

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Drug abuse is a major threat to safety, health, peace, harmony, economy, manpower and will affect the leadership in the future of the nation. According to reports issued by World Drug Report 2021, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates an increase of 11.0 per cent in drug abuse, where this increase is in line with the increase in world population estimates in 2030, as many as 299 million people (National Anti-Drugs Agency, 2020).

Meanwhile, according to statistics released by the National Anti-Drug Agency (NADA), the increase in the percentage of addicts nationwide every year came from the group most of the youth. These at-risk groups must be given attention by the government so that the country does not run out of human resources in the future. They are the country's assets that need to be given a role in the country's administration to not engage in immoral activities and ruin their future.

According to the World Drug Report 2021, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as a result of predictions, drug abuse in Malaysia is estimated to increase by 10.7 per cent, in line with the projected increase in population in Malaysia in 2025. National Anti-Drug Agency (NADA) has very clearly set a five-year goal, namely 'Controlled Drugs', in 2025. The projections show that in 2025, the threshold value of drug addicts among 100,000 Malaysians will be 737 people. The estimated value of this figure, the National Anti-Drug Agency (NADA), targets this number to be

controlled to less than or equal to 400 people only in line with the range accepted at the international level, which is between 400 to 1,000 per 100,000 people.

1.2 Background of Study

Theft problems that occur in the mosque and surau are synonymous with those involved with drug addiction. According to reports from the Sinar Harian newspaper dated January 14, 2022, in connection with the 19-year-old teenage case, who was arrested by the mosque for stealing the mosque fund. After being investigated by the police, this teenager has been involved with drug addiction over the past year. This was confirmed by Sungai Buloh District Police Chief, Superintendent Shafaaton Abu Bakar. (Harian, 2022).

When this problem occurs, it will build a negative perception among mosque committee members of drug addicts. Although there are drug rehabilitation programs involving the mosque, it is not enough to penetrate the built-in walls among mosque committee members against drug addicts. This is because most of these programs are one-off, not continuously. Among the programs implemented, for example, is the Community Setia Community Program, organized by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), in collaboration with the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Department (JAWI), the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), the Federal Drug Association (Eraser) and the Foundation Ihtimam Malaysia (YIM).

Drug rehabilitation requires the cooperation of all parties, not just the responsible agencies such as NADA. Therefore, mosques, as important members of the community, also need to play their part in helping rehabilitate the children involved in drug addiction. Hence, how does the mosque's role function if the views and perceptions of the mosque towards drug addicts are still high borders? Mosques need to return to their

role and diversity of functions that have been undeniable since the beginning of Islam (Aishah et al., 2011). Imams need to require additional mental health care and social service skill in order to play a potentially critical role in enhancing service availability for Muslim communities (Ali et al., 2005).

1.3 Problem of Statement

As we know, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), as the main leader, manages Islamic affairs in the country, is indirectly responsible for mosques in Malaysia and plays a role in addressing this issue through a religious approach. In the states that receive shared services, such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Melaka, and Negeri Sembilan, most of the mosque imams under the state are appointed officers from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).

According to statistics from the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), the percentage of Malay Muslims involved in drug addiction is 78.3% (74,768 people) compared to other races, which shows their involvement is still high drug addiction which will ruin their future. (National Anti-Drugs Agency, 2020). Therefore, the mosque should play its role by providing collaborative programs with government and private agencies to help children within the vicinity of the mosque who are struggling with drug addiction. Inter-agency cooperation programs should be further strengthened, such as the Rakan Setia Komuniti (RSK) program (Pengarah & Sosial, 1967), which was done before but held regularly, to achieve the big goal.

Based on the National Drug Policy (DDN) 2017 states three main concepts, namely multidisciplinary, comprehensive, and diverse, updated from DDN 1996 (National Anti-Drugs Agency Malaysia, 2019). This policy is very comprehensive and structured to prevent, treat, and rehabilitate, law enforcement and reduce drug addiction

problems. All parties must become this policy as a basis of reference and guidance in dealing with the drug problem in the country. The main goal of the National Drug Policy is to create a nation and Malaysians free from the threat of drug symptoms to ensure the well-being of society and maintain national stability and resilience. (National Anti-Drugs Agency Malaysia, 2019). It can be achieved through the core of the national drug policy: prevention education, treatment and rehabilitation, enforcement, harm reduction, and international cooperation

Studies prove that Islamic psychospiritual approaches are effective and can return them to *fitrah* naturally (Wazir et al., 2020). Taharem (2004) also suggested that an Islamic spiritual approach be used in drug prevention strategies. It is because he sees a well-established spirituality capable of forming a strong and long-term fortress of prevention. It was also supported by Rushdan (2015), Izwan, Saiful (2015), Sabir, Fadzli (2014), and Shafie (2006), who insisted that spirituality formed in Islam could be an effective alternative in dealing with drugs.

In Islam, the mosque is the place that can refer to anything problems had happened in the Muslim community. Hence, to mobilize the role of the mosque to implement recovery programs, a study should be held to view and understand the Imam's perception and views on drug addiction in Kuala Lumpur. This study is to understand and explore the priest's perception of drug addiction in terms of attitude, behaviour or action and the way of drug addicts.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study

1. To identify an Imam's perception of drug addiction among their community.
2. To understand factors that contribute to the formation of the Imam's attitude toward drug addicts.
3. To explore the experience of Imam handling drug addicts at their respective mosques.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the perception of Imams on drug addiction in their community?
2. What factors contribute to the Imam's attitude on drug addiction?
3. What experiences can Imam share in handling drug addiction in their respective mosques?

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Definition of perception

According to Oxford Dictionary, perception is the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. According to Joseph Reitz, "Perception includes all those processes by which an individual receives information about his environment—seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling." According to B. V. H. Gilmer, "Perception is the process of becoming aware of situations, of adding meaningful associations to sensations." Uday Pareek said perception can be defined as "the process of receiving, selecting, organizing, interpreting, checking, and reacting to sensory stimuli or data." According to S. P. Robbins, perception can be defined as "the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environments." Perception is the process of recognizing,

organizing, and interpreting sensory information. It deals with the human senses and generates signals from the environment through the five sense organs: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste (Gellatly, 1999).

2. Definition of Drug Addiction

By the definition of WHO (World Health Organization), a drug is a chemical substance of natural, synthetic, and semi-synthetic origin intended for therapeutic, diagnostic, and palliative use or for modifying physiological and psychological functions of man and animal. Meanwhile, the word “addiction” (from the Latin *addicere*) is a term that has been used since the 15th century to denominate a state of being surrendered (devoted) to something habitually or compulsively. Addiction is manifested by a high motivation to use a drug in spite of negative outcomes. Substance abuse and drug addiction are typically characterized by intense and, at times, uncontrollable drug cravings, along with compulsive drug seeking and use that take place at the expense of most other activities and persist even in the face of devastating consequences (NIDA, 2020).

Drug addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disease that results from the prolonged effects of drugs on the brain. Drug addiction is a serious public health crisis that affects almost every sphere in a community in one way or another, and this, in turn, can lead to social disharmony, severe crimes, degraded social status and most possibly physical and mental health deterioration. Drug addiction is defined as a behavioural problem associated with the abuse of psychoactive substances, which have damaging effects on the body and cause subjective problems (NIDA, 2020).

3. Mosque leaders (Imams)

Generally, in the Muslim community, there has a religious leader in every area or called that is *koryah*. They are known as the ‘imam’ who primarily leads congregational prayers in the mosque setting (Zeidan, n.d.). Besides that, imams also have taken on additional roles within the Muslim community, including pastoral and advisory roles, conducting marriage ceremonies, teaching Islamic studies to children, and arranging study circles for men and women. Indeed, they are often regarded as spiritual role models that can lead by example, play an important role in communal decision-making and act as the gatekeepers for many social and cultural issues. As such, imams may have the ability to positively facilitate local health promotion campaigns and thereby reduce existing health inequalities within this population.

In Malaysia, Imam refers to individuals appointed by religious authorities under their respective states. However, there are also religious officers appointed by the Public Service Commission of Malaysia (SPA) are stationed at JAKIM and JAIN for the state of shared services, such as Wilayah Persekutuan, Pulau Pinang, Melaka, Sabah dan Sarawak. These states are states with no King, the head of religion for these states is the Yang DiPertuan Agong. At the same time, Yang DiPertuan Agong will continue to be the head of his state's religion. (portal rasmi parlimen Malaysia, n.d.). Usually, those officers appointed by the state government are placed at JAIN and mosques under the state government. According to a study, the role of Imams from an Islamic perspective is not only to lead the obligatory prayers in the mosque, but they have a responsibility to the surrounding community, for example, being educators and models to the community, especially to adolescents and youth (Mustafa et al., 2017). Therefore, rehabilitating the parishioners who are involved with drug addiction as well is the responsibility of the Imam.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The finding and results in this research will be applicable to only Imams under Federal Territory Islamic Religious Department (JAWI), not to all other religious agencies in Malaysia. The limitation in this discussion research is only to imams in the mosques which are supervised and monitored under Federal Territory Islamic Religious Department (JAWI) and Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP). This study will be looking at which areas and factors build the perception of Imam on drug addiction, and to find the result on this study, an interview method will be used which focuses only on the perception of Imams on drug addiction in terms of attitude, behaviour, the lifestyle of the drug addict.

1.8 Summary

This chapter is an introduction chapter to define the discussion study on the background, problem statement, objectives, research question, the operational definitions of terms and limitations of research, and summary. The further chapter will discuss and focus on literature review that is important for this study's objective.