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DRUGS MISUSE AMONG CHILDREN: MEASURING THE LEVEL OF PARENTS' AWARENESS ON THEIR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

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Abstract

A survey was carried out to gather information on awareness of parents on children in relation to drug misuse matters. Significantly, parents are aware of the factors affecting their children's behaviour, which was causes by the influence of parents' knowledge on the drugs-related issues, circle of friends, social pressure, and parental behaviour. This study referred to Social Bonding Theory as its reference to compare the results of the findings with the existing theory. Meanwhile, based on Raosoft Calculator software, since the population size of the study is 8.15 million, hence 90% level of confidence was used to describe the amount of uncertainty the researcher can tolerate. The response distribution is 70% whereby it is the probability distribution of the response (target) variable. Thus, as calculated in the software, the recommended sample size is 228 respondents. In this study, the researcher managed to gather 242 respondents through purposive sampling method in order to identify the level of awareness of parents on their children's behavioural change. The R^2 obtained = 0.401 defines that 40.1% of the amount of variance in the awareness of parents on their children's behavioural change can be explained by the independent variables.

Keynote: substance misuse, awareness, friends, drug misuse, parental behaviour, social bonding theory

INTRODUCTION

Drug can cure diseases, however, their misuse can also generate crime, street violence, and other social problems that could harm the societies. The report also recorded that cannabis remained the world's most widely used illicit substance, ranging from 2.6% to 5% of the adult population (119-224 million estimated users aged 15-64 years), in an estimated annual prevalence of illicit drug use in 2010. The drug misuse such as heroin, cocaine, and other drugs had killed around 0.2 million people each year, shattering families and bringing misery to thousands of other people, to date. Furthermore, they also stated that the economic and social development had been undermined by drug abuse, where the abuse of drugs also had greatly contributed to crime, instability, insecurity, spread of diseases, and considerable costs to health care services. (Jui, Jii, and Wen, 2014)

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to an article by Alcohol Drug Information Service (ADIS) (2019), a drug is any substance (with the exception of food and water) which, when taken into the body, alters the body's function either physically and/or. Drugs may be legal (e.g. alcohol, caffeine and tobacco) or illegal (e.g. cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin). Drugs can also be defined as substances that change a person's physical or mental state. The vast majority of drugs are used to treat medical conditions, both physical and mental. Some, however, are used outside the medical setting for their effects on the mind. Based on further study on literature review and empirical studies, the factors affecting the children's behavioural change are:

Parents' Awareness: In a research conducted by Green, Bekman, Miller, Perrett, Brown, & Aarons (2011), a significant proportion of parents are unaware of their child's alcohol (30%) and substance use (50%) problems. It is also found that parents may be more aware of their child's alcohol and substance use if they are receiving treatment. In a study conducted by William (2009) regarding the relationship between children patterns of the consumption of drugs, alcohol and cigarette consumption and their academic achievement resulted that the high frequency of cigarette smoking and being under the influence of drugs and alcohol have an impact on their academic achievement.

Knowledge: Coleman and Cassell (2008) in their research stated that parents should know that drugs can affect the mood, emotions, behaviour and social relationships and these, in turn, can impinge on parents' care of their children. Parents should also know that children would suffer from increased problems when their parents misuse drugs, including hyperactivity, behavioural disorders, delinquency, depression and anxiety. The nature and extent of the substance misuse has affected parenting behaviours and any accompanying interpersonal problems and social difficulties.

Influence of Friends: According to Brook, Lukoff and Whiteman (1977), the results of the study indicated that peer or friends have an impact on the children's drug behaviour. The findings by McIntosh, MacDonald and McKeganey (2009) on the other hand resulted that the role of peer pressure had influenced the decision of the children to misuse the drugs. The children is said to feel more comfortable being in the company of their friends when they are using drugs. This causes an increase in opportunity and temptation for the children to follow suit. The predominant influence of curiosity and boredom in the initial use of drugs also suggests a greater role for activities and interests that provide alternative for the children to occupy their time.

Social Pressure: Social factors are able to shape the population distribution of substance use through the behaviour of children who misuse the drugs. Guided by predominant focus in social epidemiology, these factors reflect how the person and his or her relations to society at large can shape health and disease. Social factors may include social network norms and neighbourhood characteristics. The probability of increased drug use or misuse is affected by individual characteristics, attributes, situational conditions, or environmental contexts. These factors inhibit, reduce, or buffer the probability of drug use and misuse or a transition to further drug involvement. However, each factors differ individually and cannot always be differentiated at individual level. Drugs misuse can also change the balance of risk and factors, which may change the level of drug used. (Galea, Nandi, & Vlahov, 2004; Leukefeld, McDonald, Stoops, Reed, & Martin, 2006).

Parental Behavior: Citing Straussner & Fewell (2011), millions of family members including an estimated 27 million children who live with a parent who abuses or is dependent upon alcohol or illicit drugs are impacted by them, the substance abusers. Substance abuse by parents is more likely to involve the most developmentally vulnerable of all children, those who are the youngest. Straussner and Fewell cited SAMHSA where almost 14% of children aged 5 or younger live with a substance-abusing parents, compared with 9.9% youths who were aged 12-17. These children run a risk of multitude of short- and long-term problems and are likely to become the next generation of individuals who are alcohol and/or drug dependent, thus perpetuating this cycle into the future. According to Foo, Lee and Tam (2012), parents' substance use habits is the most influential factor in affecting a child's substance abuse. If the relationship between a parent and a child is good, the child would have higher probability of abusing the same substance. This is proven in the study of 657 adolescents that found them modelling father's marijuana use and mother's cigarette's use if the parent-child relationship was relatively moderate or good.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the quantitative study approach (survey method) to identify the level of parents' awareness in Malaysia on their children's behavioural change. For sampling, by referring to Raosoft Calculator Software, 8.15 million population of parents in Malaysia can be equal to 228 sample of respondents with 90% confidence level (Raosoft Survey Tools, 2004). The study involving 242 respondents from South, Northern, East Coast, West Coast, Sabah and Sarawak region, selected through a purposive sampling method (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018). A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data was keyed-in and analysed by SPSS (Abdul Rauf Ridzuan et al., 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Laerd Statistics (2019), multiple linear regression is an extension of simple linear regression where it is used to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. The variable that the researcher want to predict is called the dependent variable, while the variables the researcher used to predict the value of the dependent variable are called the independent variables. Multiple regression allow the researcher to determine the overall fit of the model and the relative contribution of each of the predictors of the total variance explained. In this study, this test is used to analyse the relationship between Awareness and Knowledge, Influence of Friends, Social Pressure, and Parental Behaviour.

Table 4.18: Model Summary of Multiple Linear Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.633	0.401	0.390	0.27101

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Influence_Of_Friends, Knowledge, Social_Pressure
b. Dependent Variable: Awareness
c. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Influence_Of_Friends, Social_Pressure, Knowledge
d. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Knowledge, Social_Pressure, Influence_Of_Friends
e. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Knowledge, Influence_Of_Friends, Social_Pressure

Table 4.19 put the summary of the multiple regression models when all four independent variables influence the dependent variable, which is the awareness of parents on their children's behavioural change. There are four independent variables that correlate to dependent variable in various degree, but they are also might inter-correlate to themselves too. Later, when these variables are regressed jointly against the dependent variable, R-value = 0.633 shows that there is a moderately strong, positive relationship between independent variables and the awareness of parents towards their children's behavioural change. It means that as there is changes in independent variables, the awareness of parents would also change. The $R^2 = 0.401$ defines that 40.1% of the amount of variance in the awareness of parents can be explained by the independent variables as perceived by the parents.

Table 4.19: One-way ANOVA table for Multiple Linear Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.634	4	2.909	39.600	.000[b]
	Residual	17.407	237	.073		
	Total	29.042	241			

a. Dependent Variable: Awareness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Influence_Of_Friends, Knowledge, Social_Pressure

c. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Influence_Of_Friends, Social_Pressure, Knowledge

d. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Knowledge, Social_Pressure, Influence_Of_Friends

e. Predictors: (Constant), Parental_Behaviour, Knowledge, Influence_Of_Friends, Social_Pressure

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table (see above) tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(4, 237) = 39.600$, $p = 0.000 < 0.10$, thus showing that the regression model is a good fit of the data.

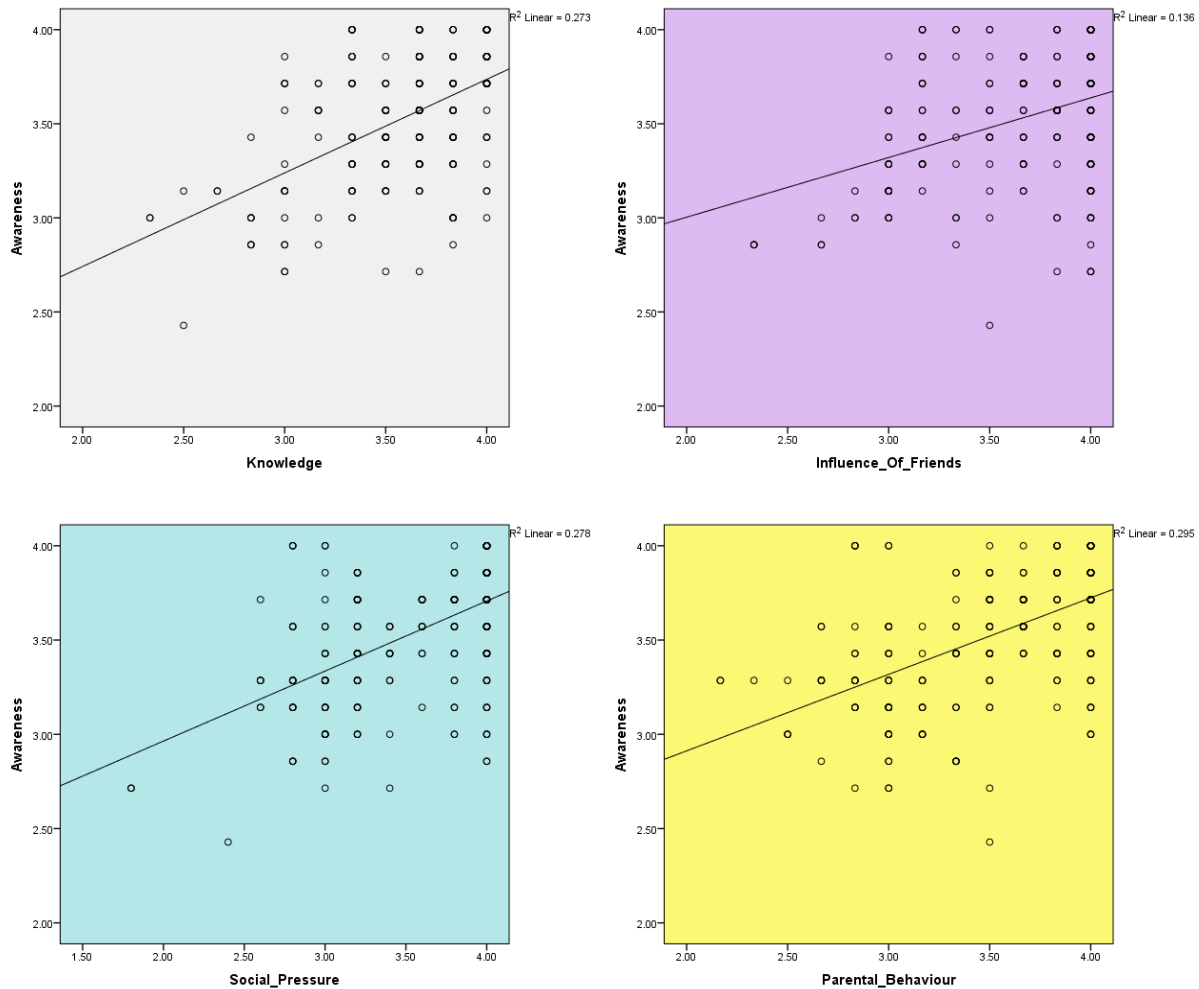*Table 4.21:* Coefficient table for Multiple Linear Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.396	.190		7.342	.000	1.082	1.710
	Knowledge	.296	.068	.311	4.370	.000	.184	.408
	Influence_Of_Friends	-.044	.059	-.051	-.738	.461	-.141	.054
	Social_Pressure	.146	.051	.208	2.847	.005	.061	.231
	Parental_Behaviour	.203	.052	.272	3.931	.000	.118	.288

a. Dependent Variable: Awareness

*the table applies at 90% level of confidence

On the other hand, by referring to the table above, the main predictor of change is **Knowledge** of parents on the factors that influence their children's behavioural change due to the misuse of drug ($\beta = 0.311$). It means that this variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the awareness of parents, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for. The Beta value for **Parental Behaviour** was slightly lower than Knowledge ($\beta = 0.272$), indicating that it makes less contribution towards awareness of parents in their children's behavioural change. Both Knowledge and Parental Behaviour show significant relationship with p-value = 0.000, together with Social Pressure that has a p-value = 0.005.

- **H1: There is a relationship between Awareness of parents and Knowledge**
  Factor 1 is regarding Knowledge factor which indicated Beta value of positive relationship ($\beta = 0.311$) with the p-value = 0.000. Thus, the null hypothesis is **accepted** whereby there is **a significant relationship** between Awareness and Knowledge. The statement is supported by Mallick, Evans, and Stein (2009), where they found that parents are concerned about drugs in relation to their children, and that drugs are easily available to young people and very much part of today's youth culture.

- **H2: There is a relationship between Awareness of parents and Influence of Friends**
  Factor 2 is referring to the influence of friends towards the children's behavioural change. It indicates a lower, negative reading of $\beta = -0.051$ at 10% significant level with p-value = 0.461. As the p-value is more than 0.10 significant level, thus the null hypothesis is **rejected**. There is **no significant relationship** between awareness of parents on their children's behavioural change with the influence of friends. However, based on the findings by McIntosh, MacDonald & McKeganey (2009) resulted that the

6

role of peer pressure had influenced the decision of the children to misuse the drugs as the children are said to feel more comfortable being in the company of their friends when they are using drug. It then causes an increase in opportunity and temptation for the children to follow suit.

- **H3: There is a relationship between Awareness of parents and Social Pressure**
  Factor 3 stated a positive relationship with Beta value of $\beta = 0.208$ with a p-value = 0.000 at 10% level of significant. As the p-value = 0.000 < 0.10, thus, null hypothesis is **accepted** whereby there is **a significant relationship** between awareness of parents and social pressure in indicating its influence towards the behavioural change of the children due to drug misuse. Galea, Nandi & Vlahov (2004) supported the finding by stating that social factors are able to shape the population distribution of substance use through behaviour of children who misuse the drugs where these factors reflect how the person and his or her relations to society at large can shape health and disease. They also added that social factors might include social network norms and neighbourhood characteristics.

- **H4: There is a relationship between Awareness of parents and Parental Behaviour**
  Factor 4 is a factor studying the relationship between awareness of parents and parental behaviour in conjunction with the children's behavioural change due to drug misuse. The Beta value of this factor is $\beta = 0.272$ showing a positive relationship with a p-value = 0.000. Since the p-value = 0.000 < 0.10 at 10% significance level, thus, null hypothesis is **accepted** indicating that there is **a significant relationship** between awareness of parents and the parental behaviour.

  According to Tam, Foo & Lee (2012), parental behaviour in terms of parents' substance use habits is found to be the most influential factor in affecting a child's substance abuse. If the relationship between a parent and a child is good, the child would have higher probability of abusing the same substance. This is proven in the study of 657 adolescents that found them modelling father's marijuana use and mother's cigarette's use if the parent-child relationship was relatively moderate or good.

Table 4.22: Hypothesis Testing - Multiple Linear Regression Findings

Hypothesis	Findings	Null Hypothesis
H1: The higher the level factor of **Knowledge**, the higher the level of **Awareness of parents.**	p = 0.000 (p < 0.10)	**ACCEPTED**
H2: The higher the level factor of **Influence of Friends**, the higher the level of **Awareness of parents.**	p = 0.461 (p > 0.10)	**REJECTED**
H3: The higher the level factor of **Social Pressure**, the higher the level of **Awareness of parents.**	p = 0.005 (p < 0.10)	**ACCEPTED**
H4: The higher the level factor of **Parental Behaviour**, the higher the level of **Awareness of parents.**	p = 0.000 (p < 0.10)	**ACCEPTED**

CONCLUSION

Based on Multiple Linear Regression method, there were two indicated results based on the coefficient analysis. The first reading indicated the Beta (β) values, which represent the significant relations directly from the independent towards dependent variables. The Beta (β) values showed that knowledge ($\beta = 0.311$) was the strongest significant relations towards the dependent variable of parents' awareness on their children's behavioural change.

Besides, based on the coefficients significant level analysis indicated the standardized significant value must be or less than 0.10. There were three independent variables and hypothesis that are accepted with p-value = 0.000, p-value = 0.005 and p-value = 0.000 for knowledge, social pressure, and parental behaviour respectively. The $R^2 = 0.401$ defines that 40.1% of the amount of variance in the awareness of parents can be explained by the independent variables. Hence, the findings declared that each important factors (knowledge, social pressure, and parental behaviour) have a significant relationship with the mean of awareness.

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