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Title : FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE AND FINANCIAL BEHAVIOUR INFLUENCE ON PERSONAL FINANCIAL DISTRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA

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The issues of financial mismanagement among youths have been growing at an alarming rate lately as reported by The Malay Mail in 2016 that on average eleven youths declared bankrupt every day. As such, immediate remedial measures need to be identified on whether the role of financial socialization and the influence of financial knowledge and the change in financial behaviour may lead to the solution to this problem. Therefore, the motivation of this doctoral dissertation is to examine the influence of financial knowledge and financial behaviour towards personal financial distress of undergraduates in Malaysia. The first step involves reviewing the body of literature on financial distress to identify useful models and concepts. The paucity of reference to financial distress in that literature is eminent, especially here in Malaysia in which the discussion focuses on issues related to financial distress faced by undergraduates in Malaysia. Four hundred copies of questionnaires were disseminated, however, only three hundred and four usable copies were subsequently recollected and deemed usable after the data cleaning process. The data were then analysed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling SmartPLS 3.0. The findings reveal that the financial socialization possesses explanatory and predictive capability to foresee the undergraduates' ability to absorb financial knowledge and influences undergraduates' personal financial distress. As few studies have been done, especially on this topic, this study is able to extend the literature by providing the insights into the subject matter and therefore contribute towards the future well-being of this nation.