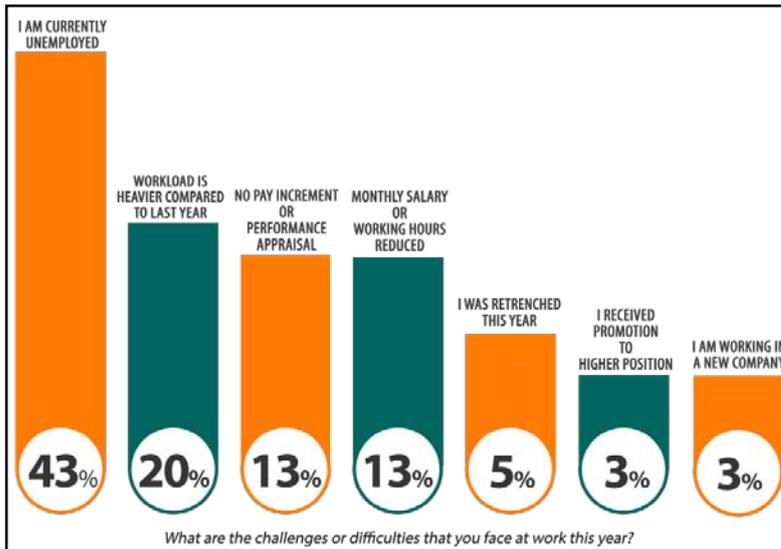


## PART 1 - CURRENT JOB MARKET CONDITIONS IN SABAH

Life after the COVID-19 outbreak will never be the same. As we are approaching the endemic state, we are at the beginning of the end expecting the best for a new beginning. Prior to the unprecedented pandemic last year, its lingering effects on economic activity mostly on labor-intensive sectors, may need months to come back to speed. The persistent effects have left our local Sabahians with income cuts or inactivity as well as exposing some of our fellow citizens to displacement. It is undeniable that our economy has been hit hard by the pandemic - here's what it's like for the current local talents residing in this state based on findings by SabahJobs.com - social media survey conducted on October 2021.



### Challenges & Difficulties Faced by Local Employees

To contain the spread of COVID-19, both state and federal introduced the Movement Control Order (MCO) starting on 18 March 2020, and it has been prolonged until 2021. The order includes stricter movement across the country and of course; limitation of business activity. COVID-19 has undeniably influenced our daily routines to our professional lives. SabahJobs.com launched its first social media poll in October 2020 to assess the impact of the COVID-19 on Sabahans. Our 2020 survey found that 59% of the local workforce was affected by the pandemic, including being retrenched by their company, having their wage lowered, or being placed on unpaid leave.

According to our 2021 social media poll results, 94% are affected by the pandemic: 43% are currently unemployed, 20% said heavier workload compared to last year, 13% has no pay increment/performance appraisal, another 13% said salary/working hours was reduced, 5% were laid off this year. 6% of the respondents are unaffected by the pandemic: 3% started work in a new company, 3% received a promotion to a higher position.

### Sabahans' worry, concern or fear in the job market in the next 4 months (Oct 2021 to Jan 2022)



According to our recent social media survey of Sabahan employees on their job market concerns and fears, 30.8% fear most on "Will I lose my Job?" (i.e. retrenchment or temporary lay-off); another 30.8% concern on "When will the Economy Recover?", 19.2% wondering "Will I get a promotion or salary increment?"; 11.5% worry "Will I get a pay cut?" (i.e. salary reduction); and 7.7% concern about their workload "Will I be asked to cover more work?" (i.e. longer shift work or more responsibilities). Insights to these concerns are present in previous findings, by referring to [Covid-19 Business Confidence Report 2020](#) which was released by SabahJobs.com: 50% of local employers chose to reduce their employees' compensation (such as salary and benefits), 44% of the employers planned to downsize/retrench; 45% planned to freeze hiring, these decisions may affect employees with heavier workloads/responsibilities or compelled to work longer shifts.

**Question: What are the new skills or job roles that you've seen emerged from the pandemic?**



### New Types of Jobs Emerge from COVID-19

Because of the pandemic, the workplace and job market have changed dramatically in the last year. Our labour market is always changing, but the pandemic has accelerated the pace of change. Employers in all industries must learn to adapt to quickly changing conditions, and businesses must learn how to match personnel to new roles and activities.

The digital transformation has progressed more quickly than expected since the epidemic forced the country to switch into working-from-home mode. Talents that didn't previously need to be tech-savvy had to learn rapidly to adapt to meet the same level of productivity digitally. Sabah companies are starting to invest more and more into technology including in searching for talents who are skilled in technology, even for positions which previously wouldn't be thought of as a tech role.

According to our recent social media poll results: 42% favour the idea of Runner / Delivery Services as one of the growing jobs in Sabah; 33% think that E-commerce skills, Social Media management, and Account Manager skills are in great demand; 25% believe that Digital Skills (Information & Cyber Security/ Web Programmers/ IT Development/ Software Programming, etc.) are also in a great demand.

**Question: Are you willing to relocate to pursue job opportunities outside of your hometown amid the pandemic?**



### Sabahans' Willingness to Relocate

It is said that the economic recovery may require a longer period of time and looking for a new job is uniquely difficult due to the pandemic. However said, some job seekers are optimistic that hiring will continue in selected industries that have not been negatively impacted by the pandemic and in order to remain employed during and after this pandemic, it is observed that majority 78% of

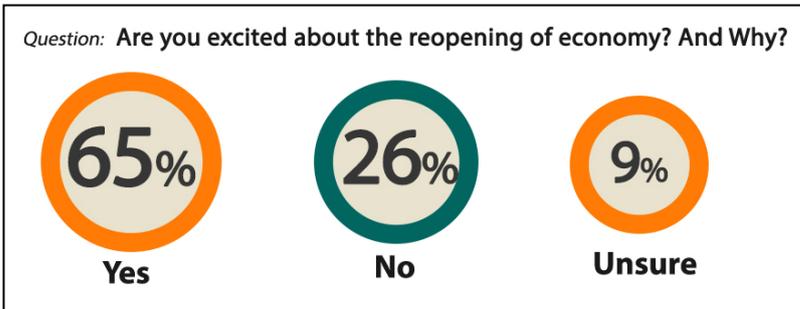
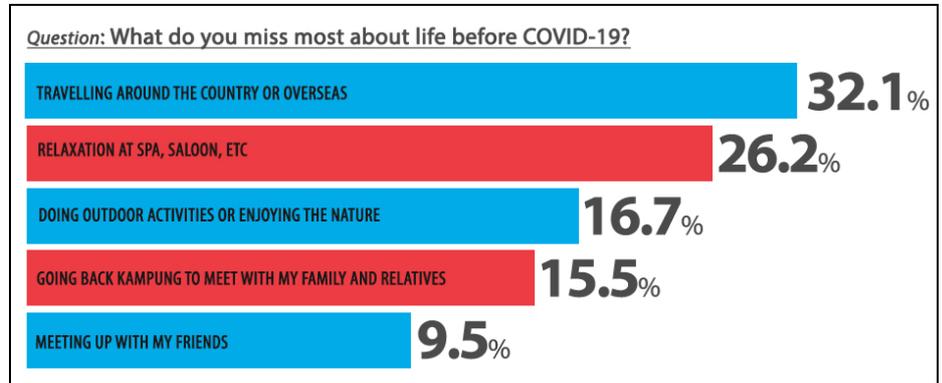
the respondents are willing to relocate outside of Sabah if offered with better salary and work-life balance; 11% of the respondents are willing to keep their current job as they preferred to stay close to their family; and 11% of the respondents are unsure about relocating due to work opportunities. In comparison to [Sabah Employment Survey in 2019-2020](#) which was released before the pandemic: 96% of the respondents wished to remain in Sabah while 4% of the respondents indicated their preference to work outside of Sabah. With the pandemic, it really changes how people think and react. In conclusion from the current poll results, it seems that more jobseekers are willing and open to the idea of relocating or seeking work opportunities outside of Sabah.

**PART 2 - SABAHANS' OPINION ON 'REOPENING OF MALAYSIA ECONOMY' & COVID-19 AS 'ENDEMIC'**

We are approaching the end of our third year living with the COVID-19 pandemic. We asked our followers on social media to express what they missed most about their life before COVID-19 and their opinions moving forward living with COVID-19.

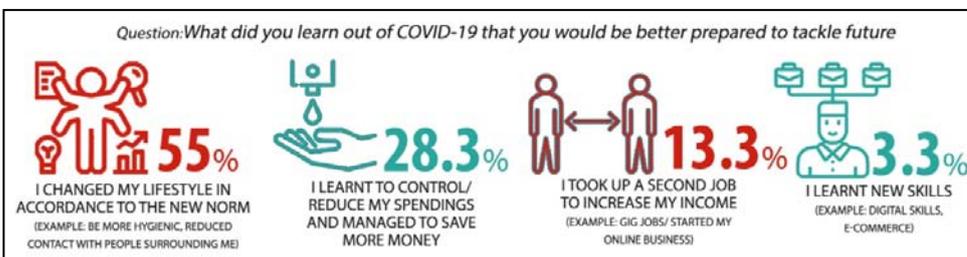
**Sabahans' Voices: What do you miss most from life before COVID-19?**

As we are preparing to enter the endemic phase, we can't help to feel excited and anxious to resume all of our favourite activities that were previously restricted due to the pandemic. 32.1% of the locals miss to travel around the country or overseas; while 26.2% missed relaxing at the spa or saloon. 16.7% missed outdoor activities or enjoying the nature; 15.5% wished to go back their Kampung and meet with their family and relatives and minority 9.5% of them wished to meet-up with their friends.



**Sabahans' Opinion on Reopening of the Economy**

We have been experiencing a series of prolonged movement restrictions which limit our day-to-day activities; which leads us to hope that in the near future, we will be able to fully reopen the economy and conduct our activities without any restrictions. Supported by this recent social media survey, 65% of respondents are excited for the reopening of the economy, while 26% aren't and 9% are unsure.



**After Covid-19: Preparing to Tackle Future Challenges**

COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affecting us with the movement restriction and economic shutdown; which prompted us to reset major trends in our day-to-day routine or

in our workplace. Throughout these 2 years, we have learnt to adapt to new lifestyles and to overcome all challenges faced throughout this pandemic. The pandemic has in a way reminded us to be prepared to tackle any challenges in the future and equipped ourselves to be ready for any global changes thereafter; be it our financial stability or our social activities. From our recent social media survey, 55% of respondents said they had changed their lifestyles in accordance to the new norm (i.e.: Be more hygienic, Reduced contact with people surrounding); while 28.3% learnt to control/reduce their spendings and managed to save more money throughout this pandemic. 13.3% took up a second job to increase their income (i.e.: Took up Gig jobs/ Started their own online business) while 3.3% took this period to improve their career development by learning new skills (i.e.: Digital Skills, E-commerce) to fit the economic demand. As the pandemic is seen to contribute to global destruction; however on a brighter side, it can be seen as a reset button for everyone to change to a better lifestyle or to learn and discover new skills.

## PART 3 - IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTHNESS

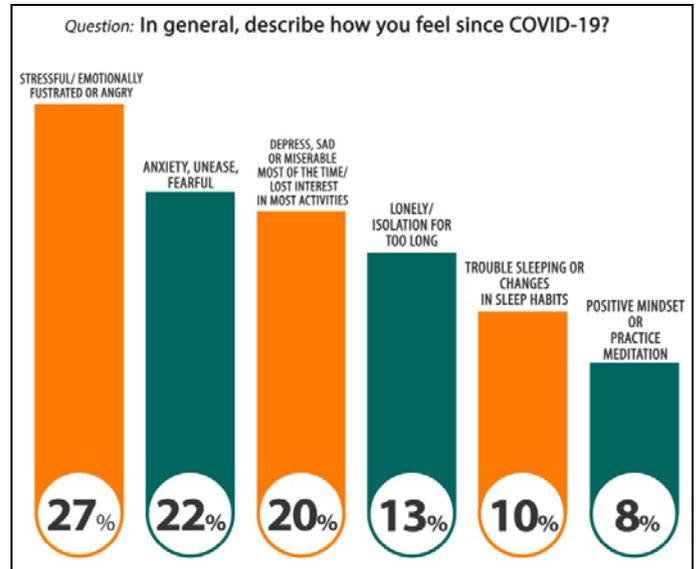
The Covid-19 Pandemic has affected our mental health in some degree as it can be rather challenging to cope with changes in lifestyles and at work and to adhere to strict SOPs. In this section of the survey results, we can be more aware of one's mental health and as well as to help our loved ones around us.

### Covid-19 pandemic sees rising mental health concern among Sabahans



As observed through our latest social media survey, 50% of respondents reported that they have experienced a decline in their mental health, while 33% of the respondents experienced no change in their mental health. Only 17% of the respondents experience improvement in their mental health.

Among 50% of respondents that experienced a decline in their mental health, 27% of them felt stressful or emotionally frustrated or angry on the current situation or with its after-effect. Of course, the pandemic has brought anxiety and fear to many of us, based on our social media survey results, at least 20% of respondents feel anxiety, unease and fearful since COVID-19, 20% felt depressed, sad or miserable most of the time and even have lost interest in most activities. 13% feel lonely due to be in isolation for too long, while 10% experienced trouble sleeping or changes in their sleeping habits. On the bright side, 8% of the respondents still hold positive mindset or practicing meditation to cope.



### Career & Financial stability causes stress to Sabahans



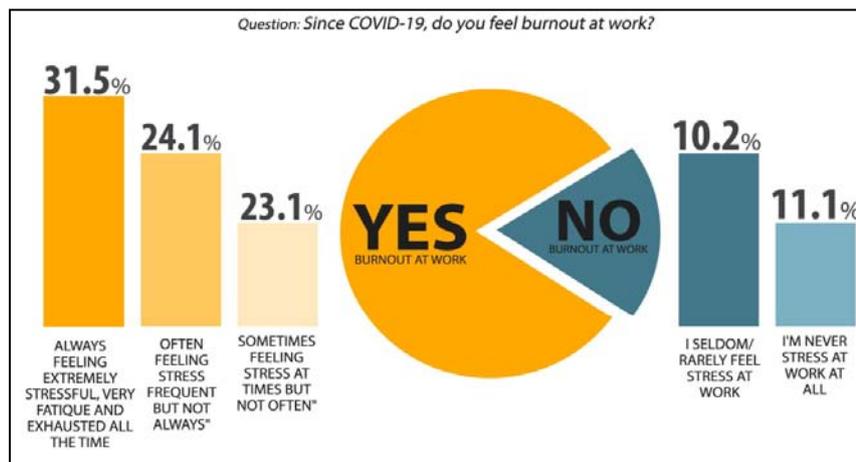
It is not surprise to see that more than 2/3 of the respondents are stressed about job and financial stability: 30% of respondents said they are worried of their 'Money/Financial Stability', while 26.7% worried most on 'Work/Career/Job Stability'. During the pandemic, many businesses had to shut down temporary or close permanently, and along with SOPs and restrictions to business operating hours, which also lead to the reduction of staffs' working hours and salaries, these definitely played a big contribution on our livelihood and psychological well-being. Similarly, the constant isolation and many other SOP restrictions throughout these two years have left many feeling in despair or frustrated. Among the remaining respondents, 23.3% of Sabahans are concerned of health/sickness; while 12.5% felt pressured being at home/coping with their family/marriage/relationship. Meanwhile, there are minority of 7.5% of Sabahans students are worried on their schools/studies/exams.

### Declining mental healthness and its effect



Over 83% of respondents are either unable to focus or feeling less motivated or felt overworked at work. Only 6% are late for work/ absent more often, an indication of less motivated to come to work or to conduct their normal day-to-day activities; and 11% felt somehow sensitive or emotional about things which were never before.

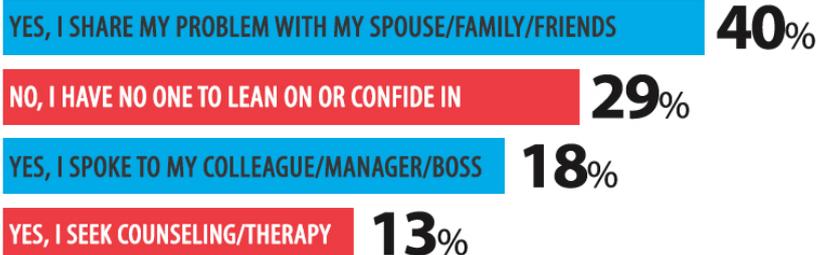
### Workplace Burnout and the Constant Stress, Fatigue & Exhaustion



More than 3/4 of the respondents felt “Yes burnout at work” since the pandemic and amongst these individuals: 31.5% felt they are “Always” burnout at work and feeling extremely stressful, very fatigue and exhausted all the time; 24.1% reported that they “Often” felt burnout and feeling stress frequent but not always; and 23.1% felt burnout “sometimes” and feeling stress at times but not often. In contrast, 21.3% of the respondents felt “No burnout at work”: 10.2% of said they seldom/rarely feel stress at work; and 11.1% never been stress at all in their workplace. Looking at this, there is a possible that a group of the labour force in Sabah could be experiencing a burnout at work that may lead to overall mental health decline and should not be taken lightly.

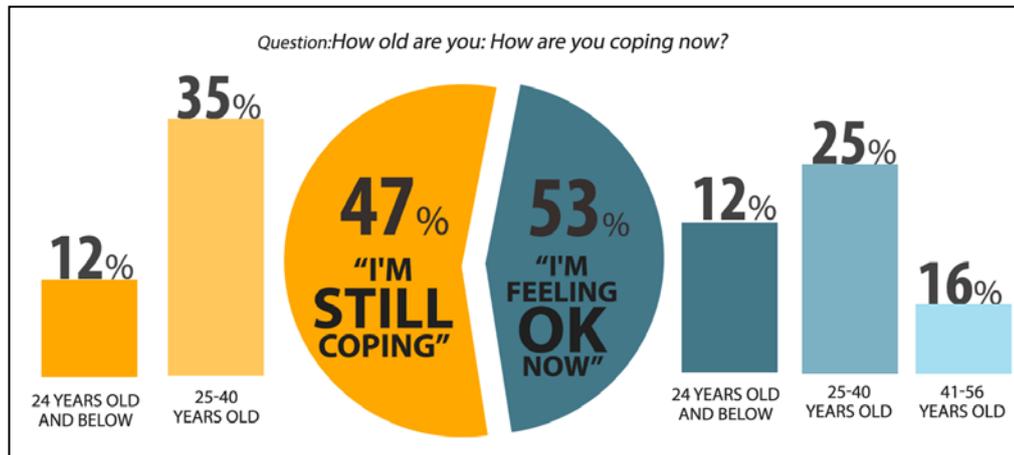
### Road to mental health recovery

Question: **Have you sought help or spoke to anyone about how you are feeling?**



Before this pandemic, it is convenient to de-stress and to take short break from our hectic schedule in which we could just easily book a vacation or to just simply treat ourselves by going to the cinema or to our favourite restaurant. And now as the pandemic strikes, most of us resorted to other accessible option to de-stress. In this survey, we managed to observed several solutions Sabahans have took up to sought help with their mental health or simply to speak about how they are feeling how they are feeling during this period.

Majority of 71% of these individuals are willing to speak and share regarding their problems and concerns. Amongst this, 40% preferred to share their problems with their spouse/family/friends, while 18% did master up and spoke with their colleague/manager or employer and 13% did seek professional counseling and therapy. On the other hand, there are still 29% of individuals are unable to speak in regards to the problems that they are facing as they are no one that they can lean on or to confide in.



During this hard period of constant isolation and increasing pressure from our surroundings, it is important to overcome our stress; and by seeking help and to be able to speak out on our problem is crucial to regain our mental health.

Recovering from the declining mental health is a slow process and it may require longer period of time. From this survey, at least 47% of the respondents are still coping with their mental health: 35% are individuals with the age between 25-40 years old and 12% are those of the age 24 years old and below.

53% are beginning to regain their mental health and are feeling okay now. Among which 25% are age between 25-40 years old; 12% are age 24 years old and below; and 16% are age 41-56 years old.

The Covid-19 pandemic has enormously affected us not only on our finance and career progression, but to our psychological well-being and social life. However, as we are entering a new endemic phase, all activities will soon resume while adhering to the new norm and SOPs. This brings us with a new beginning and a new journey of recovering our mental health.

## Mental Health Assistance

Getting help is the most important first step to overcome any forms of mental health condition.

Here are a list of several Helpline and Professional Mental Health services available in Malaysia, where you can reach out and talk to professional peers in regards to your mental health:

- **MENTARI Sabah by Ministry of Health**  
088-240984 ext 227/234 | 011-1056782  
[Click to visit website](#)
- **Malaysian Mental Health Association**  
03-27806803 | 017-6133039  
[Click to visit website](#)
- **Befrienders**  
03-76272929  
[Click to visit website](#)
- **Mental Illness Awareness & Support Association**  
1-800-820066  
[Click to visit website](#)