

Revealing Adolescent Drug Trafficking and Addiction: Exploring School Disciplinary and Drug Issues in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia

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Abstract

Previous studies have predominantly concentrated on drug trafficking and addiction amongst adults, with a relative dearth of research specifically dedicated to adolescents. However, it is crucial to recognise that drug-related issues amongst adolescents necessitate unique attention and understanding. This study sets out to identify high clusters of drug trafficking and addiction in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, and scrutinise their relationship with schools that have disciplinary and drug-related issues. By analysing the data, the study seeks to comprehend the correlation between these high clusters and the presence of disciplinary problems and drug issues within schools in the region. Local Indicator Spatial Autocorrelation was utilised in this study to identify the patterns of adolescent drug trafficking and addiction in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The Local Indicator Spatial Autocorrelation analysis (LISA) from 2015 to 2020 disclosed consistent high-high clusters of adolescent drug trafficking and addiction in Pantai, Ampang, Jinjang, Tun H. S. Lee, Pudu, and Cheras areas. These clusters indicate a concentrated prevalence of drug-related activities amongst adolescents aged 17 years old and below. Secondary School of SMK Sri Pantai in Pantai faces disciplinary challenges related to drug issues, underscoring the importance of providing support for a safe learning environment. In contrast, SMK Bandar Ampang has managed to maintain a drug-free environment despite being in a high-high cluster area. SMK Dato Ibrahim Yaacob in Jinjang, along with SMK Dato Onn, Tun H. S. Lee, Cheras, and SMK Cochrane Perkasa, are closely associated with drug issues amongst adolescents. Schools grappling with discipline issues and drug-related problems are notably affected by their geographical locations. It's worth mentioning that a majority of these institutions are positioned in areas with a high concentration of drug trafficking and addiction, amongst adolescents (17 years old or younger). These findings emphasise the need for preventive measures and support to ensure student well-being and safety.

Keywords: Adolescent, Drug Trafficking, Addiction, School, Lisa

1. Introduction

The National Anti-Drug Agency reported that an adolescent between the ages of 15 and 25 who tested positive in a urine drug test was apprehended at a bar or karaoke pub in Kuala Lumpur [1]. The increasing concern of drug addiction among adolescents is alarming, as some start getting involved in drugs as early as 9 years old. It is unfortunate that children at such a young age may not fully realise the impact that

drug use can have on their lives. Children and the new generation are crucial assets and play a vital role in the development of countries for the future [2]. Most of the time, drug users engage in their activities in flats, vacant houses, and playgrounds, which serve as locations for drug transactions. These places become hubs for the sale and purchase of drugs [3].

In the year 2019, the enrolment rates for adolescents in secondary and higher education were reported as 86.99% for girls and 80.70% for boys [4]. The prevalence of harmful drug use seems to be on the rise among teenagers. According to the 2017 National Health and Morbidity Survey, there was a reported increase in adolescent drug usage, with 3.4% admitting to current drug use (defined as the consumption of substances such as heroin, morphine, glue, amphetamine, or methamphetamines, marijuana) in 2014, a rise from 1.5% in 2012. Alarmingly, one out of every 25 secondary school students confessed to having experimented with drugs at some point. Even more distressing is the fact that seven percent of these students began using drugs at the tender age of seven or even younger [5]. In Malaysia, a total of 106,000 adolescents have reported using drugs at least once in their lifetime, while 60,000 adolescents are currently engaged in drug use. It is concerning to note that approximately three out of every four drug users in Malaysia initiated their drug use before the age of 14. According to the data, 2.8% of adolescents have reported ever using inhalants, such as glue or paint. Additionally, 1.1% have admitted to ever using marijuana, 2.3% have acknowledged ever using kratom, and 1.0% have disclosed ever using amphetamines or methamphetamines [6].

Figure 1 shows the sources of obtaining drugs among adolescents. According to the chart, the majority of adolescents bought drugs from someone, accounting for 38.4%, while the lowest percentage was through other means, with only 9.70%. Adolescents, specifically between the ages of 12 to 14, have been identified as a crucial period when the risk of substance use initiation is high. However, research indicates that the risk continues into the later teenage years, particularly between 15 to 17 years old. Furthermore, substance use may reach its peak among young adults aged 18 to 25 years [7]. The prevalence of cannabis uses among young people

aged 15 to 16 years was 18% in North America and 20% in Europe, as reported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2018). According to [8], there is a concerning prevalence of tobacco use among adolescents in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, with rates ranging from 11 to 15%. Drug abuse poses a significant threat to the younger generation as it can lead to addiction and dependency on harmful substances. The consequences of drug addiction are severe, and individuals who are addicted may experience torment and desperation when they cannot satisfy their cravings. Drug addicts may resort to engaging in criminal acts to fulfill their addiction and obtain the substances they crave [9].

The involvement of young people in gangs can have a profound impact on their lives, leading to a disruption of other life opportunities and potential negative outcomes. When young individuals become connected to gangs, it can significantly alter their lives, potentially resulting in school dropouts, exclusion, and increased interactions with individuals involved in similar activities. The affiliation with gangs can lead young people to engage in more criminal behaviour, such as drug dealing, as they become more deeply immersed in the gang lifestyle. The involvement of young individuals in gangs can have a detrimental effect on their future prospects, limiting their access to education, employment, and other positive life opportunities [10].

A majority of 16 to 17-year-old students in upper secondary school exhibiting risky behaviours, such as involvement in violence, drug use, smoking, exposure to sexual activities, occasional loneliness, and instances of self-harm attempts [11]. In a study conducted by the Criminal Legal Investigation Department involving interviews with police officers, it was found that student involvement in social issues, criminal acts, and school dropouts has consequences for the Malaysian government.

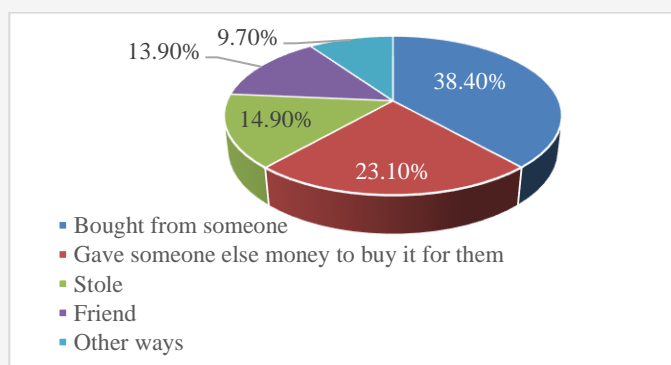


Figure 1: Sources to get drug among adolescents in Malaysia, 2022 [6]