

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As Nelson Mandela said, education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. According to Schon (1984), every child needs to attend school. Schools are viewed as educational providers because education is a critical process everyone must go through today. This is especially true in the digital age, as the world becomes more globalized, and information and communication technology pervades all aspects of life. Therefore, education is the key to unlocking the treasure of knowledge and a critical indicator of development.

Schools are designed to assist students in finding others with whom to share their experiences, whether during morning playtime, a group activity, or an after-school activity. Socializing with others should be a fun and enjoyable experience that allows a child to learn more about the beautiful world around them. Making friends is an essential element of pre-school learning. Friendship is essential for the healthy development of school-age children. As Petriwskyj et al. (2005) explain, having friends has been identified as a significant critical benefit, as well as providing better long-term achievements for school adjustment and social relationships.

Peers among youth play an essential role during a teenager's adolescence. The children will experience significant changes as they enter secondary school. The children's friendships, peer group, schoolwork, and school environment, for

example, are all likely to change. They will encounter new peers and make new friends. In addition, they will also have to figure out how they fit in with a new peer group. Fabian (2000) points out that learning about a new environment and participating in various social experiences are significant changes for children.

Teachers and parents have traditionally received the most attention regarding factors that promote academic development. Peer relationships among students at school are a crucial component of their learning environments. This is when teenagers form deep friendships with their peers throughout their adolescence. Students' interactions with their peers enhance their learning in ways that go beyond what adult educators provide. Indeed, many children appear to go to school or like school (better) because their peers and friends are there.

Scholars from various fields have demonstrated for decades how different types and features of adolescents' peer relationships predict key developmental outcomes such as academic achievement, problem behaviour, and schooling adjustment. However, peers make children's school days more bearable and enjoyable. Not only that, as Hamm et al. (2010) explains, peer group offer companionship, entertainment, a sense of belonging, assistance, personal validation, and emotional support.

Adolescence social environment may impact teenagers during adolescence, as teenagers tend to communicate more with their peers during this period. According to Uslu (2013), as children grow and enter adolescence, teenagers become more reliant on their peers than their parents, especially when making decisions and developing moral values. When it comes to making

decisions and developing morals and values, children often become less reliant on their parents and more reliant on their peers as they grow into preteens and teenagers.

1.2 Background of The Study

Peer group influences are essential throughout one's life, but they are essential during the developmental years of childhood and adolescence. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2016), a peer group is a group of people of the same age or social status. The peer group is the child's first social group outside the home where he or she attempts to gain acceptance and recognition. Adolescents always imitate their peers in whatever form of behaviour they exhibit, particularly that which interests them; thus, socialization only refers to changes in behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs that arise from interaction with other people; a child learns more through interaction with peers.

The school is a well-established academic institution where an individual's behaviour is sharpened to prepare him or her for occupation socialization. Adolescents always imitate their peers in whatever form of behaviour they exhibit, particularly that which interests them; thus, socialization only refers to changes in behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs that arise from interaction with other people; a child learns more through interaction with peers.

In school, the child joins a social group of "like minds" and interests. Through role-playing, various attitudes, skills, and knowledge are acquired. The most important socializing agent for the adolescent child is his or her peer group. According to Castrogiovanni (2002), a peer group is a small group of similarly

aged, relatively close friends who participate in the same activities. Peer group is the central pillar of social change, and interaction with peers transforms the child's life from a helpless child to a mature adult.

Peer groups or cliques typically have two to twelve members, with an average of five or six. Given that adolescents spend twice as much time with their peers as they do with their parents or other adults, it is critical to investigate the relationship between smoking peer groups and academic motivations in secondary school students. Many peer groups can have a positive impact on their friends. It is believed that intelligent students assist their peers in improving their academic performance. Similarly, girls with intelligent, good friends tend to do better in school because they are part of a friendly team with similar goals.

Other children and adults can significantly impact a wide range of issues in a child's life, including academic achievement. The type of group with which a child identifies will sometimes influence the group's influence on his academic achievement. Children, if unchecked, frequently associate with bad friends, which can significantly negatively impact them. It is supported by (Bankole Adeyemi, 2019) reported, that academic priorities are frequently ignored, and as a result, academic performance suffers greatly.

During adolescence, the amount of influence that peer group has on one's academic achievement can be huge. Peer influence can impact an adolescent's academic performance in both positive and negative ways. As a result, the mechanisms by which peer groups influence adolescents' academic motivation need to be researched and documented. Understanding peer groups'

prospects and challenges are critical for school system productivity in improving student academic motivation.

Ultimately, this study aimed to know peer influence on tobacco use and academic motivation in lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan. As Nelson Mandela said, education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. According to Schon (1984), every child needs to attend school. Schools are viewed as educational providers because education is a critical process everyone must go through today. This is especially true in the digital age, as the world becomes more globalized, and information and communication technology pervades all aspects of life. Therefore, education is the key to unlocking the treasure of knowledge and a critical indicator of development.

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1.3 Problem Statement

These adolescents tend to mimic the behaviour of the group in which they are placed. It is supported by Van Roosmalen et al. (1989) reported that peer groups were discovered to be crucial in the initiation of smoking among young adolescents, particularly females. In the beginning, this adolescent will try to mimic his peers' behaviour. They will attempt or carry out the actions of their group. If the group they follow enjoys harmful activities such as smoking, they will most likely smoke.

Peers have a strong influence on a student's life. Because of the patterns of indirect peer influence on girls, girls are less likely than boys to quit smoking once they start. Teenagers will learn new behaviour and try to adapt to their personalities by imitating their peers. This will have various indirect consequences on students' learning processes, such as academic motivation, enthusiasm for going to school, behaviour and emotions during the learning process, and academic achievement in examinations. Furthermore, smoking is linked to other risky behaviours such as drug abuse, skipping school, and fighting.

According to the 2015 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia, 22.8 per cent or 5.0 million Malaysians aged 15 and up smoke, with men outnumbering women. 60 per cent of Malaysian smokers began smoking before

18, during their school days. Every day, an estimated 50 to 60 Malaysian teenagers begin smoking.

Table 1.1: Compares the Prevalence of Adolescent Smokers

Year	2003	2006	2009
Research	GYTS 1	NHMS 3	GYTS 2
Prevalence of Adolescent Smokers	20.2 % (13-15 years old)	8.7 % (<18 years old)	18.2 % (13-15 years old)
Men	36.3 %	16.6%	30.9%
Girl	4.2 %	0.7%	5.3%

Source: Sinar Harian (15 January 2019)

Furthermore, according to Table 1.1 published by Sinar Harian on 15 January 2019, 68 321 secondary school students were detected smoking during the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) screening through the Oral Health Without Smoke (KOTAK) programme. Following that, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, Minister of Health, stated that the percentage of secondary school students who smoke is equivalent to 3.7 per cent of the 1.9 million school students screened in the KOTAK 2018 programme.

Many factors, directly and indirectly, influence academic motivation, particularly in secondary schools. As a result, more research into peer group relationships and individual approaches to learning is needed to determine how factors such as behaviour, age, gender, and socioeconomic status influence peer group compositions and existence in secondary school settings. This research and

the organisational structure of educational systems necessitate an understanding of the nature and magnitude of the peer group effect in education.

Peer group influences are a type of influence that arises from social interactions and includes a wide range of behaviours that are dependent on the behaviour or characteristics of others. There has been much interest in estimating peer influence in school from a global perspective in recent years, and literature reflects the difficulty in defining the peer group and isolating causal peer group effects from other influences. The influence of smoking peer groups is one factor that contributes to low academic motivation.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the influence of peers on tobacco and academic motivation in lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan, based on the nature of peer group influences observed by researchers in one of Sarawak's secondary schools that lead to changes in student attitudes at school.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 What is the level of influence of peers on tobacco use and the level of academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan?

1.4.2 Is a significant difference in the influences of peers on tobacco use based on socioeconomic and gender status among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan?

- 1.4.3 Is there a significant difference in the level of academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan, based on gender and socioeconomic status?
- 1.4.4 What is the relationship between influences of peers on tobacco use and academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan?

1.5 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated from the research questions above.

- H01 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.
- H02 There is no significant mean difference in the level of academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.
- H03 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.
- H04 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.

- H05 There is no significant difference in the level of academic motivation of students in a lower secondary school based on gender among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.
- H06 There is no significant difference in the level of academic motivation of students in a lower secondary school based on socioeconomic status among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.
- H07 There is no significant relationship between the influences of peers on tobacco use and academic motivation among lower secondary school students in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

1.6 Operational Definition

This section discusses the definitions of several variables in this study, including smoking, peer group, academic motivation, and secondary school students. It also describes the meaning that serves as the foundation for supporting the study's theme, which includes terms like smoking, peer group, academic motivation, and a secondary school student.

1.6.1 Smoking Peer Group

Smoking means inhaling smoke from burning tobacco that may occur occasionally or regularly because of physical addiction to some chemicals, primarily nicotine. The researcher wanted to find out which peer groups students belonged to and whether they were involved in smoking or not. A peer group is a

small group of about the same age or social status, close friends and sharing the same activities.

1.6.2 Academic Motivation

Academic motivation refers to the cause of behaviours related to academic functioning and success, such as how much effort students put forth, how effectively they regulate their work, which endeavours they choose to pursue, and how persistent they are when faced with obstacles.

1.6.3 Secondary School Students

The students enrolled in a secondary school, including a student in form 6 if the student attends a secondary school.

1.7 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the introduction, the purpose of the statement, the problem statement, the research question, the research hypothesis, and the operational definition. The researcher hopes this study will benefit all parties, particularly school administrators, teachers, parents, and respondents, by identifying students' academic motivation levels influenced by their smoking peer group. The findings of this study can be used by all parties in the future to address the gaps in our country's educational advancement.

This study hopes to open parents' eyes to their roles and responsibilities in educating children, particularly monitoring children's interactions with their peers regularly. This study can help parents care for and monitor their children's

behaviour so that they do not engage in smoking activities that can lead to moral and ethical collapse and being stuck with drug abuse.

