



e-Journal of Media & Society

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NO-SMOKING POLICY IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

As a party to the World Health Organization - Framework of Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), Malaysia has introduced steps in the control of tobacco use in public places through its No-Smoking Policy. The purpose of this review is to briefly summarise the implementation of the No-Smoking policy in Malaysia, Malaysians awareness on the No-Smoking Policy and the distinctiveness of the impacts on the no-smoking policy towards the public. Well-structured and positive commitments in protecting the public from the health hazards of smoking and second-hand smoke (SHS) exposure have been shown by the Malaysian government. However, the level of compliance is an area of concern. Since e-cigarettes have been introduced to the market, it brings along new challenges in the implementation of the current no-smoking policy. Thus, treating e-cigarettes in the same manner with conventional cigarettes will help to maintain the strength of the current no-smoking policy and allowing the authority to focus on the enforcement for the successfulness of the implementation. Malaysia has taken a proactive action in protecting its people from the adverse effects from tobacco. The compliance level to no-smoking policy implementation thus far was unable to show its positive effects in protecting the health of the public. Empowering the local authority in its ability to perform enforcement is suggested to help improve the effectiveness of the existing no-smoking policy.

Keywords: *no-smoking policy, secondhand smoke, Malaysia, effectiveness, distinctiveness*

INTRODUCTION

Smoking in Malaysia was first managed in enactment requiring a general cautioning message on all Malaysian cigarette bundling in 1976. Smoking bans in public places started to be implemented in the 1980s. Since May 14 1994, selling cigarettes to people under the age of 18 has been prohibited. Tobacco advertising was banned in 2003 ; since January 1995 it was prohibited to display cigarette packaging in advertising, and print media advertising was limited to just one page.

Smoking in Malaysia is a significant public health concern. Despite continuing public health campaigns to encourage cessation of smoking, the incidence of cigarette smoking in Malaysia remains one of the highest in South East Asia (Morrow & Barraclough, 2003; Noor Zurani, Hussain, Rusdi & Muhammad Muhsin, 2008). It is the only extremely addictive legal consumer product that kills half of its regular customers. It is also associated with multiple health issues such as breathing, cancer, and heart disease. For instance, in Malaysia, instances of lung cancer have risen at a rate of 17 percent per year. Smoking habits were identified as the cause of coronary heart disease in at least half a million cases.

In 2018, accordance with Regulation 11 of the Tobacco Product Control Regulations 2004. The Minister of Health, Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad has explained that this prohibition will include vaping and shisha unless they contain nicotine because our legal definition of "smoking" reads as "inhaling and expelling the smoke or vapor of any tobacco product, including keeping or controlling any ignited, heated or vaporized tobacco product". Deputy Health Minister Lee Boon Chye said that smoking in all air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned hotels, coffee shops, open-air hawker centers and even street stalls will be illegal in 2019. Owners may be fined up to RM3,000 or jailed for up to 6 months if they do not put up "No Smoking" signs, and they may also be fined up to RM5,000 or jailed for up to 1 year if they do not take measures to prevent individuals from smoking at their premises.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This review involves studies on the topic published between 2010 and 2018 in the database of Google Scholar & Google Search with the key words inclusive no-smoking policy, secondhand smoke, Malaysia, effectiveness, distinctiveness as well as key words used to get the articles that are related to the particular topic. The key words in entered in English and Malay. Only journal contributions are included.

In the first step, records identified through the database search were selected if their titles matched the topic of interest. In the second step, the references of selected records, as well as meta-analyses and reviews on the topic were searched for further records. The third step consists of screening the abstracts of the selected records and excluding them if they do not meet the selection criteria. Finally, the full-text articles were assessed for eligibility (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018). The articles were included in the review only if they corresponded to the following criteria :

- a) The study evaluated on the effectiveness of the No-Smoking Policy in Malaysia
- b) All articles are related to the effectiveness of the No-Smoking Policy in Malaysia
- c) The study had an experimental, a statistics and research finding.
- d) The study was published in a peer-reviewed journal.

A total of 20 articles seemed to correspond to the criteria according to the titles and abstracts. Among these articles, 10 articles were excluded after reading the content, in several cases because the study is focused on the effectiveness of the **No-Smoking Policy in Malaysia** (e.g **Khan, Abdul & Ab Manan, Azizah & Yahya, Noorlia & Ibrahim, Lailanor (2014), Lim, Kuang & Li, Lim & Teh, Chien & Veloo, Yuvaneswary & Sayan, Pan & Yusoff, Muhammad & Kuang Kuay, Lim & Yn, Ling & Chee, Cheong & Ghazali, Sumarni. (2019)., Dioso, Regidor III. (2014), Hassan, Noraryana & Baharom, Nizam & Dawam, Netty & Ismail, Norliana & Festus, Christopher & Chong, Chee. (2018), Zulkifli, Aziemah & Zainol Abidin, Najihah & Zainal Abidin, Emilia & Hashim, Zailina & Abd Rahman, Anita & Rasdi, Irniza & Syed Ismail, Sharifah & Semple, Sean. (2014)., N.J., Damia & H.A., Ameera & A.M., Afham & A.H., Sabariah. (2019), Atikah, A. & Wee, Lei & Zakiah, M. & Chan, Caryn & Mohamed, Mohamad & Swinderjit, J. & Siau, Ching Sin. (2019),**

The ASEAN Post 2019, The Srait Times 2019, Al-Naggar, Redhwan & Osman, Muhamed. (2013).

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Author (Year)	Journal	Method	Element	Past Year Findings
Khan, Abdul & Ab Manan, Azizah & Yahya, Noorlia & Ibrahim, Lailanor (2014)	The Support for Smoke Free Policy and How It Is Influenced by Tolerance to Smoking – Experience of a Developing Country.	Qualitative research using face to face interviews by trained interviewers	Effect of Smoke Free Policy	Education on the risk of secondhand smoking can increase the knowledge on the adverse effects of tobacco smoke.
Lim, Kuang & Li, Lim & Teh, Chien & Veloo, Yuvanewary & Sayan, Pan & Yusoff, Muhammad & Kuang Kuay, Lim & Yn, Ling & Chee, Cheong & Ghazali, Sumarni. (2019)	Support for smoke-free policy among Malaysian adults: Findings from a population-based study	Qualitative research using face to face interviews	Malaysian adults on supporting smoke-free policy	More than half of adults (67.2%) on this research supported a total smoking ban at various public domains, with a higher support from non-smokers.
Dioso, Regidor III (2014)	Cigarette Smoking among Male Teenagers in Malaysia — A Narrative Review. ASEAN Journal on Science and Technology for Development	Quantitative & Qualitative research. A ten year survey was conducted in Malaysia	the impact of active cigarette-smoking as a contemporary healthcare issues in Malaysia	Good strategy is important especially on campaigning preventive measure against the threat of chain cigarette smoking.

Author (Year)	Journal	Method	Element	Past Year Findings
Hassan, Noraryana & Baharom, Nizam & Dawam, Netty & Ismail, Norliana & Festus, Christopher & Chong, Chee. (2018)	Strengthening quit smoking services in Malaysia through Malaysia Quit (mQuit) Program	Quantitative research	The mQuit program is to make smoking cessation services accessible throughout the public and private sectors.	The mQuit services has increased accessibility to smoking cessation services in Malaysia.
Zulkifli, Aziemah & Zainol Abidin, Najihah & Zainal Abidin, Emilia & Hashim, Zailina & Abd Rahman, Anita & Rasdi, Irniza & Syed Ismail, Sharifah & Semple, Sean. (2014).	Implementation of Smoke-free Legislation in Malaysia: Are Adolescents Protected from Respiratory Health Effects?	Quantitative research by distributing questionnaires to respondents	The relationship between respiratory symptoms among adolescents and the implementation of Smoke-Free Legislation	Stricter enforcement of SFL in public places by the relevant authority should be a priority.
N.J., Damia & H.A., Ameera & A.M., Afham & A.H., Sabariah. (2019)	The Awareness on Passive Smoking among Smokers in Mukim Sg Pelek, Sepang, Selangor, Malaysia	Quantitative research by distributing questionnaires to respondents that are 18 above, not mentally retarded and deaf.	Integrated effort needs to be initiated in order to make public spaces in Malaysia as smoke free zone and determine the awareness of passive smokers in Sg Pelek	An integrated effort needs to be initiated by authorities as more than half respondents are not aware of second-hand smoke.

Author (Year)	Journal	Method	Element	Past Year Findings
Atikah, A. & Wee, Lei & Zakiah, M. & Chan, Caryn & Mohamed, Mohamad & Swinderjit, J. & Siau, Ching Sin. (2019)	Factors associated with different smoking statuses among Malaysian adolescent smokers: a cross-sectional study	Quantitative research method by distributing questionnaires on selected schools	Adolescence is a crucial stage for health development	Adolescences' smoking status was found to be associated as they single out smoking and cessation programs for adolescences
The ASEAN Post (2019)	Malaysia gets tough on smokers	Qualitative research method	To ensure the no-smoking policy is not a temporary campaign but becoming the nation's culture	Smokers that are caught smoking within meters from eateries will be fined up to RM5000 or face jail time.
Al-Naggar, Redhwan & Osman, Muhamed. (2013).	Public Attitudes towards Smoking Bans in Non-Air Conditioned Restaurants in Malaysia	Quantitative research method by distributing questionnaires around Klang Valley's restaurants	To determine Malaysians agreement of smoking bans in non-air conditioned or outside restaurant	It is an urgent need to increase cigarette taxes and 3 out of 4 smokers support stronger government control over tobacco
The Strait Times (2019)	Lighting Up: A Look at Malaysia's Smoking Ban	Qualitative research method	The idea of turning Malaysia into a smoke-free country will eventually become a reality, for the good of nation	Smokers that got caught smoking will be fined up to RM10000

CONCLUSION

Malaysian health promotion and tobacco control education has focused primarily on smokers. This must change; awareness should also be aimed at non-smokers about the hazards of second-hand smoke. The no-smoking policy can educate and provide the increasing knowledge on adverse effects of tobacco smoke which will help reduce social acceptability of smoking. This will result in the acceptance of people in the no-smoking policy restricting second hand smoke and the reduction in smoking rates leading to reduce adverse health consequence. With the use of mass media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram on promoting the no-smoking policy to the public has been shown as an effective tool even on people with low levels of educations. The no-smoking policy can open the publics' eye on the dangerous of smoking and how it will effects the humans' respiratory system. Educating the public through the introduction of the no-smoking policy on the dangers of inhaling cigarettes smoke and the nuisance of the smoke in public places. With the policy, it can empower non-smokers to speak out against smokers who like to smoke freely where ever they feel like it and win the support from them smokers who will understand the risk associated with the second hand smoke which can trigger acceptance of society on the no-smoking policy. Even though the policy is still new for Malaysians, it will bring a major positive impact as this will bring benefits for all. According to findings by study above, majority of respondents out 100, more than 60 people agree that they are aware of the no-smoking policy in Malaysia and they also agree that people cannot just simply smoke anywhere they feel like it.

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