

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The world's economy, society, culture, government, finances, and relationships among states have all undergone profound transformations because of globalization. On the plus side, globalization has opened the door to novel social interactions, intellectual pursuits, collaborative projects, commercial approaches, and so on. However, a hidden truth lurks underlying these dramatic changes. The shadowy underbelly of globalization is a web of illegal trade involving anything from narcotics and weapons to human trafficking for purposes of slavery and prostitution. Illegal drug traffic is one of these industries' largest and most lucrative. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2017)

International drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime pose a serious threat to national and international safety. According to experts, this phenomenon must be grasped within the global political and economic context. (Bailey, 2013). Manufacturing and exporting psychoactive substances that are outlawed at the international, regional, and national levels because to their impact on public health, criminal behavior, and government policy is included in the definition of global narcotics trafficking (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2017). A growing variety of synthetic drugs are joining the likes of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine, and ecstasy on this list (Kan, 2016). Synthetic drugs are made from chemicals that are created and made in a lab. They are not made from natural substances. These

drugs are made by changing the chemical structure of current compounds or by making new compounds from scratch. Synthetic drugs can be used for a lot of different things, like medicine, fun, or study.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, illegal drugs like Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), weed, heroin, ecstasy, cocaine, and amphetamines have become more and more available in South Africa (Parry, 1997). From Latin America, illegal drugs first got to Europe through a number of different sea routes (Kumar, 2015). Van Heerden and Minnaar (2016) said that South Africa is the most common way for drugs like heroin from Afghanistan and East Asia and cocaine from South America to move around the region. Van Heerden and Minnaar (2016) say that the European and Southern African markets are where these illegal drugs are sold. South Africa is one of the most developed countries in Africa, but drug abuse and trafficking are big problems there. UNODC (2015) says that one of these problems is the spread of illegal drugs across countries that aren't well watched.

Drug use and problems in Malaysia go back to before the country got its freedom. Illegal drugs have caused problems for a long time. In fact, a decade ago, the country's leader said that drugs were the country's number one enemy (Haq, S. M., 1990-). Even though heroin, morphine, and cannabis were the most reported drugs, these traditional opioids are being replaced by synthetic drugs like amphetamine-type stimulants and other psychoactive medicines. Drugs, their precursors, and important chemicals used to make drugs have become more of a target of smuggling (Hamdan, 2013). This is because the demand for drugs at home is growing and, in some cases, there aren't enough drugs in the area to meet demand.

1.2 Background of Study

Malaysia has been an easy target for the drug crime business for a long time. Because it is in a vital place and has a long, easy-to-navigate land and sea border, it is especially vulnerable. Aside from that, drug-related crimes have been going up (Maysam & Mohsen Mehrara, 2014), even though there have been several programs, laws, and regional efforts to solve the problem. Along with the chosen country, the security of neighboring countries is also at risk. In the past, drugs were moved using non-human tools like tires, boxes, bottles, etc. Now, people are used as tools to move drugs, which makes the growth of drugs even more complicated. Drug smugglers are known to use a wide range of tricks to make it easier to send illegal drugs overseas (Wotherspoon, 2016). "Drug mules" is a term for these people. (Zarina Othman, Nor Azizan Idris, and Mohamad Daud Druis, 2015) Because of the high pay and low value of the tasks, these workers are likely to be part of illegal groups that help move drugs. (Fleetwood & Hass, 2011) The word "drug mule" refers to people who move illegal drugs across international borders for other people. Young guys were also used with children and women who were pregnant. No matter how the drugs are transported, the mule generally has a low level of education. They are the perfect "vehicle" for smuggling and transporting illegal drugs because they are willing to work for low pay and are less likely to get caught.

The arrests of Malaysians suspected of involvement in drug trafficking remained front-and-center in both national and international media. According to Malaysia's Deputy Foreign Minister A. Kohilan Pillai (2016), 1,900 Malays are now serving time for drug mule offenses in prisons around the world. 270 were arrested

in Thailand and another 200 in Singapore. This research aims to learn more about the drug mule problem in Malaysia and the overall drug trafficking problem. There is a pressing need for this study because the drug mule problem poses a serious threat to the human security principle by jeopardizing basic human necessities, fundamental rights, and human respect (Kan, 2016).

Hence, this research has included a few of the factors that affect drug mules in Malaysia. However, this research aims to explore the drug mule experience based on phenomenological study. As a result, it assists drug mules to change their attitude and not become involved in drug mules again which means it can save more people out there to not be involved in this crime anymore.

1.3 Problem Statement

Trafficking in drugs has become a big problem in Malaysia. Since it started in the 1970s, this threat doesn't seem to be going away any time soon. Even so, Malaysia is determined to lower or get rid of this drug trafficking problem by making its laws and rules stricter. But their work doesn't work because the results aren't what they were hoping for. Global crime is changing quickly, making the tactics that police are using now useless. Domestically, Malaysia needs to be strong and bold to solve this problem in a good way. This may seem like a simple job, but the speed at which drug trafficking gangs are working right now means it may be the hardest to do. These groups that sell drugs choose Malaysia because it is in a good place in Southeast Asia. Malaysia is mostly used as a place to pass through.

Furthermore, echoes Ralf's (2000) assertion that people from all walks of life are susceptible to becoming victims of drug trafficking organizations. According to her, not even college students are spared; in fact, these groups are frequently viewed as easy prey by the criminal syndicates. It is obvious, according to Azizah (2008) research on drug abuse among school children, that these syndicates influence schoolchildren for financial benefit. Teenagers are often duped into becoming drug mules or traffickers due to causes such as avarice; many engage in drug trafficking out of a desire to make money and live an extravagant lifestyle. They are typically dissatisfied with what they have. One of the reasons people become drug traffickers is unemployment. They engage in these activities because they need money to survive. So many have fallen prey to drug traffickers due to ignorance and lack of awareness. People ultimately engage in drug trafficking, whether intentionally or not. Some become involved without understanding the repercussions of their actions in conclusion, drug mule trafficking is a complicated issue that affects people, groups, and countries all over the world in many ways. To stop this illegal trade successfully, governments, law enforcement agencies, and international organizations must work together to create and enforce policies that not only go after the traffickers but also try to figure out why this is happening in the first place. To stop the cycle of victimisation, it is also important to help and rehabilitate people who are forced to be drug mules. It is possible to lessen the effects of drug mule trafficking and build a better, fairer world by working together and caring about human rights.

1.4 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions, this study will include analysis to reach the following two research goals:

1. To understand and capture the nuances and complexities of the lived experiences as drug mules.
2. To explore the underlying factors that contribute to drug mules' persistence in their operations, understanding, motivations and decision-making processes.

1.5 Research Questions

The goal of this research is to use a phenomenological study method to look into the cases of drug mules in Malaysia. More study will be done on the following questions:

1. How do individuals describe their lived experiences of becoming drug mules?
2. Why do drug mules persist in their operations despite the imposition of stringent legal penalties?

1.6 Scope of Study

This study will aim to investigate the drug mule experience based on a phenomenological study of Malaysian cases. Meanwhile, because the sampling technique to be used is purposive sampling, the sampling frame of this research is anyone who fits the description qualified to be a respondent. A qualitative research study was to be conducted to achieve the goal. This study has been scheduled to take

place for those involved in drug mules and participants will be given an interview to the five respondents who are involved in drug mules.

This study was adopted with a phenomenological emphasis design. The purpose of phenomenology is to explain and interpret the experiences of an individual. The objective of the study was to better comprehend and investigate the topic of Malaysian drug mules. Therefore, a phenomenological approach was deemed suitable. The focus of this study will be on who have previously served as drug mules regardless of whether they may have been arrested previously.

1.7 Significance of Study

Phenomenological studies aim to explore and understand the lived experiences of individuals, in this case, drug mules in Malaysia. By delving into their experiences, motivations, and the social contexts surrounding their involvement in drug trafficking, this research contributes valuable insights to various areas:

1.7.1 To the Researcher

The result and outcome of this study would help the future researcher. This study will allow future research to become more informed and educated about drug mules. Having said that, this research enables us to give some ideas to other studies as this study can be one of the bases from which a new learning theory can emerge and develop. In addition, this study also provides findings that will serve as a model

for future researchers. Equivalently, it enables future researchers to save time and resources to complete their report in regard to drug mules. The results and findings of the study will give researchers who are interested in studying drug mules useful information and new ideas. This means that the research will be a good place to start for people who want to learn more about this field of study. The study will help educate and teach future researchers, giving them more information about drug mules. This sharing of information is a key part of becoming an expert in the field. Researchers can learn from what was found in this study. This means that the research can show how to study drug mules in a good way, giving other researchers a plan to follow.

1.7.2 To the Body of Knowledge

The focus of the study is to contribute not only to the researcher and organization but to the body of knowledge. This research can be a learning model for new graduates and new potential employees as it aims to analyze the experience of drug mule cases in Malaysia. As a result, this study enables it to be repeated by samples from the organization as a whole or by knowing the truth of experience about drug mules. Having said that, this research would enable management to classify factors that contribute to the drug mule. Thus, the findings of this study include recommendations on destroying all the drug mules in Malaysia. This can benefit criminology, law enforcement, and associated researchers, scholars, and practitioners. New graduates and future employees can learn from the findings. This

shows that your study's findings and insights could be used to train law enforcement, border control, and similar professionals. It may also help academic institutions teach this issue. Law enforcement and border control may use the study. Understanding drug mule causes could impact legislation, training, and prevention initiatives.

1.8 Definition of Key Concepts

Definitions have an important role in facilitating both argument and communication (De Vos et al., 2011). Definitions help clarify ideas so that no ambiguity or confusion is introduced (De Vos et al, 2011). To help people understand the study better, it can quickly go over the following key points:

1.8.1 Drug

In the National Drug Master Plan (DSD, 2017), drugs are put into groups based on what they are used for. (Ngadini, Van Stade, and Cowely, 2008) A "medicinal" is something that can help keep the body or mind healthy or make it better. A pharmacological agent is any chemical that changes the way biochemical or physiological processes work in cells or animals. A drug that changes your mind or makes you dependent on it, especially one that is against the law according to the Medicines and Related Substances Act 101 of 1965. (Health Department [DoH] 1965). Act 140 of 1992, the Drug and Drug Trafficking Control Act (Department of Justice, 1992), defines a drug as any substance that can make a person physically or

mentally dependent on it. Any chemical or plant that is mentioned in Part II of Schedule 2 as a dangerous substance that can lead to dependence is thought to be exactly that (see Annexure F). The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (2010) says that the word "illicit drugs" refers to chemicals that are limited globally but are made, sold, or used illegally. These chemicals may or may not have legal medical uses. The word "drug" refers to any psychoactive substance that can be made illegally by mixing chemicals and can have both short-term and long-term effects on the person.

1.8.2 Drug Mule

Even though the word "drug mule" is used in the Drug and Drug Trafficking Act 140 of 1992, it is not defined. Hübschle (2008) defines a drug mule as "a person who smuggles illegal substances across national borders, including smuggling in or out of an international plane, for an international drug syndicate." Fleetwood (2014) says that drug mules are people who bring illegal drugs across national borders without legal permission and who can't stop themselves. A drug mule is "hired" to bring illegal drugs across national borders in exchange for money (Haas, 2017). According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), a drug mule is someone who is bribed, misled, or tricked into moving drugs across international borders but who has no other financial reason to do so (EMCDDA, 2012). According to this study, a drug mule is a woman who helps bring drugs across international borders in return for money.

1.8.3 Drug Smuggling

According to Decker and Chapman (2008), smuggling is the unlawful transit of narcotics over international, national, or state borders. Smuggling drugs over international boundaries is a form of drug trafficking (Prezelj and Gaber, 2005). Smuggling drugs across national or international boundaries by air, land, or sea for financial benefit is what this study means when it refers to smuggling.

1.9 Study Limitations

According to Simon and Goes (2003), there are errors in every research project, regardless of how carefully the planning and execution of the study was carried out. The term "study constraints" refers to factors and events that are not under the direct control of the investigator. They limit the scope of an investigation and frequently affect both the results obtained and the inferences that can be formed from the investigation (Simon & Goes, 2003). According to Labaree (2019), the characteristics of a methodology that are referred to as "study limits" are those that have an effect or influence on the interpretation of research outcomes. Please refer to Chapter Five for any recommendations regarding these disclaimers.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the subject of drug mule experience as a form of transnational organised crime. The study places a particular emphasis on the role that persons from Malaysia play in the drug mule industry. We also talk about the problem statement for the research, which focuses on people who have experience with or as drug mules in Malaysia and asks us to consider their perspectives. The researcher also provided an overview of the objectives, significance, and usefulness of the study. It has been established what is meant by fundamental terms like "drug," "drug mule," and "drug smuggling," which have been applied during this research. In the following chapter, we will investigate the existing research and criminological theories to try to answer the questions of why and how individuals in Malaysia are involved in the illegal drug trade as mules.