

The effectiveness of drug prevention programs among children in schools

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ABSTRACT

The problem of discipline and moral decay nowadays in society in Malaysia is very concerning, especially among children and teenagers, as it spreads very fast and keeps being very difficult to deal with. Drug abuse is a big problem that is spreading among the world community and this will have a very bad effect especially the development of human capital. This study aimed to find out the effectiveness of Drug Prevention Programs among children at school. From this Program we want to know the level of awareness, knowledge, skills, and spirituality among children. This study has used quantitative design and is supported by qualitative data. The first phase is a case study that uses the interview with teachers and government anti-drug agency officers who are involved in the implementation of the program. For the second phase of the study, researchers have used the survey method by distributing questionnaires to the recipient subjects, who are primary school students in at-risk states who have been selected to follow the drug prevention program. The results of the survey show that all the indicators of the effectiveness of the participants, namely awareness, knowledge, skills, and spirituality, have a high percentage, with percentage values of 78.0%, 93.4%, 84.2%, and 93.4%. Overall, of the study show that the implementation of the drug prevention program in schools has achieved its objectives, in addition to paying attention to the effectiveness factors as well as the obstacles and weaknesses encountered.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is a big problem that is spreading among the world community and this will have a very bad effect on the development of the country, especially the development of human capital [1], [2]. The problem of discipline and moral decay nowadays in society in Malaysia is very concerning, especially among children and teenagers, as it spreads very fast and keeps being very difficult to deal with. Statistics from the Department of Social Welfare in 2019 recorded a total of 4,833 teenagers involved in crime according to the type of case and gender [3]. Among the social and moral problems that are at a critical level is drug abuse among the community, especially teenagers and young people [4]–[6]. Drug abuse is a universal issue that threatens the safety and order of society [7], [8]. This matter is also experienced in foreign countries as stated by previous studies that drug abuse has been proven to have many negative effects on the well-being of its

users [9], [10]. Some research findings conducted in Nigeria have proven drug abuse among Nigerian youth is linked to poor academic performance of students [11], low self-esteem [12], crime [13], and lack of employment opportunities [14], [15].

Therefore, efforts to prevent drug abuse need to be done more actively with careful and correct planning [16]. These efforts also need to be emphasized on teenagers and youth because they are the backbone and inheritors of the country's leadership in the future [17], [18]. Fauziah and Ezarina [19] conducted a research on the involvement of teenagers in drug abuse and found that as many as 79.5% of the 200 study samples involved in drug abuse was a result of the influence of peers and suggested the implementation of drug abuse prevention programs among children and teenagers are conducted. Liu *et al.* [20] on the other hand found that more than half of the study sample was involved in illicit substance abuse in their study which aimed to examine the perception of illicit substance abuse among high school students. Based on the findings of these studies, it shows the importance of drug abuse prevention programs carried out in schools in Malaysia.

Among the efforts implemented is a drug prevention program in schools that aims to deal with drug problems among children, especially in risky states in Malaysia. In general, this study aimed to find out the effectiveness of the drug prevention program that has been implemented for level two primary school students (ages 10 to 12 years old) who are identified as being at risk of engaging in drug abuse. In particular, the objective of the study is to identify the main factors in the effectiveness of drug prevention programs in schools and to assess the effectiveness of drug prevention programs based on awareness, knowledge, skills and spiritual components.

2. METHOD

This study has used quantitative design and is supported by qualitative data. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, two phases of the study were conducted. The first phase is a case study that uses the interview method to gather data on the effectiveness of drug prevention programs conducted on program implements. The second phase is a quantitative study that uses a survey design through the distribution of questionnaires to program recipients. The design of this study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Phased study design

Phase 1	Phase 2
Find out about the implementation of drug Prevention programs by interviewing the implementer	A survey study on drug prevention program recipients To see the effects in terms of awareness, knowledge, skills and spirituality

Table 1 shows that in phase 1, the interview method was used by program implements and facilitators, namely National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) officials. Interview with eight people listed to obtain information about the implementation of the prevention program in terms of activities, program journey, facilities, and so on. While in phase 2, a survey study was conducted using the questionnaire distribution method. The questionnaire used is a set of questionnaires on the effectiveness of drug prevention programs that have been specifically developed by researchers.

In order to continue the process of gathering information and research data, the researcher has identified the location for both phases of the study. For phase 1 of the study, a total of six locations have been identified, namely the Johor Bahru District AADK Office (Johor), the AADK Kota Bharu Office (Kelantan), the Federal Territories AADK Office (Kuala Lumpur), the AADK Office Ipoh (Perak), the AADK Seremban Office (Negeri Sembilan), and the Melaka State AADK Office. Meanwhile, the study location for phase 2 is six schools from each of six different states that have implemented a drug prevention program, selected randomly in Table 2.

Table 2. Study location according to phase

Phase 1	Phase 2
Johor Bahru district AADK office	Johor
AADK office Kota Bharu	Melaka
Federal Territories AADK Office	Perlis
AADK Ipoh office	Perak
Seremban AADK office	Kelantan
Melaka State AADK Office	Kuala Lumpur

For the first phase of the study, the respondents were six program implementers, consisting of teachers and AADK officials. The respondents for phase 2 of the study are 500 primary school students who are categorized as at risk in risk areas. However, only 499 respondents returned a set of questionnaires for analysis in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents according to study phase

Phase 1	Phase 2
6 program implementers (Teachers and AADK Officers)	499 students who are categorized as at risk

To carry out the survey, a set of questionnaires on the effectiveness of the drug prevention program was used. The questionnaire is used to evaluate each indicator of the effectiveness of the drug prevention program. It has been developed by the researcher and has been tested in terms of validity and reliability. In total, this questionnaire contains 40 items, which are divided into five sections, namely demographics, knowledge, awareness, skills, and spirituality. Next, for the purpose of this study, a pilot questionnaire survey was conducted on 30 students of a primary school to obtain Cronbach's alpha value to see its reliability, where the overall Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.71. This shows that it has a high reliability value [21]. Ethical clearance number: 2021-0177-01.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Effectiveness factors of drug prevention programs in schools

Based on a case study conducted at six study locations, it shows that both factors; i) module content and ii) program implementation greatly influence the effectiveness of drug prevention programs in schools. This finding shows that without good and effective module content or activities, they will affect the effectiveness of the implemented program. This is in line with the recommendations of Sidek and Jamaludin [22], who state that the best module effect means that when a student follows a module [23], at the end of the module, the student has successfully mastered the objectives that have been stated in the module [24].

In addition, the findings of the study also show that the implementation and administration of the program also affect the effectiveness of the implementation of drug prevention programs in schools, whether in terms of facilitators, facilitator training, participant selection, or program implementation coordination according to modules and challenges. Jamaludin [25] stated that a successful module program or activity is highly dependent on the operator, executor, facilitator, counselor, leader, or moderator of the module activity.

3.2. The results of drug prevention programs based on the construct of awareness, knowledge, skills and spirituality

The data on the effectiveness of the drug prevention program according to the construct of knowledge, skills, awareness and spirituality among children has been broken down according to high, medium and low levels and is reported in Table 4. For the knowledge construct, a total of 466 people is at a high level, followed by a medium level of 32 people and finally only one low level. Next, for the skill construct, the majority of respondents were at a high level, 420 people, the rest were at a medium level, 79 people, and no respondents were reported to be at a low level. While for the awareness construct, 389 respondents were at a high level, 97 people were at a medium level, and 13 people were at a low level. Finally, for the spiritual construct, a total of 466 respondents scored high, while for medium and low, 32 and one respectively.

Table 4. Levels of constructs of knowledge, skills, awareness and spirituality

Construct	Level			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
Knowledge	93.4%	6.4%	0.2%	100.0%
Skill	84.2%	15.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Awareness	78.0%	19.4%	2.6%	100.0%
Spirituality	93.4%	6.4%	0.2%	100.0%

3.3. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis

This technique is designed for use in the preliminary stages of decision-making processes and can be used as a tool for evaluation of the strategic position of organizations of many kinds (for-profit enterprises, local and national governments, and non-government organizations (NGOs)). A SWOT analysis has been

constructed based on aspects of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats [26] in order to provide a clearer and more comprehensive conclusion regarding the findings from this study in Table 5.

Based on the overall findings of this study, it has been shown that the drug prevention program in schools has been implemented in a planned location [27], [28], which has shown a positive effect in efforts to eradicate and prevent drug abuse among primary school children [29]. The drug prevention program is very suitable to continue by giving emphasis to several aspects that are factors in the effectiveness of program implementation [30], such as module improvement, monitoring, follow-up activities, and so on [31]. Therefore, drug prevention programs in schools should be continued [32], [33] in an effort to eradicate the spread of drug abuse from the grassroots in society [34], [35], especially among teenagers, which is becoming increasingly worrying [36].

Table 5. SWOT analysis

Strength	Opportunity	Weakness	Threats
S1: The drug prevention program successfully increased children's awareness, knowledge, skills and spirituality	O1: Be able to find out the main cause or problem of high-risk children	W1: The content of the module needs a more child-oriented approach	T1: Families and parents are not ready to involve children with the program
S2: The drug prevention program succeeded in delaying the addiction process among students	O2: Collaboration between AADK, Education Office and School	W2: Weaknesses in terms of monitoring and follow-up	T2: External influences and circumstances around the participants
S3: Reducing student misbehavior		W3: Program participants do not follow the correct criteria	

4. CONCLUSION

Recommendations to the management and stakeholders so that drug prevention programs can be continued in a more structured manner, in addition to giving emphasis on module content, budget, promotion, and monitoring. In addition to that, emphasis on the sustainability of the program through monitoring and follow-up activities that may be carried out periodically and in accordance with the needs of the program participants can also be given attention.

Next, the collaboration of various parties, such as NGOs, and universities, needs to be mobilised for the planning and implementation of more effective programs so that the programs to be implemented have good content of activities and are planned with full strategy and systematic planning and can then be implemented with maximum effect. This is in line with the findings of an external study which states that an effective drug prevention program for teenagers needs to involve the school, family, community, peers, as well as technology-based interventions.

Regarding the content of the module, it needs to undergo an improvement process by involving researchers from any university or research body. A specific study needs to be conducted to further refine every aspect of the module's content as well as test the module in a real setting to examine the level of validity of the content, reliability, and effectiveness of the module using the correct research process.

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