

# The Characteristics of Travellers of Homecoming During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Makassar City

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## Abstract

Homecoming “*mudik*” is one peculiar culture in Indonesia which is generally held on Eid al Fitr, Christmas and New Year. Homecoming is a routine for urban people who travel back to their hometowns. Before 2020 the impact of going home was only on the level of congestion and the use of large transportation facilities, but the blowout of Covid-19 as a pandemic that hit the entire world including Makassar City had a significant impact on travel patterns. This paper aims to describe the pattern of homecoming trips in Makassar City during the Covid-19 period. The analysis results in knowing that the ratio of people who do not travel back and forth with those who do homecoming is 53.46% versus 46.54%. The main reason for people to travel back and forth is the closure of schools/campuses by the government to prevent the widening of this virus with a percentage of 42.27%. Meanwhile, the reason for the people to stay in Makassar City or not to travel precluding the virus spread is 56.25%. From the logistic regression test, it is known that the factors that influence people's desire to travel back and forth are: age, occupation, income, mode of transportation and travel costs which have a significant effect on people's perceptions of homecoming during the Covid-19 pandemic in Makassar.

## Keywords

Homecoming, Covid-19 and Travel Behavior.

## 1. Introduction

One of the transporting phenomena, especially in big cities in Indonesia, which becomes the government's main concern every year is the homecoming phenomenon. Homecoming is a social phenomenon in Indonesia that occurs

every year. Homecoming means returning to your hometown on big days such as Eid, Christmas and New Year. The homecoming phenomenon began to become a trend since the development of big cities in Indonesia in the early 1970s, which made big cities develop into places to find sources of livelihood and stopovers for migrants from various regions (Asmoro 2015). As with other big cities, Makassar City, which is the largest city and gateway in eastern Indonesia, will certainly become a destination city for urbanization (Manganta et al. 2019).

City residents, especially migrants from villages who have migrated for a long time to the city usually carry out their homecoming activities on holidays that are long and have cultural significance such as Eid, Christmas and New Year. From year to year, homecoming has never been a worrying thing other than congestion problems (Sari et al. 2018). However, in 2020, going home is very worrying because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has also hit Indonesia. The homecoming phenomenon can certainly lead to an increase in the spread of COVID-19 to various regions in Indonesia and an increase in the number of sufferers from this virus (Rifai et al. 2021).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered type of coronavirus. The virus from this disease was first discovered in an outbreak that occurred in Wuhan, China in December 2019. COVID-19 is now a pandemic that ensues in many countries around the world (Djalante et al. 2020).

The trend of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia has increased since the first positive cases were announced on March 2, 2020. Based on data released by the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 as of 8 June 2020, the total number of positive cases in Indonesia has now reached 32,033 cases scattering across almost all provinces in Indonesia. The largest number of cases to date is in DKI Jakarta Province with 8,033 cases (25.8 %) and East Java Province with 5,948 cases (19.1 %) (Prasojo et al. 2020), while in Makassar City the death rate due to this virus has reached 250 people out of the number of sufferers reaching 6,629 cases.

Major cities in Indonesia are not only the navel of economic activity but during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have also become the node for the spread of COVID-19. High human mobility in urban areas is now a major factor in the spread of COVID-19. Several studies have shown that human mobility plays a significant role in the spread of epidemics (Djalante et al. 2020) and (Merlera and Ajelli 2010). Of course, Covid-19 has had a very weightily negative impact on people's lives both economically, educationally and socially. In this context, the homecoming phenomenon is considered very distressing because it has the potential to spread COVID-19. Regarding the spread of this disease, the Government of Indonesia issued a policy called Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). This policy aims to avert the possible spread of Covid-19. The application of large-scale social restrictions includes a. shutting school and work; b. restrictions on religious activities; c. restrictions on activities in public places or facilities; d. restrictions on social and cultural activities; e. restrictions on the mode of transportation; f. restriction of other activities, especially those related to defense and security aspects.

The policies implemented by the government have an impact on the community's routine, especially the people in Makassar City. This is because in general, people outside Makassar City will migrate to Makassar City, with certain goals, and will return to their hometowns at certain times as well. The habits of going home done by the people in Makassar City will of course be different before and during the COVID-19 pandemic either in terms of the means of transportation used, the characteristics of travellers, and the number of people returning (Government Makassar 2021). Thus this research concerns the problem of homecoming characteristics that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic in Makassar City as well as the number of homecoming and non-homecoming during the Covid-19 pandemic in Makassar City. Based on the above problems, this study discusses "Characteristics of the Travellers of Homecoming during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Makassar City".

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Homecoming**

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), what is meant by homecoming can be interpreted as returning to your hometown. Eid homecoming can be categorized as a spontaneous and temporary migration carried out by the community as a form of gratitude and happiness for the success of the fast. Besides, the Eid al-Fitr homecoming can also be a reflection of the success of relatives working abroad with many items that are given as souvenirs. As for the regions, Lebaran homecoming is a source of regional financial income because of the large number of inter-city transportation facilities as well as expenditures made in the regions (Prasojo et al. 2020).

Homecoming according to anthropologist Neil Mulder is often interpreted as a temporary (local) process of internal migration which is common in Indonesian society. Apart from being a migration process, homecoming is also a symbol of the culture of commonality that occurs in the community both before and after long holidays such as Christmas, New Year, and especially during Eid. Homecoming is already an annual routine activity for some Indonesians who are migrants or who are far from their families (Abeyasekera 1989) and (Evers and Korff 2000). Homecoming is defined as a mass vacation for the inhabitants of a big city coming back to their hometown (village or small town). This activity is usually carried out before Eid, Christmas and New Year. The number of urban residents who return each year is estimated to be around 10% - 60%. This can be seen from empirical evidence, such as road conditions and downtowns around big cities in Indonesia such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Semarang, Makassar, and others which are relatively quiet when going home. This is in line with the assumption that big cities in Indonesia are built with the presence of "migrants".

The homecoming phenomenon has become a tradition for the Indonesian people. The homecoming tradition is considered the most effective movement to canal funds to the regions. Homecoming accelerates the distribution of money from cities to villages. The flow of funds from the center to the regions, from cities to rural areas, from Java to outside Java, from Jakarta to other small cities, illustrates the gaps between urban and rural areas. The homecoming tradition occurs as a result of migration from villages to cities which then it develops into uncontrolled urbanization. Uncontrolled urbanization events occur due to the poverty problem in rural areas. However, uncontrolled urbanization also creates poverty in urban areas. This happens because several workers who control the informal sector in urban areas were formerly farmers leaving their respective villages (Iriyanto 2012).

## **2.2. Pandemic, Epidemic, And Plague**

The term pandemic according to the Indonesian Dictionary is defined as an epidemic that has spread everywhere, covering a wide geographic area. In more classical meaning, the pandemic happens when an epidemic spreads to several countries or regions of the world. An epidemic that is included in the pandemic category is a disease that is contagious and has a continuous infection line. So, if a case occurs in several countries other than the country of origin, it is still classified as a pandemic.

An epidemic is a contagious disease that spreads rapidly over a large area and victimizes many, for example, a disease that does not spread regularly in that area. Another definition of an epidemic is an outbreak that spreads over a wider geographic area. From these two definitions, it can be concluded that an epidemic is an outbreak of a disease that occurs in a wider, geographic area that is very high and effects on some proportion of the population.

The word epidemic in KBBI means a contagious disease that spreads rapidly, affecting a large number of people in a wide area (such as diseases like smallpox, dysentery, cholera). An epidemic is the occurrence of a disease in society, in which the number of people infected is greater than usual. A disease is said to be an epidemic when the disease has not infected the community for a long time, a new disease that was previously unknown has arrived, and a disease affecting people in one peculiar area for the first time (P et al. 2020).

## **2.3. Covid-19**

Covid-19 is a contagious disease caused by the newly discovered type of corona virus. The new virus and disease were unknown previously beginning to spread from Wuhan City and becoming a pandemic that took toll in many countries around the world. The disease caused by this virus is called Covid-19 and is included in the category of dangerous infectious diseases. Coronavirus is a collection of viruses tainting animals or humans. Several types of coronavirus are known to cause respiratory tract infections in humans ranging from cold coughs to more serious coughs such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Various reports indicate that the spread of this virus is so wild. This direct human to the human transmission caused an extraordinary increase in the number of cases, until the end of January 2020 there were 2000 confirmed cases within 24 hours. At that time, WHO declared Global Emergency status for this Coronavirus case and on February 11 2020 WHO named it COVID-19 (P et al. 2020). Figure 1 shows the timeline of coronavirus events in the world (Handayani et al. 2020).

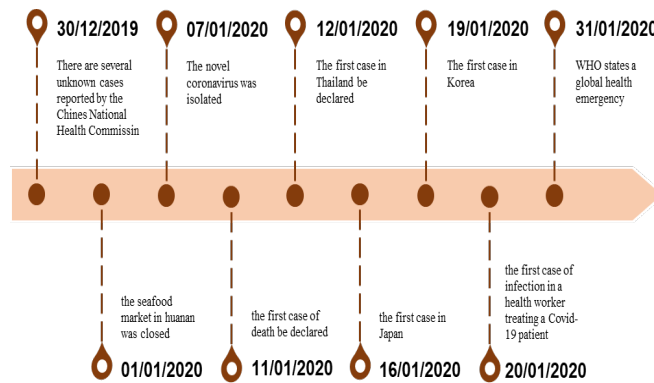


Figure 1. Timeline of the coronavirus

There are several terms used in Indonesia related to the handling of the covid-19 virus, as mentioned below:

a. OTG

OTG is People without Symptoms. OTG does not show any symptoms of Covid-19 coronavirus infection. That is why; they carry and can transmit the virus to other people without they are aware of it. In this symptom-free condition, a person has difficulty detecting himself or herself free from the Covid-19 coronavirus or not.

b. ODP

ODP is a Person under Observation, meaning someone who has a history of travelling to a country that has been infected with the coronavirus or has been in contact with someone infected by the coronavirus. Even though, he has not shown any symptoms of being infected by the virus.

c. PDP

PDP is a patient who shows symptoms of being infected by the coronavirus. These symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose and shortness of breath. Patients in the PDP category need to get supervision from medical personnel because they are considered as patients who are in need of treatment.

d. Positive

Positive patients are patients who have been medically proven to have been infected with the coronavirus through a laboratory testing process.

People can catch COVID-19 from other people infected by the virus. COVID-19 can be spread primarily from person to person through droplets from the nose or mouth that come out when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Transmission of this virus can be through a splash of those droplets from a Covid-19 sufferer which uncounsciously is inhaled by another person. The spread can also occur by touching objects such as tables, doorknobs, and handrails. This incident is caused by a splash from an infected person clinging to the object that someone else ha unknowingly touched. Therefore it is very important to prevent the transmission of this disease by complying with health rules, maintaining distance, wearing a mask, washing hands, etc. Makassar City is one of the cities with the largest Covid-19 cases in Indonesia in which in August 2020 there were 6,629 cases with the number of deaths from this virus reaching 250 people.

### 3. Research Method

The research was conducted using a quantitative approach, using qualitative data with a quantitative approach to generate numerical values (Firdaus et al. 2021). Quantitative research methods can be defined as a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, which is used to study a particular population or sample. The sampling technique is generally carried out randomly, data collection uses research instruments, and data analysis is quantitative/statistical by purpose to test predetermined hypotheses (Isradi and Putri 2021).

The target respondents in this study were the people of Makassar City who stated that they planned to do homecoming in particular for Eid, Christmas and New Year's homecoming. The way to get primary data is usually through direct observation, the subject is given a sheet containing questions to fill in, the questions are aimed at respondents ". This data collection is done by distributing questionnaires online or survey phone interviews to residents in the city of Makassar. This questionnaire contains questions regarding user characteristics, modes of transportation and travel.

Makassar City residents, the respondents, were asked to fill out the questionnaire by accessing the questionnaire link taking advantage from their gadget.

The determination of the number of samples used in this study is random sampling (Prasetijo et al. 2016). This technique was chosen because all elements of the population have the same possibility of being sampled. The population in this study is the population data of Makassar City registered in 2019. The total population data of Makassar City were 2,967,839 residents. To find the minimum sample size from a population, the Slovin equation can be used (Firdaus et al. 2021). In this study, an error tolerance of 5% was used and it was assumed the total population of Makassar City as a population, so that the required sample size was  $\pm 400$  samples.

The variable used in this study is the dependent variable or response variable which is usually symbolized by Y and the independent variable or predictor variable symbolized by X. In this study, the dependent variable is homecoming behavior. This variable is dichotomized into two categories, namely going home ( $Y = 0$ ), not going home ( $Y = 1$ ). The next variable is the independent variable. This variable is in the form of travel behavior characteristics related to age, gender, education, occupation, income, status, mode of transportation and travel costs. These factors are identified as determining factors that contribute to the travel patterns of transportation. These factors are entered into the model as independent variables, namely X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6, X7 and X8.

Model development was done by doing descriptive statistical analysis of data to determine the characteristics of travel patterns using a multinomial logistic regression model to obtain the factors affecting the pattern of homecoming using IBM SPSS 21 software.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Covid-19 Spread Rate

The data on the spread of the coronavirus since it was announced as a global pandemic still has yet not shown any sign of decreasing spread in 15 sub-districts in Makassar city. Based on data from Wikipedia, Indonesia is in the 23<sup>rd</sup> place in the rankings of the global spread of COVID-19 and South Sulawesi placed the 4<sup>th</sup> province based on the number of confirmed cases in each province of Indonesia. Data on the development of the coronavirus per week from April 2020 to the end of July 2020 for the city of Makassar can be presented in the following Figure 2 below:

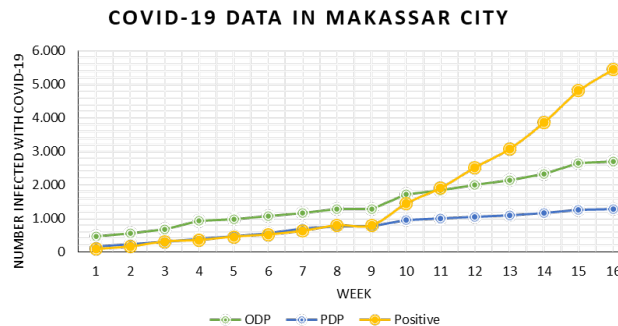


Figure 2. Graph of the development of the spread of covid-19

### 4.2. Covid-19 and Homecoming

From the survey results, the data collected were 868 sample data. The sample data used is the data that meet the criteria to be used as a research sample consisting of 833 selected respondents. This has met the minimum requirements of 400 samples. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic can be sensed in almost all sectors of life including the transportation sector. The first question in this study serves to find out how much Covid-19 affects the perceptions of the Makassar people to go home.

This study illustrates that the percentage of Makassar City residents who did not plan to do homecoming is 53.46% and those who still planned to do homecoming is 46.54% as shown in Figure 3. This means that the Covid-19 pandemic

and the government's call not to go home as well as to work, study and worship at home have not shown any significant results in reducing people's desire to go homecoming.

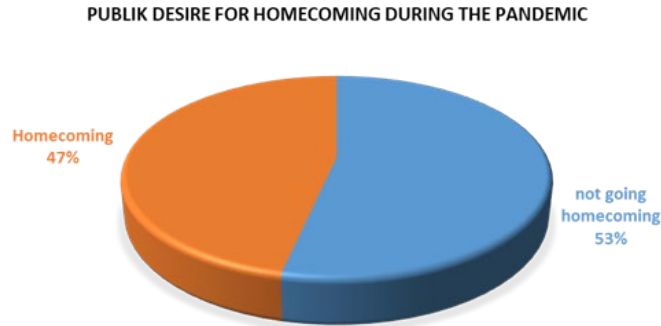


Figure 3. Public desire for homecoming during the pandemic

### 4.3. Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB)

The Indonesian government policy regarding handling the spread of Covid-19 implements a policy called Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). Public understanding of the risk or danger of transmission of the Covid-19 virus prominently affects their desire to travel. The risk will be even greater if the trip is made using public transportation without physical distance. The use of public transportation for people who want to go home is still very high so that it is not ideal in limiting the distance between passengers. To educate the public, especially the middle to lower class, it is necessary to have socialization about the risks that they must accept if they still want to go home. However, the homecoming culture that tends to make people gather at close range will increase the risk of transmitting the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, the Government is trying to minimize the transmission of the Covid-19 virus, one of which is through the demand not to travel back and forth. The government's appeal regarding policies not to go homecoming is well socialized. This is indicated by all respondents knowing the government policy. However, the perception of the people of Makassar City towards government policies regarding the constraints of going home can be seen in Figure 4. Most of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the Government by percentage of 28.33% and 31.69%. Meanwhile, respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed were 7.72% and 2.76%. The remaining 30.49% of respondents agreed and disagreed with the policy of prohibiting homecoming.

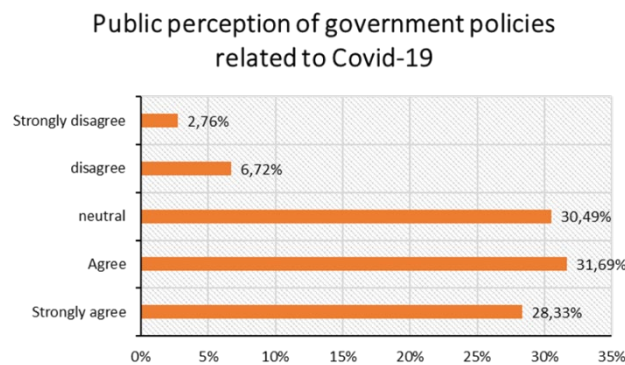


Figure 4. Public perception of government policies related to covid-19

### 4.4. Homecoming reasons

One of the questions in the questionnaire flow was a question related to the reasons why respondents continued to return to their hometowns even when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. There were several reasons put forward to the respondents regarding the desire to return home during this pandemic as illustrated in Figure 5. Most of the respondents chose to go home because the school/campus was closed, 42.27%. The next biggest demand is the request from the family to go home, 23.16%. This request from the family was due to concerns from the family regarding the spread of Covid-19 in Makassar City. The next reason is carrying out Ramadan / Eid al-Fitr with family, amounting to 12.81%.

Meanwhile, for reason of not having a job/income and fear of contracting the virus in Makassar City, are only 10.70% and 11.06%. This shows that the people of Makassar City are not too worried about the spread of the Covid-19 disease in harmony to the government's call to ban homecoming, besides that most of the respondents are migrants who come to Makassar City as students or to find a job.

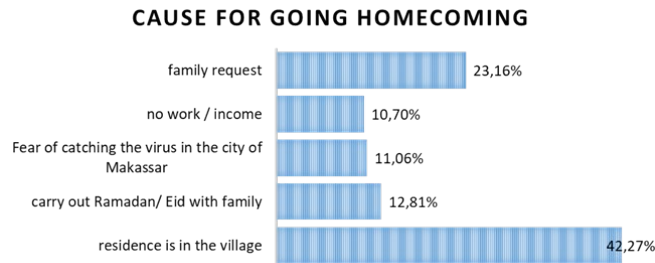


Figure 5. Cause for going homecoming

#### 4.5. The reason for not going homecoming

In addition to questions about the reasons for going home, the next question on the questionnaire line is a question related to the respondent's reason for choosing not to go home. This question is only addressed to respondents who answered: “will not do homecoming”. Respondents who chose not to return home had various reasons; even one respondent could have several reasons for not coming home. However, in this questionnaire survey, the reasons of respondents analyzed were only their main reasons, so that one respondent had one main reason for not coming home. The following are the main reasons why respondents did not return home as shown in Figure 6. Most of the respondents who cancelled their homecoming plan argued that they "prevented the spread of COVID-19" with a percentage of 56.25%. The next big reason is "following government policies" with a percentage of 19.64%. From this reality, it can be inferred that the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the desire of the public not to return hometown.

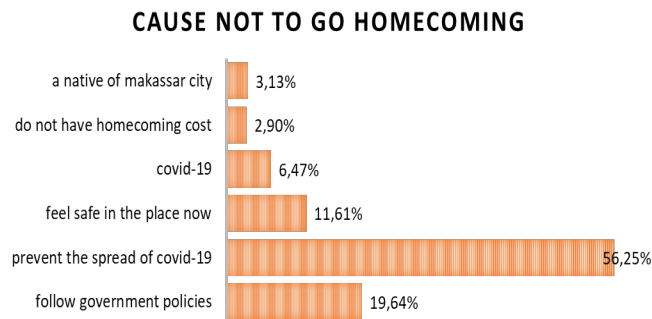


Figure 6. Cause not to go homecoming

#### 4.6. Characteristics of Homecoming Travel Behavior

After knowing the characteristics of the variables that will be used in this study, the next step is to test the independence between the predictor variables and the response variables to determine the relationship between these variables (Prasetijo et al., 2021). The hypothesis used to test the independence between the predictor variable and the response variable is as follows.

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no relationship between the predictor variable and the response variable

H<sub>1</sub>: there is a relationship between the predictor variable and the response variable

The test statistic used is the Omnibus Test of Efficient Model statistic, and the test results are shown in Table 1. Based on Table 1, it is known that the Sig.Model value is 0,000. Since this value is less than 0.05, reject H<sub>0</sub> and accept H<sub>1</sub>, so it can be concluded that the variables used jointly affect the perception of the community to make homecoming trips during the Covid-19 pandemic in Makassar City.

Table 1. Omnibus test of efficient model

		Omnibus Test of Coefficients		
		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	43.467	8	.000
	Block	43.467	8	.000
	Model	43.467	8	.000

This study also used a model suitability test. This test aims to determine whether the model equations that have been formed are appropriate. The test statistic used is the Hosmer and Lemeshow test with the following hypotheses.

H<sub>0</sub>: The model is suitable (there is no significant difference between the results of the observation and the possible results of the model's prediction)

H<sub>1</sub>: The model does not fit (there is a significant difference between the results of the observations and the possible results of the model's predictions)

Table 2. Model fit test

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test			
Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	12.905	8	.115

From Table 2 it can be seen that the  $\rho$ -value obtained from this test is 0.115. Thus, the value of  $\rho$  value is greater than the alpha of 0.05. So, it can be concluded that H<sub>0</sub> is rejected because the model is suitable or there is no significant difference between the observed results and the possible prediction results.

In determining the factors that influence people's perceptions of the desire to go home, the significance test to each variable of the response variable and the predictor variable is carried out. The method used in this research is the Ordinal Logistic Regression Method, which is by making regression all the possible variables in affecting the response variables, so that it is resulted a model with a significant variable. The hypotheses in this test are:

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\beta_1 = \beta_2 = \dots = \beta_8 = 0$

H<sub>1</sub>: There must be at least one  $\beta_k \neq 0, k = 1, 2, \dots, 8$ .

The partial test results can be seen in Table 3

Table 3. Partial test

		Variabels in the Equation					95% C.I for EXP(8)	
		B	SE	Wald	Sig.	EXP(8)	Lower	Upper
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	X1(1)	-.412	.158	6.803	.009	.662	.486	.903
	X2(1)	.239	.154	2.94	.122	1.269	.938	1.717
	X3(1)	-.474	.649	.533	.465	.623	.174	2.222
	X4(1)	.620	.288	4.617	.032	1.858	1.056	3.270
	X5(1)	-.478	.236	4.113	.043	.620	.391	.984
	X6(1)	.171	.366	.218	.641	1.186	.579	2.432
	X7(1)	.343	.156	4.844	.028	1.410	1.038	1.914
	X8(1)	.764	.155	24.381	.000	2.147	1.585	2.908
Constant		.747	.325	5.279	.022	.474		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6, X7, X8

Table 3 is the main table of data analysis using logistic regression. Based on the table, the  $\rho$ -value <0.05 is the age variable (X1) with a significance value of 0.009. The next is the occupation variable (X4) with a significance value of 0.032, the income variable (X5) also shows a significant factor towards the desire to travel back and forth, which its



value amounting to 0.043. Likewise, the transportation mode choice variable (X7) and the travel cost variable (X8) have a significant level of 0.028 and 0.000. Therefore, it can be seen that the variables age, occupation, income, mode of transportation and travel costs have a significant effect on people determining they will likely go home or not during the Covid-19 pandemic in Makassar City.

From this research, it is also revealed that homecoming is a culture that is deeply rooted in Indonesian society so that the high spread of COVID19 that occurs does not necessarily reduce the interest of the people to go home. This is the same as previous research which states that during the Eid homecoming period, the people's desire is very high, but to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus, travellers utilize private transportation. The reasons for using private vehicles are more to prevent getting contacted with the virus and minimize its spread. Another reason of the minimal use of public transportation is that the use of public transportation still requires a mode shift (trip change). This happens when people shift the mode of transportation from online taxi to more public ones (Isradi et al. 2020).

Differences of the character of each region also have the potential to single out homecoming behavior in each region. It is proven in this study that homecoming is still prioritized by Makassar City residents with the ratio between going home and not going home almost the same as previously explained. This research result is in contrary to the research conducted by Muhtaruddin et al, whose research object is JABOTABEK (Jakarta Bogor Tangerang Bekasi). This study shows that the impact of the pandemic is very significant in reducing the number of travellers in these areas. However, the perceptions of the people in JABOTABEK area and Makassar City have quite significant similarities. As a destination city for urbanization, of course, the public's perception has the same view of homecoming behavior because those cities are only temporary residence and hometown is as a permanent one. Also, there is a common perception regarding not going home for the fear of getting contacted or transmitting the Covid-19 virus (Mutharuddin & Hartanto, 2020). The results of this study can serve as basis of recommendations in determining policy for the implementation of Lebaran transportation in the upcoming years.

## **5. Conclusion**

From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that the main reason for respondents to do homecoming is because schools/colleges are closed by government with policies to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Meanwhile, the main reason respondents cancelled or did not do homecoming was that they were afraid of getting contacted or transmitting the Covid-19 virus. The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the perception of the people of Makassar City to do homecoming. Another thing that can be concluded is that the existence of a government policy, which is Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), has not been able to prevent people from doing homecoming. Although government policies related to Covid-19 are well known to the public, they have not been able to reduce the perception of not doing homecoming. It can be seen that the number of people who do not and do homecoming is almost the same, which is by the ratio of 53.46% compared to 46.54%. Likewise, the public's perception of the desire to do homecoming is known to be influenced by several factors including age, occupation, income, mode of transportation and travel costs which significantly affect the public perception of going homecoming during the Covid 19 in Makassar City. For this reason, with the high number of cases of the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the Government has intervened through the issuance of regulations, Regulation of the Minister of Transportation Number 25 of 2020 concerning The Control of Transportation during Homecoming of Lebaran 1441 Hijriah in Context of Preventing the Spread of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). This regulation aims to reduce the level of spread of the Covid-19 virus through a ban on going home.

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