and if this persisted, the respondents would be left with a financial trajectory which is not favourable to them in the near and long term future. 85 of the respondents indicated that they were able to save their monthly stipend and this is financially prudent as their savings could be utilized for basic necessities when they had reached their golden age.

Statement 3 is pursuant to the housing situation of the respondents. 267 respondents stated that they are having difficulties in paying for their rents or mortgages. Only 4 respondents indicated that they do not have difficulties in paying rents or mortgages. The difficulties of the respondents are plausibly due to the fact that the incomes of the respondents did not commensurate with their total monthly expenses. There should be a citywide study to gauge the rent and mortgage value that beckons upon the residents of Ipoh and to determine whether this value is appropriate to the population of Ipoh with regards to their income level.

Pursuant to Statement 4, 298 respondents strongly agreed that there should be more financial and economic programs to aid the populations that reside in cities. Not one respondent disagreed with this. The financial and economic programs would ensure that the population is financially stable and able to build their wealth so that it could sustain them in the golden years. The authorities should develop programs that would educate the population in terms of financial freedom, and methodologies should be developed and utilized to ensure the population is aware of the dangers related to financial hardships.

Statement 5 gauged the respondents pursuant to their mental capacities where they were asked whether urban setting is mentally challenging for them. 236 respondents strongly agreed that living in urbanized areas had mentally challenged them. Mental health is important and individuals living in cities should be given the leverages to enhance their mental fortitudes as unfavourable mental statures would degrade their productivities and behaviors. Research had indicated that crimes related to mental health are on the rise and this should be curbed by providing appropriate environment to the city dwellers.

We had managed to acquire numerous quotations from the respondents, but this paper only showcased 5 prominent quotations. These quotations reflected the hardships that the respondents had gone through. Overall, the quotations indicated that there are still rooms for improvement, and the authorities should take heed of the responses from the respondents, and the government should investigate more upon the economic hardships faced by urbanites.

Conclusions

We had collected the responses from city dwellers living in the city of Ipoh and a majority of them had stipulated that they are currently facing economic hardships. Some had praised the government pursuant to the economic programs actuated by the authorities. But from the results that were acquired, the efforts by the government should be augmented and enhanced in order to pacify the masses, and subsequently the holistic landscape of the city should be alleviated in order to attract more domestic and international investors for the sake of economic growth.

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