

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE STUDY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK
AMONG DAIRY FARMERS AT SELECTED
DAIRY FARMS IN NEGERI SEMBILAN**

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In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

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ABSTRACT

Recently, concern has increased globally over dairy farmers' mental health issues. This study aims to identify dairy farmers' psychosocial status and risk factors. Two selected dairy farms participated in this study, with total participants 28 dairy farmers (20 participants from Dairy Farm A and 8 participants from Dairy Farm B), and the prevalence of psychosocial risk was assessed using Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS-21) and Environment & Occupation Likelihood Scale on Workers Mental Health Status (LEOs). The association of mental health status with the working environment was analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation and Likelihood of Environment & Occupation Mental Health Hazard Hierarchy matrix (MH3) to identify which final color code obtained by the participant that should be prioritized for mental health action. Farmers in Dairy Farm B were identified to have high subscale psychological symptoms and an association of mental health issues with their working environment. Farmers on this farm are also more likely to require high priority for mental health action towards occupation and environment risk compared to farmers in Dairy Farm A. High job demand, long working hours and workplace atmosphere were related to psychosocial risk and possibly the contributing factors that affect the mental health of the dairy farmers. This research is crucial in identifying risk factors that affect dairy farmers' mental health issues and outlining possible suggestions to prevent the risk from occurring.

Keywords: Psychosocial risk, dairy farmers, working environment

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Psychosocial risk is the possibility of psychological injury to occur when exposed to hazard. In the psychological aspect, hazards could enhance the risk of employees experiencing a stress response. The International Labor Office (ILO) from 1984 says that psychosocial factors are the interactions in the workplace, the job description, the worker's skills, needs, and personal concerns. These things could affect the workers' health, how well they do their jobs, and how happy they are at work. In this modern life, psychosocial risk is a common feature that results in work-related stress, burnout, or depression. Concern has increased globally about the psychosocial risk among employees at the workplace due to its adverse impacts, which in the long-term can have a severe effect that not only affect the psychological but also the physical health of the workers. Agriculture is one of the most critical sectors for economic growth, with employment is around 7% and 10%, respectively (Berman et al., 2021). However, due to the hard labor under challenging conditions, farming is always linked to various physical and mental health concerns (Fraser C.E.,2005). Earlier research has identified various occupational health risks among farming communities, and some have identified farming as a particularly stressful occupation. Overwork, drought, climate conditions, debt, role conflicts, and changes in government regulations may be the most influential factors on farmers' mental health in the agricultural sector. Farmers are more likely to suffer from anxiety, low self-esteem, burnout, and exhaustion if they do not cope with work stress properly. The impact of stress factors on the farmers varies, depending on how they manage their problems. Thus, this study aims to identify the possible psychosocial risk among farmers in the relationship between their work status and working environment.