

CHAPTER V :DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the summary of the main findings obtained from the findings of this study on the acceptance level towards decriminalization of medical marijuana in Malaysia and the perceived risk of medical marijuana use among police officers and substance abusers in Kuala Lumpur are explained. The summary is based on research questions, results, and comparisons with another study. The limitations of the study and recommendations will also be described. The proposal is based on the conclusion and purpose of the study.

5.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDING

Overall, the data analysis shows that the average acceptance level towards the decriminalization of medical marijuana in Malaysia among police officers and substance abusers in Kuala Lumpur is considerably high. Similar findings were observed in another study (Ramat Dapari et al., 2022) which showed that the current acceptance level towards the decriminalization of medical marijuana among the adult population in Selangor is considerably high. The findings might reflect that people who live in the urban area such as Kuala Lumpur urban residents are more aware of the risks associated with substance abuse and addiction (Oshi et al., 2019). Kuala Lumpur also has the greatest data network coverage in Malaysia and can contribute to a higher information disclosure factor than other states.

However, the analysis shows a significantly different acceptance level toward the decriminalization of medical marijuana in Malaysia among police officers and substance abusers, where the level of acceptance toward the decriminalization for

substance abusers is higher than police officers. This finding may be influenced by several factors, including the respondents' exposure to marijuana. Similar findings were observed in another study by Alexis et al. (2021) suggested that substance abusers have unique perspectives on legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana based on their experiences. Marijuana is a substance derived from plants, and its addiction or dependence is less than amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) produced from synthetic drug substances. The AADK (2020) reveals that the abuse of ATS-type drugs is significantly higher than that of marijuana-type drugs. Even these two drugs can be obtained in the market with prices that are not much different. In addition, continuous consumption of ATS drugs can affect the addict's mental state and cause psychosis compared to marijuana also the usage of medicinal marijuana as genuine medical therapy might be considered Lindsey et al. (2019).

The acceptance of marijuana might be explained on the relationship between drugs and criminal behavior. In Malaysia, cannabis drug users have a lower violent crime arrest index than those who take ATS drugs. The crimes often associated are robbery, murder, fighting and rape. Rebecca et al. (2020) suggests a strong possibility of a relationship between the use of methamphetamine and the acquisition and violent crimes among those who depend on this type of drug. At the same time, the comparison between cannabis and alcohol shows that alcohol is often associated with the road accident index compared to cannabis-type drugs. This phenomenon can affect the perception of police officers on the effects of marijuana drug use. A similar finding has been observed in another study showing that most Metropolitan police forces in the United States believe that marijuana is physically and mentally dangerous but not as dangerous as alcohol because it is more readily available and causes more accidents (Beck et al., 1982).

The analysis of this study also shows that there is no significant difference in the risk perception of the use of medical marijuana among police officers and substance abusers, where both are uncertain about the risk of medical marijuana use, with the group of substance abusers having a perceive risk medical marijuana use is low compared to police officers. The same findings were observed in other studies, which showed that the majority of university staff and students in Malaysia have little knowledge related to marijuana and the risks of users (Govarthnapany et al. 2021; Mohamad Hashim Othman et al., 2018). This situation may be due to the lack of scientific research and discussion in open forums about marijuana and its risks in Malaysia. This is a bad phenomenon because it can expose society to the risk of marijuana abuse and already happened in Thailand, where the public's lack of understanding and awareness of the benefits and harms of medical cannabis has contributed to the increasing number of adverse events reports for cannabis use there (Nantthasorn Zinboonyahgoon et al., 2021).

This study's findings align with Albert Bandura and Richard Walters's theory in the social cognitive theory that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between the person, environment, behavior and a cognitive that considers past experiences (LaMorte, 2019). Although the respondents have an uncertain perception related to the risks of using marijuana in medicine, experience with the effects of using marijuana and observation through the relationship between drugs and criminal behavior in the environment have taught and formed confidence that led to a high acceptance of the decriminalization of medical marijuana among others. This acceptance may also be influenced by the knowledge they obtain from the internet regarding the implementation of the decriminalization of medical marijuana in other countries, including Malaysia's neighboring country Thailand.

5.1 LIMITATIONS

Some limitations exist in this study and can be developed in the future. Among the limitations is that this study only examined differences between the acceptance levels of decriminalizing medical marijuana and respondents' perceptions of medical marijuana use. However, it did not assess the dynamic relationship between sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and respondent lifestyle due to the cross-sectional study design.

Additionally, this study represents acceptance only towards the decriminalization of medical marijuana among police officers and substance abusers in Kuala Lumpur, which is a highly urbanized state and may be associated with a high level of awareness of medical marijuana policy and does not explore the factors that influence those choices.

These findings of this study also cannot be generalized to the entire population in Kuala Lumpur because it is only limited to two small groups compared to the ratio of the population in Kuala Lumpur. Increasing the sample size of respondents is needed in order to be able to provide an overview of the current acceptance level towards the decriminalization of medical marijuana in Kuala Lumpur.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Several improvements can be made in the future to ensure that cannabis-related research continues. Among the improvements is an increase in the sample size to represent the general opinion among the residents of Kuala Lumpur. In addition, the location of this study also needs to be expanded to other states throughout Malaysia, especially states that have a low level of economic development and information exposure, in order to see if there is a difference in the level of acceptance of

decriminalizing medical marijuana among urban and rural residents. A study on the dynamic relationship between sociodemographic, socioeconomics, and the respondent's lifestyle also needs to be done to understand the relationship of these factors in influencing their acceptance towards the decriminalization of medical marijuana and the perceived risk of medical marijuana use.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study results show that the current acceptance level towards decriminalizing medical marijuana among police officers and substance abusers in Kuala Lumpur is considerably high. However, there is a high level of uncertainty among these two groups regarding the perception of medical marijuana use, with no significant difference between these two groups. Thus, further exploration of this phenomenon is needed, specifically by increasing the sample size and expanding the study location to other states in Malaysia to raise awareness about marijuana.