

The Effectiveness of the Moral Rehabilitation Program with the Concept of Religion and Spirituality for Adolescents with Drugs

Farhana Kamarul Bahrin*, Masarah Mohamad Yusof, Mohammad Haziq Zamri, Mohd. Haizzan Yahaya
School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

Abstract

The development process among adolescents is now increasingly changing in parallel with the development changes in the exposure of technology to that group. This causes changes to the adaptation process among adolescents including moral rehabilitation programs. Cases of drug abuse among adolescents, which are increasing day by day, require an effective moral rehabilitation program for the group to recover from the problem. Addressing drug use among adolescents is a significant concern, as it can have detrimental effects on their physical and mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Adolescents may experiment with drugs for various reasons, including curiosity, peer pressure, coping with stress, or seeking a sense of belonging. This study was carried out to look at the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program with a religious and spiritual concept offered at Tunas Bakti School Teluk Air Tawar, Penang as an effort to rehabilitate adolescents involved in drug abuse and to see the acceptance of the youth towards the moral rehabilitation program with a religious and spiritual concept. Data for this study has been collected using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed using the SPSS software. Based on this analysis, the effectiveness of the moral rehabilitation program is high and has a strong relationship with the youth's acceptance of the rehabilitation program carried out. The results of this study can be used to improve and improve moral rehabilitation programs for adolescents' moral rehabilitation institutions in this country.

Keywords: *Adolescence, Community Health and Wellbeing, Drug Abuse, Rehabilitation Program.*

Introduction

Due to the increase in technology and the rapid development in Malaysia, the development process among adolescents has also changed. The cognitive and intellectual development that develops every day among today's adolescents requires a different approach to push them in a more positive direction and the approach taken must also be in line with the existing modernization current. This also causes changes to the adaptation process among adolescents regarding various types of matters. This change causes the group in question to need a different approach for example in the learning process, motivation

and including the rehabilitation program available at Tunas Bakti School for the youth group placed in the institution in question. In this increasingly advanced and developing era of globalization, there are many types of criminal cases involving adolescents and young offenders. Among the cases that are popular or become favorites for this group of adolescents are cases of drug abuse, drug trafficking, theft, robbery, rape and even gangsterism. Nevertheless, the most increasing case every year is the case of drug abuse among adolescents. Cases involving drug abuse among adolescents, which are increasing every day, need to be given

Received: 29.04.2024

Accepted: 14.05.2024

Published on: 28.06.2024

**Corresponding Author: farhanabahrin@usm.my*

attention because they are among the cases that will threaten the sovereignty and peace of this country. Therefore, the rehabilitation program that is offered to the concerned group needs to be emphasized to help them to recover from drug addiction and influence and further so that they do not repeat the same case or 'relapse'. Drugs are the enemy of the country; they not only damage the physical but also the mental of an individual who uses them incorrectly.

The youth group is an asset to the country, and they are potential leaders who will lead the country in the future. However, these groups are heavily involved in drug abuse. According to data released by The Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia in 2019, there were a total of 124 adolescents who were placed in Tunas Bakti School Teluk Air Tawar, Penang, and most of the offenders were drug abusers. It can be seen from the data that one of the most common offenses committed by adolescents is drug abuse. The results of the study found that adolescents abuse drugs due to several factors including the influence of peers, the feeling of wanting to try social acceptance factors, medicine, personal factors, and the feeling of fun when using drugs [1]. Due to these matters, now most of the adolescents who are placed in Tunas Bakti School are from drug abuse offences. In 2023, Tunas Bakti School, Teluk Air Tawar, Penang only has 50 young offenders and most of them, 30 adolescents, are involved in drug abuse. Therefore, the rehabilitation program offered by Tunas Bakti School needs to include a rehabilitation program that is also specific to adolescents who are addicted to drug abuse that is effective so that they do not repeat the same mistake again, which is using drugs.

This study was conducted to look at the effectiveness of the religious and spiritual rehabilitation program offered at Tunas Bakti School, Teluk Air Tawar to rehabilitate adolescents who are involved in drug abuse

and who are addicted to the matter. This is to prevent and ensure that they do not return to do those things after they are released from Tunas Bakti School and can then live a normal life without stigma and discrimination from their families, communities of residence and even society because of the cases they have committed. Drug users who have previously been involved in drug abuse have a high potential to return to using drugs again when they return to their residence and socialize with friends who also use drugs once they are released from the detention center [2][3][4]. These things are caused by the negative influence from the living environment in addition to the lack of positive encouragement for them to continue to leave their previous negative habits. The matter is also due to the lack of effectiveness in moral rehabilitation programs offered by moral rehabilitation institutions to the concerned groups. Therefore, this study was conducted to look at opportunities for improvement and renewal of the rehabilitation program.

Drug users who 'relapse' or return to using drugs is one of the challenges and phenomena that are difficult to anticipate in the rehabilitation program carried out [5]. Therefore, a good rehabilitation program or module, as well as in line with the current of modernization and acceptable to today's youth, is important in an institution like this Tunas Bakti School. This is to reduce and prevent adolescents involved in drug abuse from returning to use when they are released from the Tunas Bakti School. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the moral rehabilitation program available at Tunas Bakti School Teluk Air Tawar, Penang whether it is effective or not in rehabilitating adolescents involved in drug abuse activities as well as their acceptance of the program. The purpose of the matter is to guarantee and reduce the risk of adolescents involved in returning to drug use after being released from the concerned Tunas Bakti School.

This study is important for institutions such as Tunas Bakti School, rehabilitation centre and Henry Gurney School in strengthening the programs and rehabilitation modules related to academics, co-curriculum, spirituality, and religion to achieve the maximum level of rehabilitation. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the existing program available at the Tunas Bakti School regarding the adolescents who are involved in drug abuse and their acceptance that there is a program that can have an impact in the rehabilitation process for the group in question. The group of adolescents who were born in the current of modernization that is becoming more modern need an approach that is also modern and in line with their level of development and maturity for them to live to return their social functionality to normal and free from the same problems.

Adolescents who behave in violation of local community norms are known as a group that behaves deviant and it is called delinquent if this group is still in school or still underage. Deviant or delinquent is one of the behaviours that break the rules or behaviours that cannot be accepted by the community [6]. The social problems that occur in the community, which is the problem of drug addiction, are among the most and there are 46 drug rehabilitation centers under the management of the National Anti-Drug Agency, which were built to help the rehabilitation of drug users, in addition to there being 55 private drug rehabilitation centers with the intention and purpose the same. Several factors lead to the occurrence of moral misconduct among adolescents, among them are the lack of religious education, spiritual factors, the attitude of wanting to try, friends, oneself, and weak self-reliance [7].

The early stages of adolescence, which are between the ages of 12 and 16 years, is a period of development that is signified as a transition to the risk of substance abuse. As such, it is easy for adolescents to be influenced by criminal cases such as substance or drug

abuse [8]. At the age of adolescents who are still searching for identity in addition to having a high curiosity that causes adolescents to be easily caught up in negative influences, social acceptance is also very important to them that they are willing to take risks and accept challenges to be seen with the times [9] For them if they don't do things like smoking, using substances and other social problems they are seen as not keeping up with the times or behind the times by their peers. On the other hand, most adolescents in their early teens are not only involved with drugs but they are also involved with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other prohibited substances [10]. A teenager can be categorized as a group at risk when involved in behaviour that is wrong with the law or societal norms [11].

Social environment factors are also factors that can influence or be a source of learning in the process of forming an individual's attitude or behaviour through social learning methods such as modelling, feedback, encouragement, and obstacles [12]. Social environment factors in terms of humanitarian elements such as the influence of parents, the influence of teachers, the influence of peers and also the influence of society as well as non-human elements such as the influence of the media received by a person during the growth process are among the factors that influence the formation of an individual's morals [13][14]. The contributor to the problem of delinquency which is getting worse among children and adolescents is due to the lack of concern of parents towards their children's studies and there is no control for the children to socialize with their friends [15]. The way of education and upbringing at home which is also a factor of the parents is one of the factors that has a close relationship with the problem of misbehavior that arises among children and adolescents [16]. Four main factors contribute to the symptoms of drug addiction, including peers, family environment and place of residence, pressure experienced

by adolescents and lack of knowledge and religious education [17].

Adolescents are among the groups that find it difficult to accept change or self-adjustment and this is evidenced by early signs that they like to be involved in disciplinary cases at school [18]. As such, the recovery program or programs carried out at Tunas Bakti School are likely to be less effective at the initial stages of the recovery process. Although the rehabilitation program run by the Tunas Bakti School can stop their addiction while they are in the Tunas Bakti School, the real risk is being outside the school. Adolescents are more easily influenced by the environment and additional peers if they do not get support or positive encouragement from the microenvironment such as parents, family members and even peers themselves. This is because according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the involvement of adolescents who are involved in substance abuse who are still in school is expected to be more than those who have been convicted of an offence and these people are quite risky and have the potential to influence other adolescents, plus adolescents who have involved in substance abuse. WHO also stated that every drug user detected is only one in four that cannot be detected. This clearly shows that there are still many risks that await the adolescents who have recovered from the rehabilitation program at Tunas Bakti School to return to their original residence and environment. If they are not properly restored mentally and the spirit remains changed, they will return to their old habit of using substances in other words that is 'relapse.'

Adolescents placed in rehabilitation institutions on average have internal and external conflicts involving their parents, family, environment, and their internal conflicts [18]. Existing conflicts faced by these children can affect the recovery process if the situation in the institution puts pressure on the child. Negative interactions between staff and

interns in a rehabilitation institution can cause the intern to not fully recover, but it also increases the potential for the intern to repeat the crime committed. The study found that repeated crimes are related to the environment of rehabilitation institutions that fail to help trainees and further encourage trainees to repeat criminal acts ever done [19][20].

The process of rehabilitation treatment or psychotherapy for adolescents is carried out by applying religious elements to mental and spiritual development. The matter is because religious elements can have an impact on the formation of behaviour, decisions, and actions towards adolescents due to the nature of religion or spirituality which gives peace and happiness to individuals [21]. The recovery of drug addiction problems found that several elements of therapy are emphasized in the study for aspects of drug recovery, among them is the application of guided repentance, the application of feeding passion and soul, the application of charitable giving with noble values [22][23]. The therapy emphasizes the concept of continuous treatment with a combination of spiritual and physical aspects through continuous efforts and prayers.

Methodology

The study sample consisted of adolescents who were involved in drug abuse who had been placed at the Tunas Bakti School in Teluk Air Tawar, Penang. A total of 30 adolescents involved in drug abuse were taken as a sample for this study. All 30 of these students were questioned and also interviewed by the researcher regarding the moral rehabilitation program with a religious and spiritual concept to evaluate the effectiveness of the moral and spiritual rehabilitation program that has been carried out at the School in question as well as their acceptance of the moral rehabilitation program with a religious and spiritual concept in helping the group to recover from drugs.

The semi-structured interview method through the in-depth interview technique is used in this qualitative research to obtain accurate data. The guidance of the existing interview questions in line with the research objectives is used in the interview process conducted in stages. It begins with the construction of rapport with the informants at the first stage and then carries out the process of getting more information in more depth on the informants. Bahasa Malaysia was used as the medium to conduct interviews with informants, and the average time allocated for each interview was between 45 minutes to one hour. In addition, this research involves several important tools, including audio tape recordings, interview question guidelines, and the researcher's self towards more effective data analysis. Before transcripts were produced, recordings of all interviews were played several times so that the data processed was accurate and concise. Next, the data undergoes a coding process through the use of NVIVO 8 software towards the production of key themes in line with research objectives. Finally, selecting appropriate verbatim data is important to explain the existing themes.

Concerning research ethics, confidentiality was maintained by assigning the informants participating in the interviews anonymous labels from R1 to R30, instead of using their actual names. Additionally, the interview question guide avoided addressing sensitive topics with the informants. It was made clear to all participants that they had the right to withdraw at any point, and there was no obligation to answer any specific questions. The informants collectively reached a consensus by agreeing to complete the provided consent form, resulting in the successful full participation of all 30 informants in the research.

Results and Discussion

The informants used in this study are students who are involved with drugs at Tunas

Bakti School, Teluk Air Tawar, Penang. A total of 30 students out of 50 students placed at Tunas Bakti School Teluk Air Tawar, Penang are the students arrested for drug abuse cases have been selected. 6.67% or two students are aged 16 out of the total number of students involved in drugs. Next there are three students who are 17 years old which is equivalent to 10% of the total number of students involved in drug abuse. The majority of students involved in drug abuse are aged 18 and 19 respectively, which is equivalent to 36.67% and 36.67% of the total number of students involved in drug abuse. Finally, there are only three students aged 20 who are involved in drug abuse which is equivalent to 10% of the total number of students involved in drug abuse cases placed at the Tunas Bakti School, Pulau Pinang.

The adolescents involved with drugs who have been placed in Tunas Bakti School feel that going through and implementing a rehabilitation program with a religious and spiritual concept at this school can help them recover from their mistakes of abusing drugs and be able to become better people when they released from the rehabilitation centre.

"After learning these religious topics with the teacher, I just realized that I had sinned by taking drugs (drugs) before this." - R1

This program for the restoration of religious and spiritual morals can form a good identity among teenagers, with that, an individual or teenager who is involved with drugs will find it easier to change into a better person. This is also an important factor in the effectiveness of a moral recovery program in recovering a teenager involved with drugs. Adolescents are individuals who are still in the phase of searching for their identity according to Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, therefore it is important for them to study and understand the contents of every religious and spiritual program delivered, apart from being able to form a high level of religious understanding which is also indirectly can immediately

confirm the identity of the teenager to continue to remain steadfast after being released from the School in question.

"I think if I had studied religion a long time ago, I would have stopped smoking drugs because this is a big sin." - R2

The adolescents involved in drug abuse placed in the Tunas Bakti School believe that undergoing a recovery program based on religious and spiritual concepts at the school helps them forget their addiction to drugs. This is because the observation and learning of religious knowledge applied in this moral recovery program make them not think about drugs. The addiction experienced by this group is sometimes caused by loneliness and boredom. With a dense schedule of religious and spiritual programs, they do not have time to think about their addiction, and it gradually helps them forget about drugs.

"Since I entered here, I learned to recite the Quran, and I forgot all about that thing (drugs), especially with constant Quranic studies, I forget even more." - R5

These teenagers also believe that attending and participating in a recovery program based on religious and spiritual concepts at the School somewhat helps them recover from the influence of drugs. They feel that following a moral recovery program based on religious and spiritual concepts will bring them back to their old lives before they got involved in drug abuse. Religious elements can have an impact on the formation of behaviour, decisions, and actions of teenagers because the nature of religion or spirituality provides peace and happiness to individuals.

"I feel more at peace when every day the religious teacher tells us to read the Quran, engage in remembrance (zikir), and pray. Before this, I felt overwhelmed, and that's why I took substances (drugs)." - R8

Furthermore, due to the moral recovery program based on religious and spiritual concepts helping to eliminate the craving for drugs and its influence, these teenagers also

believe that they will not return to drug use or relapse after being released. The religious education and spiritual strengthening they receive at the School can help them refrain from repeating past mistakes such as drug abuse.

"After learning about religion, about what's permissible (halal) and forbidden (haram), I don't want to use drugs like before. It's not good, and it's a sin too." - R11

It is important to assess the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program for these teenagers. When the rehabilitation program is well understood and followed, individuals find it easier to incorporate it into their lives. However, some teenagers express that it is difficult for them to return to the life they had before using drugs, even if they have stopped using them. This is because their thinking has changed; they cannot go back to being as comfortable as they were in their old lives. They need to work hard to redeem each mistake by being devoted to the family they cherish.

"It's difficult, brother, if I want to go back, back to the time before using drugs. Because I feel guilty towards my parents, thinking of being better from now on." - R13

Based on investigations and interviews conducted with 30 teenagers involved in drug abuse who had been placed at Tunas Bakti School Teluk Air Tawar, Pulau Pinang regarding the effectiveness of the moral recovery program with a religious and spiritual concept that they had undergone at since they were first placed there, it can be concluded that the results of the study obtained by the reviewer show that the moral recovery program has a relatively high effectiveness in recovering teenagers involved with drug use. This case shows that on average the teenagers agree that the moral recovery program with a religious and spiritual concept helps to recover them from the influence of drugs.

A moral recovery program with a religious and spiritual concept is a good way of moral

recovery in helping teenagers to form high identity values in facing any negative influences and encouragement towards them. In this case, if a teenager has or learns more about religious and spiritual knowledge, it will help them to affirm their identity and then recover from the influence and addiction to drugs. The recovery of drug collection problems found that there were several therapeutic elements emphasized in the study for the drug recovery aspect, including the application of guided repentance, the application of purification of passions and souls, the application of giving charity with noble values. This therapy emphasizes the concept of ongoing treatment with a combination of spiritual and physical aspects through continuous effort, prayer, and trust [24].

The rehabilitation or psychotherapeutic treatment process for adolescents is carried out by incorporating religious elements in the development of their souls and spirituality. This is because religious elements can impact the formation of behavior, decisions, and actions in teenagers due to the tranquillity and happiness they provide to individuals. This indicates that moral recovery programs incorporating religious and spiritual elements assist adolescents involved in drug abuse placed in Tunas Bakti School to change their behavior, enabling them to function normally in their social roles as they did before engaging in drug abuse. Interview results also show that respondents feel more peaceful and think less about drugs since participating in the moral recovery program at the Tunas Bakti School.

These adolescents also acknowledge that their involvement with drugs was influenced by a lack of sufficient religious education. This aligns with studies conducted earlier which found that factors contributing to juvenile delinquency include family dysfunction, environment, peer influence, religious beliefs, social problem-solving, and

the emotional state of the involved teenagers [23][24]. Therefore, incorporating religious elements into the moral recovery program at the Tunas Bakti Schools helps these teenagers recover and enhances their religious values. The effectiveness of the religious and spiritual-based moral recovery program has been proven through survey questionnaires and interviews. The study results indicate that the majority of adolescents involved in drug abuse placed in the Tunas Bakti School agree or strongly agree with the effectiveness of the moral recovery program.

The lack of positive support for learning about religion and spirituality outside causes this group of teenagers to easily get trapped in negative activities such as using drugs [25]. However, according to teenagers, they often get positive support from friends and also teachers or moral staff. Because of this, they feel that the moral recovery program based on religion and spirituality that they are undergoing is enjoyable and will not cause them any trouble. They added that they felt grateful if they were placed at the Tunas Bakti School because they were able to study and deepen their religious knowledge to strengthen their beliefs and identity, making it easier for them to be free from the influence of drugs. This positive support not only needs to be implemented so that they are released from the Tunas Bakti School, but it also needs to be implemented in their social environment while they are outside the Tunas Bakti School so that they do not return to their old mistakes, namely using drugs.

The effectiveness of the program also considers social work theories, which contribute to explaining these matters. The engagement of teenagers in drug abuse is typically influenced by peer pressure, as observed in the Ecological Systems Theory that explains the systems surrounding the adolescents, including parents, family members, peers, and the community. In the moral recovery process undergone by

adolescents involved in drug abuse placed in the Tunas Bakti School, it closely relates to the environmental systems where the surrounding systems play a crucial role in the effectiveness of the religious and spiritually-based moral recovery program. Peer groups within the Tunas Bakti School, considered microsystems, are among the closest systems, interacting the most with the adolescents after the teaching staff and moral officers at the Tunas Bakti School. These peers act as a support group for adolescents involved in drug abuse, aiding in their recovery from the influence and addiction to drugs.

Social work is one of the crucial fields in addressing social issues that are becoming increasingly prevalent due to rapid social developments. Various types of social problems occur, especially among adolescents. Therefore, this study has practical implications for the field of social work. The practical implications of this study for social work involve assessing all the causes and reasons that lead an individual, particularly a teenager, to engage in negative phenomena such as drug abuse. In the practice of social work, it is acknowledged that every action desired by an individual or teenager is their right, and as social workers, we must respect that right. However, when such actions conflict with the law or religious teachings, the question arises whether they should be ignored.

The study also emphasizes that, although religion cannot be directly incorporated into social work practice, a religious and spiritual approach can help individuals recover from past mistakes, such as drug abuse. For individuals with religious beliefs, especially Islam, this approach can be key to mental and spiritual recovery and returning to normal functioning in society. Previous studies have shown that a religious approach is effective in treating the mental and spiritual aspects of an individual, helping them return to normal functioning in society. Therefore, modern social work practices need to enhance

religious and spiritual therapies, especially for individuals or teenagers involved in negative phenomena, particularly in a country like Malaysia with high sensitivity to religious issues. The implications of this study for social work practice involve changing the perspectives of social workers regarding the influence and religious approach to addressing social issues. By understanding the positive role of religious and spiritual approaches, social workers can use them as tools to rehabilitate individuals and prevent more serious social problems in the future. In other words, this study encourages recognizing and integrating the religious dimension into social work practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of social work in addressing the escalating social issues, particularly those affecting adolescents. The practical implications drawn from the research emphasize the need to thoroughly assess the root causes leading individuals, especially teenagers, into negative behaviors such as drug abuse. It highlights the delicate balance between respecting individual rights and the necessity to intervene when actions conflict with the law or religious principles. Moreover, the study emphasizes the value of incorporating religious and spiritual elements into social work practices, especially when dealing with individuals who hold religious beliefs. While religion should not be directly integrated into social work, the study suggests that a religious and spiritual approach can play a vital role in facilitating the recovery of individuals, contributing to their mental and spiritual well-being.

The findings of the study resonate with previous research, affirming that religious approaches can be effective in treating various aspects of an individual's well-being. The implications for modern social work practices, particularly in a culturally sensitive context

like Malaysia, highlight the need to enhance religious and spiritual therapies to address the complex social issues faced by individuals, especially adolescents. In essence, the study calls for a nuanced perspective among social workers, urging them to recognize and integrate religious dimensions when appropriate in addressing social problems. By doing so, social workers can leverage religious and spiritual elements as valuable tools for rehabilitation, contributing to the prevention of more severe social issues in the future. Furthermore, the study sheds light on the broader landscape of social issues affecting adolescents and the crucial role of social work in navigating these challenges. It underscores the dynamic nature of these issues, which often necessitates a multifaceted approach that respects individual rights while acknowledging the legal and ethical considerations.

The practical implications extend beyond mere assessment, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity, particularly in a country like Malaysia where religious factors hold significant societal weight. The study encourages social workers to be attuned to the cultural and religious backgrounds of the individuals they work with, recognizing the potential positive impact of incorporating religious and spiritual elements into therapeutic interventions. Additionally, the study prompts a reconsideration of the role of peer groups, particularly within confined settings like rehabilitation centres, as microsystems influencing adolescents. The acknowledgement of peer influence and support within these microsystems becomes essential for social workers designing effective intervention strategies. In a broader context, the research suggests that the integration of religious and spiritual elements should not be viewed as a rigid prescription but as a flexible

and individualized approach based on the specific needs and beliefs of the clients. This calls for ongoing training and professional development within the field of social work to equip practitioners with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of incorporating religious and spiritual aspects into their practice. In conclusion, the study advocates for a holistic and culturally sensitive approach within social work, recognizing the interconnectedness of social issues and the potential benefits of incorporating religious and spiritual dimensions. By embracing this nuanced perspective, social workers can contribute meaningfully to the well-being and rehabilitation of individuals, especially adolescents, fostering a more comprehensive and effective response to the complex challenges of our rapidly changing social landscape.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia for providing us with the research in *Tunas Bakti* School.

Funding

The study was funded by the authors.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in relation to this study from either party involved.

Ethics Approval

The study's ethical approval was carried out by the Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia.

Data Availability

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article [and/or] its supplementary materials.

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