

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions derived from the findings of this study on the perception of people in Padang Terap on the illegalization of Kratom under the Dangerous Drugs Act (1952). The conclusions were based on the purpose, research questions and study results. The implications of these findings and the recommendations will also be explained. Recommendations were based on the conclusions and purpose of the study.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study found that uncertain income situation might be related to the respondents to sell Kratom as their side and additional income. This situation occurs because the existing income from rice and rubber cannot cover their daily needs, especially for respondents who may have experienced previous crop failures. A previous study has supported the study by Sukor, et al. (2017). The study found that the income from rubber and paddy crops fluctuates, causing most farmers in the state of Kedah to choose to sell Kratom as additional income. The study's results also found that the income of households that depend on commodity crops cannot continue living. All respondents chose other alternatives by doing activities that generate side income to cover the daily financial burden. The findings of this study have been supported the previous findings which examined how non-farm income contributed towards poverty reduction among agricultural households in Malaysia (Mat et al., 2012; Nathan & Mohd Rosli, 2016).

Although the income from Kratom has raised the people's economic standard in Kedah, the government has proposed to amend the existing act to place Kratom under the Dangerous

Drugs Act. To the results of this study, the respondents strongly oppose the proposal because they know the punishment of the act is very severe compared to the Poison Act. It supported by Sukor, et al. (2017) who studied the reaction and action stakeholder Kratom in Kedah against Dangerous Drugs Act 1952. The results of the interviews and group discussions showed that the majority appears to agree that government should not implement the law on Kratom. In addition, respondents also think that Kratom is not a drug and does not contain harmful substances like drugs. It is a type of leaf with nutrients and benefits in medicine, especially in restoring energy, that is suitable for use by farmers.

From the study results, all respondents knew that if the proposal to amend the law was implemented, they believed their income would be affected. In addition, they know that the punishment under the Dangerous Drugs Act is very severe such as life imprisonment and hanging if they are found guilty. However, all respondents responded to continue selling Kratom secretly despite knowing the consequences of doing so. All respondents think a stable and strong household income can only be felt if they continue the activity.

It parallels with the study (Harry, 2021), which examines the connections between economic circumstances, crime, and women. The study stated that to address economic insecurity by getting quick money, many women who have received death sentences in Malaysia were employed in precarious jobs, including drug trafficking, knowingly or unknowingly. Therefore, it could be manifested that the financial push factor has encouraged someone to continue to do something even if it is illegal.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This section provides information about limitations of this research. In research, limitations and delimitations are key factors that establish boundaries, exceptions, reservations, and qualifications (Creswell, 2007). Fundamentally, limitations are conditions that restrict the spectrum of research and may affect the research outcomes; and are beyond the researcher's control. There are three primary and important limitations in this research

- 1) The research was conducted in Padang Terap area only. Therefore, the research results could not be compared with other communities and may not be representative of the broader population.
- 2) This research only involved three respondents. The limited sample size can restrict the external validity of the research and limit the ability to make broad generalizations.
- 3) This researcher not using triangulation to collect the data and relies solely on a single method of source data that is interviewed only, limiting the breadth and depth of information obtained. This limitation can result in a narrower understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

The descriptive nature of qualitative research can be directed toward many opportunities for future research as below:

1. Conduct research to analyze the potential profitability of Kratom cultivation, especially in the southern state. The study should include analyzing market trends, consumer preferences, and regulatory frameworks to guide farmers in making informed decisions about entering or expanding the Kratom industry.

2. Conduct comprehensive studies on Kratom illegalization over social and public health consequences and identify the potential shifts to alternative substances.
3. Broader views from the multiple groups such as police officers, medical officers, youth, and social workers should be interviewed to gain more perspectives on the implications of Kratom to the community.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This qualitative research aimed to conduct a descriptive phenomenological study to explore, understand, and describe the Padang Terap community's perception of the illegalization of Kratom under the Dangerous Drugs Act (1952). This research has revealed for (9) themes from 13 sub-themes that were concluded in the findings of this research

From this research, I had opportunities to scrutinize more deeply about factors of respondents to sell Kratom. There are other determining factors, such as the belief that Kratom is an ancient herbal medicine and the simple Kratom care factor that I obtained from the results of this study.

This study also showed the perception of respondents from different angles. The respondent's perception and belief in Kratom, such as the belief that "Kratom is not a drug but rather a herbal remedy with potential therapeutic properties" should be considered cultural factors in considering the illegalization of kratom. The results of this study might be beneficial to inform the government to make a comprehensive study, especially related to the socioeconomics of the local population that depends on Kratom sales. If there is no comprehensive study, the population's source of income may be affected and impact poverty.

The results of this study can also help the government to take proactive measures by increasing the market price of rubber and rice so that the prices of these commodities can be adjusted and reach a level that can help farmers get out of poverty. Finally, the results of this

study can also help farmers to explore the possibility of diversifying crops to reduce dependence on Kratom cultivation. It can help mitigate the risks associated with legal restrictions or regulation changes.

