

SOCIAL PRESSURE AMONG FORMER DRUG ADDICTS AFTER DISCHARGED FROM DRUG REHABILITATION CENTRE

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ABSTRACT--*Social pressure could influence individualsto recover from drug addiction. The purpose of this study is to identify the levels of social pressure among former drug addicts and to identify the influence of internal and external factors on social pressure among the former addicts. The study was carriedoutusing a quantitative cross-sectional design. A total of 380 former drug addicts who completed the rehabilitation programmes at Cure and Care Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) and undergoing supervision orders by the National Anti-Drugs Agency were selected to participate in this study. The data wereanalysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, includingmultiple regression and stepwise tests.The findings of the study showing that the majority of former drug addicts involved in this study reported low (48.9%) and moderate (47.1%) levels of social pressure. In the regression analysis,predictorssuch as drug craving ($\beta=.436, p<.05$), family relationship conflict ($\beta=.315, p<.05$) and emotional disturbance ($\beta=.224, p<.05$). 05) are found to influence social pressure among former addicts. The findings have implications onthe government as well as the stakeholders towards its efforts in reducing drug problems and relapse rates among former addicts.*

Keywords-- stress; social environment; people under surveillance; drug addict; relapse.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian government is committed to combat drug problems. Various community outreach programmes have been implemented continuously to reduce drug problems (Qiu et al., 2015).Zarina, et al (2015) assert that the treatment and rehabilitation programmes conducted do not seem to have a positive impact on government's efforts in reducing drug problems. High number in drug relapse is seen to contributing to criminal activities (Nazira, Mohammad Rahim, Wan Shahrazad & Rozainee, 2019) and causing detrimental effects to physical and

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psychological aspects of individuals (Engku Mardiah et al., 2018). The drug addiction problem may endanger community and their lives, and increase the feelings of insecurity. Studies have stated that people with drug problems face difficulties in finding jobs and they are considered as a liability to an organisation (Ezarina, et al., 2016). Therefore, the problem of drug addiction needs to be completely eradicated by ensuring that society is free from drugs' influence. According to Zechariah, et al. (2012), social environmental factors have an impact towards the process of developing one's behavior and identity. An individual who suffers from drug addiction needs external supports from the environment that may free them from drug problems (al-Na'imi, 1994). However, leading a new life to retain recovery in a complex external environment gives great challenges to the addicts to recover. Samira, Haslinda, Nobaya and Ali (2010) argue that the influence of an uncontrolled social environment could contribute to the stress in an individual and could lead to the tendencies of relapse. Their research established peer pressure as an easy process to obtain drugs and contributes to pressure among former addicts. Their research also found that factors such as family problems, school environment and risky community residential could also trigger social pressure leading to relapse behaviour among drug addicts. According to them, social pressures among former addicts will be higher as they are living in a risky environment (Samira et al. 2010). Whereas, a study conducted by Fauziah, et al., (2019) has indicated that social pressure factors ($r=.606$, $p < 0.01$) showed a positive, moderate and significant relationship with drug craving among former drug addicts. This result reveals that higher levels of environmental pressure reported by former addicts increase their desire to use drugs. Therefore, the stakeholders must give emphasis on the importance of social pressure in planning programmes for drug prevention in the society especially adolescents (Rozmi, 2017).

Bhandari, Dahal and Neupane (2015) in their study has divided the external pressure into two elements, including peer pressure and family relationship problems. Bhandari, Dahal and Neupane (2015) also linked other contribution factors to social pressure among addicts that lead to relapse, including low educational status and unemployment. Fauziah et al., (2012) found that 93.6% of former addicts involved in her study were reported in high tendency to relapse. Meanwhile, study by Sau, Mukherjee, Manna and Sanyal (2013) found that lower economic status and peer pressure were related to an increase in risk of relapse. They also found that religion reported no significant factor for former addict to remain free from drug (Sau et al. 2013). Besides the research conducted by Sau et al. (2013), a study carried out by Yuet-Wah (2005) found that factors such as the risky external environment, unsupportive family members and association with friends who involved in drugs contribute to the social pressure among former addicts and these may affect recovery. Not only that, the ability to acquire drugs in an easy way has also been identified as a contributing factor to social pressure among addicts (Yuet-Wah 2005).

In contrast, the study conducted by Sharma, et al. (2012) found that there are various factors contributing to social pressure among drug addicts such as low education and poor economic condition, unemployment, family history with drug abuse and crime, and low family support. Drake, Wallach and McGovern (2005), on the other hand, relate social pressure with at-risk friends. Moreover, they also found that the disorganization of daily life routines, risky neighborhoods, low self-discipline in the process of recovery and the lack of social support to

abstinence are factors that contribute to social pressure that increase risk of relapse. Studies conducted by Fauziah & Naresh (2009) and Mahmud Mazlan, Schottenfeld & Chawarski (2006) also confirmed that social environmental factors have a significant relationship with drug craving and relapse tendency. To conclude, many studies demonstrate various factors contribute to relapse among drug addicts. Therefore, this study aims to identify the level of social pressure among former drug addicts and to identify internal and external factors contribute to social pressure among former drug addict.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using a quantitative cross-sectional survey. The data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple regression and stepwise tests. Data analysis was conducted by using the 'Statistical Package for the Social Science for Windows' software (SPSS). The Social Pressure Scale was used to measure the social pressure among the addicts. It contains 10 questions related to social pressure among former addicts. The reliability value for the scale was high at 0.840. This questionnaire was developed by Fauziah et al. (2017) by using a four-point Likert scale in which each item is scored either (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree and (4) strongly agree. By using this scale, the levels of social pressure were categorized based on the minimum score interpretation as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Minimum score interpretation table for social pressure among former addicts

Mean Score	Mean score interpretation
<0.20	Low level
2.01-3.00	Moderate level
3.01-4.00	High level

Data Analysis

In this study, descriptive analysis was used to answer the first objective of the study, that is to identify the level of social pressure among former addicts. Meanwhile multiple regression analysis was used to identify changes in two or more factors (independent variables) that contribute to changes in a dependent variable (Chua 2012). In this study, multiple regression analysis using stepwise method was used to measure the second research objective, that is to identify the influence of internal and external factors of social pressure among former drug addicts.

Population, Sample and Location of Study

In this study, the research population refers to former drug addicts who have completed and being released from rehabilitation programmes at the Cure and Care Rehabilitation Center (CCRC). During the fieldwork conducted, the participants were undergoing a surveillance programme by the National Anti-Drugs Agency (AADK). They are known as people under surveillance (OKP). Random sampling technique was used to select 380 former addicts. The

study stratified sample from five different zones in order to obtain a balance sample size to represent Malaysia. The AADK Monitoring Centers involved in this study are as follows: -

1. Southern Zone: AADK Johor and Negeri Sembilan
2. East Zone: AADK Kelantan and Terengganu
3. Central Zone: AADK Melaka and Selangor
4. Northern Zone: AADK Penang and Kedah
5. Sarawak Zone: AADK Sarawak

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social pressure is a situation or state of stress resulting from environmental conditions that could lead to relapse among former addicts. Based on the analysis, the overall findings found that majority former addicts reported low (48.9 percent) to moderate (47.1 percent) levels of social pressure. Only 3.9 percent of former addicts been identified to have high social pressure and need to be given proper attention by stakeholders to prevent them from relapse (Table 2).

Table 2: Respondents Social Pressure Level (n=380)

Level	n=380	Per cent (%)	Min
Low	189	48.9	
Moderate	179	47.1	2.08
High	15	3.9	
TOTAL		100	

Although majority of the former drug addicts show controlled social pressure level, there are two important things that stakeholders need to pay attention in relation to the social pressure aspect. First, the results show that 50 percent of the former addicts that are undergoing surveillance programmes still facing living environment that are exposed to drug addiction activity (item 1-Table 2). Meanwhile, 49.2 percent admitted that friends who lived in their neighborhood still gave them drugs (item 8). Neighbourhood that is still exposed to the danger of drug besides peer pressure is a factor that needs to be addressed by stakeholders to help former addicts who are trying to recover from drug reactivity and relapse.

Table 3:The Percentage of Social Pressure by Former Addicts

Bil.	Statement	Percent (%) / Number			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Social Pressure					
1.	My living environment is exposed to drug addiction	17.1 (65)	32.9 (125)	41.8 (159)	8.2 (31)
2.	I moved places a lot	33.7 (128)	47.6 (181)	14.7 (56)	3.9 (15)
3.	The place I live is unsafe	22.4 (85)	42.6 (162)	27.4 (104)	7.6 (29)
4.	My working environment is exposed to drugs	31.1 (118)	42.1 (160)	23.2 (88)	3.7 (14)
5.	My colleague is a former drug addict	27.4 (104)	40.0 (152)	27.1 (103)	5.5 (21)
6.	I have to pass by addicts area at my neighborhood	26.1 (99)	35.8 (136)	31.3 (119)	6.8 (26)
7.	Friends still persuade me to take drugs	30.3 (115)	33.2 (126)	31.8 (121)	4.7 (18)
8.	Friend did offer me drugs	21.6 (82)	29.2 (111)	43.2 (164)	6.1 (23)
9.	I am often approached by drug pusher	28.9 (110)	45.5 (173)	22.4 (85)	3.2 (12)
10.	Employer supplies drugs so I can work hard	55.3 (210)	34.2 (130)	7.1 (27)	3.4 (13)

Based on other aspects of the social pressure items, the study found that allof the former addicts that is currently attending the surveillance programme are still in control. The situation is being demonstrated by the research results which found that 81.3% of former addicts are not the people who moved places a lot (item 2) and have their own home. Most of the participants involved in this study still considered their home as safe (65 percent - item 3), working environment that are not expose to the danger of drug (65% - item 4) and have colleagues that are free from drugs (67.4% - item 5). The results of this study showed that only 38.1% of the former addicts still have to pass by addicts area in their neighbourhood and facing pressure where their friends still persuade them to use drugs (36.5% - item 7). According to a study conducted by Kelly, et al (2018), social pressure especially from friend could cause a particular former addict to relapse. A total of 74.4% former addicts involved in this study denied that they were

frequently approached by drug pusher (item 9). However a total of 25.6% admitted that they were still approached by drug pusher and asked them to use drugs again. Results of the research also found that 89.5% of the former addicts involved in this study did not face any employer-related problems. Only 10.5% of the former addicts admitted that employers at their workplace supply them with drugs to make them work hard (item 10).

Based on the analysis of the influence factors that contribute to social pressure among former addicts, the study found that there are three (3) factors that are drugs craving, family relationship conflict and emotional disturbance, which are the factors that have been identified as influencing social pressure among former addicts. Based on the analysis conducted, significantly, drug craving [$F(1,378) = 219.678, p < .05$] contributed 36.8 percent of the variance ($R^2 = .368$) to social pressure among former addicts. The result indicates that the drug craving factor ($\beta = .606, p < .05$) is a major indicator that can contribute to social pressure among former addicts. The combination of drug craving ($\beta = .436, p < .05$) and family relationship conflict ($\beta = .315, p < .05$) increased by 7 percent to the variance ($R^2 = .438$) in the criterion variable (social pressure). [$F = 2.377, p < .05$]. Emotional disturbance factor is also found to contribute to former addicts changes in social pressure because the combination of emotional disturbance ($\beta = .224, p < .05$) and family relationship conflict ($\beta = .225, p < .05$) increased to (45.7-43.8) percent or 1.9 to variance ($R^2 = .457$) in social pressure factors [$F = 3.376, p < .05$].

Table 4 : Predictors of social pressure among former drug addicts (n=380)

Model Summary					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.606 ^a	.368	.366	.43294	.368	219.678	1	378	.000
2	.662 ^b	.438	.435	.40872	.070	47.122	1	377	.000
3	.676 ^c	.457	.453	.40205	.020	13.610	1	376	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Drug Craving
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Drug Craving, Family Relationship Conflict
 c. Predictors: (Constant), Drug Craving, Family Relationship Conflict, Emotional Disturbance

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.085	.071			15.307	.000
	Drug Craving	.479	.032	.606		14.822	.000
2	(Constant)	.739	.084			8.829	.000
	Drug Craving	.345	.036	.436		9.502	.000

	Family Relationship Conflict	.320	.047	.315	6.865	.000
3	(Constant)	.658	.085		7.712	.000
	Drug Craving	.259	.043	.327	6.071	.000
	Family Relationship Conflict	.229	.052	.225	4.395	.000
	Emotional Disturbance	.204	.055	.224	3.689	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Pressure

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In summary, the study found that the level of social pressure among former addicts who released from the Drug Recovery Center are controllable. However, continuous monitoring is needed to reduce their tendency to relapse. There are few things that could be improved to ensure former addicts to maintain abstinence during the surveillance period and to manage their emotion in the pressured social environments. The aspect that should be noted by the Counselor for drug abuse is to pay attention to all aspects that has been identified in this study. The study found that some of the former addicts involved in the research were still experiencing social pressure in their neighbourhood. They were exposed to drug activities and affiliated with friends who offer drugs. These problems need to be addressed effectively so as to control the tendency of relapse among the former addicts. Therefore, the officers who responsible for the supervision should give attention on these aspects and address these issues during the consultation or counseling sessions. Relapse prevention plans and strategies to reduce the social pressure faced by former addicts need to be developed. The proposed relapse prevention action plans could be implemented with the cooperation of the stakeholders. The plans should emphasize aspects of drug craving problems, family relationship conflicts and emotional disturbances. These three factors are identified to reduce social pressure faced by former addicts and therefore increase likelihood into drug-free living environment and a new way of living.

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