CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The focus of the current study is to understand the relation between the influence of peers on tobacco use and the academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan. The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. Chapter five will provide a discussion of the findings of the study about the theoretical foundation of this study. Finally, a conclusion will be provided, followed by the study's limitations and recommendations.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is to answer all the research questions and achieve the research objectives and the findings of the study, and then compare the given results with previous studies. This section tests the hypotheses to answer the research questions that have been posted at an early stage. Accordingly, the analysis in hypothesis testing is done one by one based on the need to meet the purpose of the study.

5.2.1 The Level of Influences of Peers on Tobacco Use Among Lower Secondary School Students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan

H_{01} There is no significant mean difference in the level of influence of peers on tobacco use among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

H_{03} There is no significant difference in the influences of peers on tobacco use based on socioeconomic status among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

H_{04} There is no significant difference in the influences of peers on tobacco use based on gender among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

As mentioned in chapter one, the study's main objective is to identify the level of influence of peers on tobacco use among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan. This study's findings show a significant mean difference between the level of influence of peers on tobacco use among respondents. Results on the influence of peers on tobacco use are moderate among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan. Benjamin (2012) revealed that earlier smoking initiation was associated with sustained smoking through adulthood. Hence, the findings are consistent with the study of Liu et al. (2017). Their study shows that comparisons of adolescent smoking intensity in situations of conflicting normative influence show that peer model behaviour is more influential than parent model behaviour.

The comparison between the environments where only peers or only parents smoke is of particular interest. Peer behaviour is more influential in driving adolescents to use tobacco than bad examples provided by their parents. Furthermore, the results show that peer behaviours (i.e. descriptive norms) are more influential for adolescents to become "light" and "heavy smokers," whereas smoking approval by peers is also essential for adolescents to become accustomed to smoking. Peer influence is potent during adolescence. Adolescents at this stage begin to seek autonomy and explore their identities by distancing themselves from their parents and seeking group membership in their social environment.

Adolescents spend more unsupervised time with friends and peers during this stage, often at the expense of less time with parents, and begin to place more excellent value on peers' opinions, acceptance, comfort, and advice. As a result, they are incredibly vulnerable to peer pressure to engage in risky behaviours such as smoking. The results in this study supported the findings of the previous research done by Rivis et al. (2003), where the more prevalent smoking is among peers, the more desirable and adaptive this behaviour appears to adolescents, and the more likely they are to mimic it. Apart from that, it is also consistent with research done by Steinberg et al. (2007), where the result shows adolescents may be influenced by the smoking behaviour of their peers in different ways, often without being invited to smoke but by simply observing smoking behaviours of salient and valued referents.

Neuroscience studies have addressed the neural bases of adolescent susceptibility to risky social influence, which supports this logic; moreover,

according to these studies by Chein et al. (2010), Pfeifer et al. (2012), Falk et al. (2012) and Falk et al. (2014) report that adolescents are more vulnerable to peer influence than other age groups, owing in part to heightened reactivity within affective and motivational brain systems, which can be especially sensitive in the presence of peers. This context-modulated sensitivity may highlight the social benefits of fitting in and the costs of not fitting in. Undoubtedly, most adolescent smokers report that they began smoking with friends and obtained their first cigarettes from friends (Yang et al., 2011).

Following smoking initiation, adolescents' smoking behaviours may be further maintained or escalated by peer influence, and they can also reciprocally reinforce their peers' smoking (de Vries et al., 2006). These results align with a current study by Wongtongkam et al. (2014), has investigated the risk and protective factors for substance abuse in a sample of 1778 Thai students attending technical colleges in the provinces of Bangkok and Nakhon Ratchasima and confirmed that peer pressure is a significant factor in Thai adolescents' participation in substance abuse. This study's findings show there is no significant mean influence of peers on tobacco use in a lower secondary school based on gender between females and males among the respondents.

Meanwhile, this study proves that the influence of peers on tobacco use for females is most substantial than for males. It is in line with the study by Mercken et al. (2010), which found that only female networks showed support for influence among friends from observing smoking-related friend selection in both male and female networks. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with

McMillan et al. (2018), showing that the girls' delinquent behaviour is more susceptible to influence, and girls are more likely to choose friends who share their smoking habits.

The study by Liao et al. (2013) examined the changes in friends' and parental influences on cigarette smoking across two developmentally distinct social environments for adolescents: junior high school and high school reported that during ninth and tenth grades, girls had a more significant influence on cigarette smoking than boys. Friends' influence on boys increased from ninth to eleventh grade, while friends and parents had less influence on girls from tenth to twelfth grade. Boys tend to foster friendship through shared behaviours, whereas girls focus on emotional sharing. As the groups grow together over time, boys may adopt their friends' risky behaviours, such as smoking. The analysis also revealed that social-economic status in the range of RM1, 001-RM3, 000 has a more significant influence of peers on tobacco use than other social-economic statuses.

It has been proposed that the higher intention to start smoking (which is likely to result in actual smoking behaviour later in life) is caused by the higher smoking prevalence of others in the social environment of children with low social and economic status. These research findings are parallel and consistent with Madarasová Gecková et al. (2005) findings that adolescent smoking is influenced indirectly by socioeconomic status through the smoking habits of parents and peers. Furthermore, this study is in line with the study conducted by Cremers et al. (2014) found that children of smokers are more likely to have

susceptible smoking cognitions and start smoking, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

A study by de Vries (1995) about 12 to 16-year-old Dutch students found that those with lower socioeconomic status had more positive attitudes toward smoking than those with higher socioeconomic status. These research findings are dissimilar from de Vries's (1995) findings that adolescents with a higher socioeconomic status perceived a more vital link between smoking. High socioeconomic status adolescents associated smoking with the discovery of taste and relief from boredom, whereas low socioeconomic status adolescents perceived smoking as a means of meeting people. Equally, previous research confirmed socioeconomic differences in adolescent health risk behaviour (Geckova et al., 2004) and significant parent and peer influence on adolescent health risk behaviour (Geckova et al., 2001).

The peers' smoking behaviour will be the strongest predictor of adolescent smoking behaviour, that parents' smoking behaviour will influence adolescent's smoking behaviour directly, but also indirectly through their influence on peers' smoking behaviour, and that parents' and peers' smoking behaviour will influence adolescent's smoking behaviour indirectly. These hypotheses lead us to a hypothetical model of the relationships between social-economic status, smoking by parents, smoking by peers, and adolescents' smoking behaviour. Similarly, Pearson et al. (2006) found that famous students from more affluent schools were more likely to smoke than previous findings, which show that schools with a

higher smoking prevalence have a lower socioeconomic composition (Alexander et al. 2001, Fletcher et al., 2012).

5.2.2 The Level of Academic Motivation Among Lower Secondary School Students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan

H_{02} There is no significant mean difference in the level of academic motivation among lower secondary school student in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

H_{05} There is no significant difference in the level of academic motivation students in lower secondary school based on gender among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

H_{06} There is no significant difference in the level of academic motivation students in lower secondary school based on socioeconomic status among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

In this study, which investigated the level of academic motivation based on gender among lower secondary school students, it was found that the academic motivation of the participants was at a high level. It clearly shows that respondents who currently attend school have high motivation. This will also make it easier for them to achieve their goals and objectives. Motivation is also thought to get people going, keeps them going, and determine where they go (Slavin, 2006). Self-determination theory (Ryan et al., 2000) distinguishes two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is an inner force that

drives students to participate in academic activities because they are interested in learning and enjoy the process of learning (Schiefele et al., 1991).

According to Harter (1978), intrinsic motivation is the true drive-in human nature that drives individuals to seek out and face new challenges. Their abilities are tested, and they are eager to learn even when no external rewards are available. Intrinsically motivated students seek understanding and mastery of science content and skills (Cavallo et al., 2003). Highly intrinsically motivated students can learn new concepts and demonstrate a better understanding of the subject matter (Stipek et al., 1988). Extrinsic motivation, instead of intrinsic motivation, motivates students to engage in academic tasks for external reasons. Parental expectations, expectations of other trusted role models, earning potential to enrol in a course later, and good grades are examples of extrinsic motivators.

According to Benabou et al. (2003), extrinsic motivation promotes effort and performance, with rewards serving as positive reinforcers for the desired behaviour. Extrinsic motivation typically yields immediate results and necessitates less effort than intrinsic motivation (Ryan et al., 2000). The disadvantage is that extrinsic motivators frequently divert students' attention away from authentic independent learning. Another issue with extrinsic motivators is that they rarely work in the long run. Students lose motivation when the rewards are removed (DeLong et al., 2002). Extrinsically motivated students tend to focus on getting better grades and receiving rewards. Biehler et al. (1990) believed that extrinsic motivational factors could reduce students' intrinsic motivation.

According to Carvalho (2016), gender differences and motivation to learn by participating in academic activities may stem from different academic and social expectation patterns for males and females, despite the cultural norms in which men are more masculine and assertive than women. These findings are consistent with previous literature. For example, Broussard et al. (2004), Skaalvik et al. (2006), and Singh et al. (2002) found a significant relationship between academic performance and motivation. It was also found that female students have higher academic motivation than their male peers. These findings corroborate earlier findings of Asimaki et al. (2013), Carvalho (2016), Duckworth et al. (2015), Khaola et al. (2019), and Richardson et al. (2007), Vallerand et al. (1992), and Voyer et al. (2014).

Evidence suggests that women's career expectations have become more like men's, though women have maintained their focus on interpersonal goals. In this respect, many studies stated that women are more motivated for academic activities and exhibit more positive affective characteristics than men (Asimaki et al., 2013). These results align with other studies by Chee et al. (2005) and indicate that women are more likely to possess an academic ethic than men and that women also tend to have higher GPAs. However, these research findings are dissimilar from Greene et al. (2004) findings report that men had more excellent range but fewer goals than women.

The results in this study supported the findings of the previous research done by Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat et al. (2016) found that students with high socioeconomic status have high academic achievement than students with low

socioeconomic status. The analysis also revealed that students with a social and economic status (SES) of RM7, 000 and above had a higher academic motivation. Parental income as an indicator of SES reflects the student's potential for social and economic resources. Because it is established at a young age, parental education is regarded as one of the most stable components of SES. Furthermore, parental education predicts parental income; income and education are highly correlated (Sirin, 2005).

The positive relationship between socioeconomic status and children's achievement is well established (Sirin, 2005). The higher the level of education, occupational prestige, and income of the parents, the better the children's academic motivation, and vice versa. Poverty and low socioeconomic status are associated with various adverse child outcomes, including low IQ, educational attainment, achievement, and increased social-emotional problems. Parental education is an essential indicator of socioeconomic status and a unique predictor of child educational achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005). Parents who are not well educated may lack the ability or motivation to provide tutoring for their children's academic achievement.

This may cause children's academic difficulties to worsen over time. Low occupational status or prestige generally indicates heavy physical labour, long working hours, low wages, and unstable employment opportunities (with a relatively high probability of being laid off). This may require parents to devote time and energy that would otherwise be spent on supporting their children's education. Previous research has found that parents' occupational prestige is

related to their involvement and engagement in activities with their children, which are related to their children's achievement (Hill et al., 2004). In terms of income, low-income families may be unable to provide necessary living goods such as a home, a study area, or a computer, as well as other supplements such as extracurricular books, newspapers, and magazines for children.

Cognitive neuroscience research has revealed a link between family income and children's academic performance in recent years. Income is inversely proportional to brain surface area. Slight differences in income were associated with relatively significant differences in brain surface area among children from lower-income families, whereas similar income increments were associated with more minor differences in the surface area among children from higher-income families. These connections were most robust in areas supporting executive functions, language, and reading (Noble et al., 2015). In other words, income is most strongly related to brain structure and reading among the most disadvantaged children. It is also consistent with research by Caldwell et al. (1996), where the result shows that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds also had lower success expectations and intrinsic motivation.

Socioeconomic advantage and achievement motivation are important academic performance mediators. Low motivation is a critical factor in student achievement, particularly for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. To increase motivation, students must become active participants in their learning while teachers take on a less controlling role. This motivation factor also influences learning style differences. These research findings are dissimilar from

Kim et al. (2002) and Kim et al. (2018) findings that their poorer middle-school classmates performed better academically than their wealthier peers. Based on interviews with 48 respondents, they discovered that students from lower-income families were more motivated to advance in life through academic achievement.

In China, there is an adage that "children from poor families take on responsibilities early." Students from low-income families grow up in a challenging environment. They may want to change their current situation more urgently than other students, and they may believe that doing so will be easier if they study harder and perform better in school. In other words, family SES influences individual success differently depending on the motivation.

5.2.3 The Relationship Between Influences of Peers on Tobacco Use and Academic Motivation Among Lower Secondary School Students In Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

H_{07} There is no significant relationship between influences of peers on tobacco use and academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

Based on the Pearson's r correlation coefficient analysis result, it was found that the positive relationship is fragile, implying that the greater the influence of peers on tobacco, the greater the academic motivation among lower secondary school students. According to the US Department of Health and

Human Services (2010 and 2014), cigarette smoking has serious health and social consequences and lowers students' academic performance. Empirical studies have proven that smoking is associated with low academic performance among university students (Attalla et al., 2020). Other research has suggested that the link between academic performance and smoking stems from the marginalisation of low-performing students.

These research findings are parallel and consistent with Elstad (2010), adolescents who perform poorly may feel marginalised by teachers and peers who perform well. They are less likely to receive others' social, emotional, and academic support. Educational differences in health behaviours may be due to how education forces adolescents into hierarchies of learning performance and social prospects, with corresponding moral recognition inequalities. These experiences are likely to shape adolescents' identities and behavioural preferences. Motivations such as communicating stress, adjusting to future socioeconomic environments, and opposing social authorities who have denied them social value may contribute to a higher prevalence of unhealthy behaviours among low-achieving adolescents.

It is concluded that a social causation perspective may help investigate the relationship between adolescents' educational careers and health-related practices. As a result, they are more likely to band together and engage in deviant behaviour, such as breaking school rules and smoking, to establish a social identity (Chen et al., 2009).

According to Dimaggio's theory of social network-induced inequality, adolescents' social ties to students who smoke and perform similarly contribute to the association between academic performance and smoking. This, in turn, may exacerbate early socioeconomic smoking disparities (DiMaggio et al., 2012). The composition of friendship ties among students is influenced by the school type imposed by the educational system. Adolescents with higher academic motivation are more likely to attend schools with a stronger academic focus and a focus on university degrees, whereas adolescents with lower academic motivation may attend schools with a vocational focus (Huisman et al. (2010).

5.3 Limitation

There are two significant limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. First, the study focused on time constraints. Due to Pandemic Covid-19, the researcher faced various problems collecting data from respondents. In the beginning, the researcher plans to collect data in Temerloh, Pahang, in February before the end of the school holiday begins. However, the Education Cluster of Covid-19 involving school students has emerged, causing the original plan to be cancelled. Therefore, the researcher uses the following plan to collect data in Kelantan after students enter school in the 2023 school session in March because participants are only available during that period. Second, this study's limitation in gathering data is due to the reason of the Covid-19 pandemic, in which close physical contact is still strictly prohibited and is needed to maintain the social distancing policy to avoid the rapid increase of cases.

Initially, questionnaires will be used to collect data, but this has been changed due to the researcher's inability to obtain permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct the data collection process. The researcher decided against using the online platform method (google form). This method is problematic in persuading invited participants to participate in the study. This situation is due to a lack of cooperation from the participants. The amount of time required, a sense that the incentive was not worth the time, confusion, or suspicion about the nature of the study, or simply the levels of prior commitments that participants had during the daytime. Furthermore, obstacles such as difficulties accessing respondents during school holidays cause the researcher to reconsider using the questionnaire instrument.

The researcher loves to raise the data through questionnaires and surveys, which can be used in conjunction with more extensive interviews. The type of questions we include in questionnaires, like in interviews and other similar methods, will make participants feel at ease. They should also be posed in a non-intrusive manner so that participants do not get the impression that we are judging their way of life, beliefs about different languages, or linguistic behaviour. Second, this quantitative study, which used a questionnaire survey, has inherent response bias. This assessment's survey instruments were self-report assessments presented by students based on their subjective perceptions. Some respondents may respond to the survey with a careless attitude and prejudice.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

This study can be used to inform future substance abuse prevention programs for the target adolescents. It can also help them enhance public knowledge about tobacco and its associated risk factors.

5.4.1 School based interventions

To date, school-based interventions have received most of the investment in smoking prevention efforts Curry et al. (2003). There is widespread agreement that interventions must begin early, and many interventions now begin in the primary grades. Booster sessions in later grades are also acknowledged. Thomas et al. (2013) reported that school-based interventions, such as, were effective in lowering long-term smoking rates.

5.4.2 Parental Collaboration

Parents should pay more attention and supervise their children to protect them from the negative influences of their peers. Meanwhile, one strategy for increasing the effectiveness of school-based programmes is to involve parents in tobacco prevention by assigning family-oriented homework to children. There is evidence that parental involvement in school-based programmes reduces adolescent smoking initiation. Prior studies reported reductions in smoking initiation and modest, long-term effects on tobacco use prevalence among youth in a series of papers summarising the results of a family-based tobacco and alcohol prevention intervention.

Recently study discovered promising effects on tobacco use prevention after a 4-year follow-up for a multisession group education intervention with parents that was broadly focused on substance use prevention. Families were identified in this study using random-digit-dial surveys, and those assigned to the intervention group received a series of mailed workbooks and outreach phone counselling calls. In another study, empirical studies evaluated family communications as one component of a multicomponent community-based intervention to prevent adolescent tobacco use as an adjunct to a school-based prevention programme. Although the effects were not consistent over the five years of follow-up, the results showed a reduction in the overall prevalence of tobacco use five years after the intervention.

5.4.3 The Health-Based Intervention

The students received health-based smoking prevention knowledge and skills as part of the health-based intervention. Over eight weeks, the programme curriculum included classroom sessions on the following topics: tobacco smoking, the prevalence and incidence of tobacco smoking, the adverse effects of smoking, smoking laws, and cigarette refusal techniques, including stress management. Lectures, demonstrations, and active learning activities such as role-playing, playing games/sports, and storytelling was used as teaching method.

5.4.4 The Islamic-Based Intervention

Students in this programme learned and practised smoking prevention techniques based on Islamic teaching. This intervention included eight two-hour classroom sessions focusing on the fundamental concepts of Islam, health concepts in Islam, smoking behaviour in Islamic society, Islamic law regarding smoking, the dangers of smoking, and healthy living techniques in Islam without smoking. The teaching methods were comparable to the health-based intervention.

5.5.5 Peer and Social Network Approaches to Health Promotion

Peer-led approaches, such as ASSIST (A Stop Smoking in Schools Trial), have much to offer to deliver health promotion messages. Previous research has found a link between peer influence and adolescent smoking behaviour (Choi et al., 2013). There are also opportunities for personal development for the peer supporter (e.g., increased knowledge, communication skills, confidence, and self-esteem) (Forrest et al., 2002). Furthermore, because peer educators are often of a similar age, they can communicate less formally than in teacher-led, classroom-based programmes. Evidence also suggests peer-led health promotion is more acceptable and credible among young people.

5.5 Conclusion

The study's main objective was to evaluate peers' influences on tobacco use and academic motivation in lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas,

Kelantan. Based on the empirical studies highlighted, it has been proven that the issue of influences of peers on tobacco use among lower secondary school students should not be taken for granted by all parties. The effects of risky behaviour, notably smoking, not only affect the academic motivation of the student himself, but even worse, it can harm physical side effects that include psychological or cognitive effects in the long term. Furthermore, the popularity of e-cigarettes and vaping among students has ballooned almost out of control.

This objective was achieved through several steps. In the first step, the level of influence of peers on tobacco use and the level of academic motivation among students was defined. Subsequently, both variables were studied thoroughly, particularly regarding gender and socioeconomic status. Differential tests were also performed. Adolescents observe and imitate people they are socially associated with, and the normative factors sent out by reference groups are essential determinants of their smoking decision. Adolescents' social environment can be separated into parents and peers (or friends). Peer influence is essential in adolescent smokers' and non-smokers' future smoking intentions and in the development of nicotine dependence in adolescent smokers.

Peer groups can be classified as best friends, romantic attachments, small social "networks," or larger social "crowds." Each of these peer groups may have an impact on the decision to smoke or not. Individual and population-level dynamics influence the strength of peer influence. Prior research on peer influence on adolescent smoking initiation and continuation suggests that when there is a high level of interpersonal closeness, smoking initiation is positively associated

with peer smoking. The analysis also suggests that smoking initiation and continuation were positively associated with peers' smoking when adolescents were from peer groups that emphasized the needs and goals of the group over individual needs.

Motivated students are more likely to engage in learning activities and maintain their learning status. *Academic motivation* is defined as a student's desire (as evidenced by his or her approach, persistence, and level of interest) in academic subjects when the student's competence is measured against a standard of performance or excellence. It can divide into two: intrinsic motivation is motivation induced by rewards or punishments based on task success or failure, and extrinsic motivation is motivation induced by rewards or punishments based on task success or failure. Grades are an extrinsic reward in college classes; intrinsic motivation involves an interest in the subject matter, enjoyment of the challenge, or a sense of progress and increasing mastery.

This study aims to identify the level of influence of peers on tobacco use with the level of academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan. It also identifies differences in the level of influence of peers on tobacco use and academic motivation based on gender and socioeconomic status. The study's findings show that the relationship between influences of peers on tobacco use and academic motivation among respondents is insignificant. Based on the research findings obtained, the researcher hopes that the results of this study can be used as a reference source by the Ministry of Education to enable organizations to plan and implement appropriate programs, modules, and training

to increase the level of academic motivation among students. Therefore, the organization's goals can be successfully achieved.