

Psycho-Legal Readiness of Women Volunteers in Combating Drug Abuse in Malaysia

Zaleha Kamaruddin¹
Mohamad Sahari Nordin²
Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail³

Abstract

This research discusses the psycho-legal readiness of PEMADAM's women volunteers in terms of cognitive and effective readiness in combating drug abuse among Malaysians. The main objective of the survey is to find out the extent the respondents are ready in terms of their knowledge of legislations that are related to drug abuse. This survey-research adopted an ex post facto research methodology. A survey was used to collect data whereas quantitative descriptive techniques were utilized to analyze, interpret, and discover the research findings. Questionnaire was employed to collect the information needed for the research to approximately 5000 members of PEMADAM nationwide. In addition, qualitative library-based research and internet access were used for maximum research output in the light of theoretical framework in this research. The results indicated that legal literacy to prevent drug abuse among the participants can be improved. Second, the type of occupation was the variable that showed relationship between the answers given and the literacy in laws. Third, the design of the research also did allow levels of psycho-legal readiness to be identified as high, medium, and low. Finally, further research should be undertaken to allow PEMADAM to effectively realize its noble objective in preventing further increase of drug abuse especially among Malaysian youths.

Zaleha Kamaruddin, PhD, is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Islamic and Family Law, Faculty/Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Mohamad Sahari Nordin, PhD, and Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail, PhD are currently lecturers at the Institute of Education, International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research highlights the psycho-legal readiness of 5000 volunteers of the National Association for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (PEMADAM) in combating drug abuse among Malaysians. It surveys the state of cognitive and affective readiness among volunteers of the drug abuse resistant programs. This case study involves participants from the second Colloquium held by the National Association for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (PEMADAM) on 17th – 19th January 2003.

The survey employs a questionnaire to collect the information needed for the research from the respondents. The respondents, all of whom are women, have been exposed to, or have been trained in PEMADAM's programs on the prevention of drug abuse. This questionnaire is employed to assess their knowledge and attitudes on the abovementioned survey.

The main objective of the survey is to find out the extent the members of PEMADAM or the respondents are ready in terms of their knowledge of legislations that are related to drug abuse. What their literacy levels are in relation to the problems of drug abuse, how much knowledge have they acquired in the provisions related to the criminal penalty of drug abuse, knowledge of parental responsibilities, and the types of illicit drug substances.

The research instrument consists of demographic characteristics questionnaire, perceptions questionnaire and legal literacy test. Under the demographic characteristics survey, the questionnaire was distributed among those who were between the ages of 18-50 years old. The distribution of the respondents according to age category was balanced: the majority (26.8%) was in the range of 19 to 30 years old. The survey shows that almost all respondents had SRP qualification; close to one third of them had diploma or degree qualification. A total of 2112 respondents identified their occupations that could be classified under ten categories and half of the samples are unemployed or underemployed, students and pupils (33.9%), housewives (15%) and pensioners (1.7%). Teachers (including 17 lecturers) formed the majority (18.3%); followed by clerks, nurses, uniformed personnel, traders, and KEMAS nursery and kindergarten teachers.

In the perception section, there were nine items to gauge the interest and efficacy belief among the respondents in the drug abuse prevention program. Every item was in the form of positive proposition and adopted a five-choice scale to indicate respondents' agreeableness to each item. Responses to eight items indicated that there were two valid psychological constructs, namely; (i) interests towards drug abuse prevention activities (4 items) and (ii) efficacy belief towards the activities (4 items). The survey showed that both the constructs described 55% of response pattern. Reliability coefficient based upon alpha Cronbach for each construct was .77 (interest) and .66 (efficacy).

Psychological readiness in this research comprises the interest and efficacy belief of the respondents towards their involvement in the drug abuse programs. The results showed that the distribution of interest scores among respondents were between 0

and the maximum of 20; minimum 16 and SD 2.53. The majority of respondents (49.7%) obtained the second highest interval scores that are between 16-18. Efficacy belief was the level of confidence of the members of PEMADAM with regard to their abilities to help the risked group to overcome the possibilities of getting involved in drug abuse. The findings showed that the efficacy belief scores distributed between 0 and 20; minimum was 15, with SD 2.27. The majority of the respondents (44.4%) scored between 13 and 15. However, research design and data characteristics did not allow labeling and generalization of the overall findings on the interest and efficacy belief in this research.

On the other hand, in the legal literacy section there were ten (10) items on the criminal penalty of drug abuse, parental responsibility, and types of substances categorized under illicit drugs. Each item was prepared into dichotomous answer category; 'Yes' or 'No'. This section also contained two items to capture respondents' opinions. The results showed that, more than 90% responded correctly to the criminal penalty and more than 1/3 reacted wrongly. The majority of the respondents (46.7%) understood the responsibilities of parents of children below 18 years old that were arrested because of drug abuse. On the knowledge of illicit drugs, analyzed data showed that more than 90% of the respondents knew about gum inhalation as a drug related crime. Only 37.6% of the respondents reported that they could differentiate between cannabis and ornamental trees. In addition, more than half responded wrongly on the position of ecstasy pills and cough syrup.

These results from the survey, as expected, have contributed to the development of a comprehensive database on drug abuse preventive programs. This would in turn contribute ideas to the decision makers, planners and NGOs in the formulation of a national agenda against substance abuse in terms of providing informative facts and figures on demographic characteristics, legal literacy and interest in executing the role in participation in related workshop and seminars.

The government of Malaysia and the NGOs, in their on-going efforts, are trying their best to educate the public in issues of drug abuse. Establishment of rehabilitation centers to rehabilitate the drug addicts and to treat them through medical treatment and counseling seem not to be the real solution to prevent this issue from exacerbating in the society. It is worthwhile to mention that, the Education Ministry, parents, educators and NGOs play an important role to be the intervention bodies to tackle this issue and to overcome it systematically and effectively. This issue has been raised by the vice-chairman of PEMADAM, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, to combat drug abuse cases in schools. He said that, more than 240,000 addicts have been identified since 1980s and the statistics from the National Narcotics Agency showed that in every 57 seconds, one new drug addict was identified last year. Sadly, almost 70% of them who were sent to the rehabilitation centers returned to addiction after being released.

Finally, from the research and survey conducted by PEMADAM, it is really hoped that, the relevant collected database would contribute solutions to assist in policy making on the drug abuse cases and provide effective measures in preventing and combating the problem which seems to be one of the barriers for human development.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aims to survey the readiness of participants of the drug abuse prevention programs organized by PEMADAM. In particular this research tries to answer the following questions:

- o To what extent are the members of PEMADAM ready in terms of their knowledge in legislations that are related to drug abuse? What are their literacy levels in relation to the problems of drug abuse and their knowledge of the laws related to criminal penalty of drug abuse, parental responsibility, and types of illicit drug substances?
- o To what extent are the members of PEMADAM ready to carry out the preventive measures of drug abuse? What are the levels of interest among the members to help the group at risk? Do they procure efficacy belief to implement their roles?
- o What are the definite variables for the readiness of the members of PEMADAM to prevent drug abuse? Are respondents' backgrounds related to their readiness in terms of their literacy in laws and psychology? Are there differences in their readiness in terms of their demographical differences, in particular their age, education, occupation, marital status, and the frequency of participation in the drug abuse prevention programs?

3. JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research was planned and carried out according to the justifications as follows:

- 3.1 The prolonged and disturbing problems of drug abuse need to be tackled comprehensively. Focus should be given on the strategy, technique, and training for prevention. Besides, variables that are related to human resources-readiness of volunteers have to be given due attention and consideration.
- 3.2 Even though the prevention programs for drug abuse are frequently conducted and researched, information about the readiness of the participants are limited: differences on the understanding of the legal literacy, interest, and efficacy belief among social workers in the prevention program remain observable.
- 3.3 Limited information on definition, ways and means to measure legal literacy that are related to drug abuse have to be explored as literacy levels have a direct effect on the ability of the social workers.
- 3.4 Efforts to undertake this survey on the interest and efficacy belief towards the activities to assist the prevention programs for drug abuse is necessary in view that these mental constructs are the motivation factors behind members actions, and hence the effectiveness of the programs provided by PEMADAM.
- 3.5 Drug abuse prevention programs in particular which involve women's participation have to be studied systematically since this group plays a major influence upon the development and change in a society.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The empowerment of community members, especially women, to function as mediators in the creation of an active, healthy society has been a major driving force of intellectual efforts (e.g., Lenney & Wandersman, 1991; Mitchell et al., 1996).⁴ Mc Millan et al., (1995) point out that the efforts have produced several promising approaches and models of community empowerment in preventing drug abuse. Interestingly, these approaches share one common belief that is for a community-based approach to make a difference, social support, competence building, and psychological readiness of the mediators are called for.⁵

Most of the literature on legal literacy focuses on the area of litigation which is only a part of literacy. Thus far, however, not much research has been conducted to study competence building and psychological readiness of voluntary drug-prevention workers. Questions such as "Do the volunteers possess adequate legal, procedural, and conceptual knowledge about drug abuse?" and "Do the volunteers have the interest and efficacy in executing the tasks?" have yet to be addressed. Answers to such questions would shed light on the effectiveness of drug-prevention programs.

Other available literature on the subject, even though not much in relation to drug abuse and its relationship to combat drug, are to be discussed here. These literature emphasized on judges and lawyers' perspective on the low-level of legal literacy in relation to area of litigation. In general, literacy is defined as the ability to use "printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."⁶

In recent years, crucial attention has been given to tackle the issue of literacy by making a change from giving importance on the levels of schooling to a focus on functional skills. Laird Hunter, in *Reading the Legal World* suggests the following ideal operational definition of legal literacy;

"People using the legal system must be able to guide themselves through a process that they understand... and, at appropriate places along the way,⁷ recognize they have a legal right or responsibility, in order to exercise or assume it; recognize when a problem or conflict is a legal conflict and when a legal solution is available; know how to take the necessary action to avoid problems and where this is not possible, how to help themselves appropriately; know how and where to find information on the law, and be able to find information that is accessible to them, know when and how to obtain suitable legal assistance; have confidence that the legal system will provide a remedy, and understand the process clearly enough to perceive that justice has been done..."

To understand the language and procedure of the courts is not a simple thing for a layman, i.e. the accused, complainants, witnesses and those who come into contact with court's trial. Review of some literature relating to this issue shows that, it is always the presumption of the courts that the accused or the witnesses who turn up for a hearing have low literacy on court's procedure and legal matters. Several researches which have been conducted to identify and overcome this problem pointed out that, it is always

been the responsibility of the judges and lawyers to ensure justice in the courtroom by giving full explanation and guidelines to the people who stand before them in a trial on what is not understandable by them before or during the process of litigation.

According to Phil Knight,⁸ low literacy⁹ is critical even before a person engages with the criminal justice system. He viewed out that, it is not an easy job to determine whether a person who comes into contact with the legal system could read and have the tendency of understanding a particular matter. He pointed out that the judges in a criminal court have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to address this issue to ensure justice is served.

This issue also caught the attention of Judge Gilles Renaud, Ontario Court (Provincial Division), who says that judges have the ultimate responsibility to ensure that not only the result and the procedure are just but it is manifestly so in terms of its appearance. He firmly viewed out that, although it is the duty of the lawyers to give explanation to their clients on what has taken place and what will take place, the court still holds a tremendous responsibility to ensure that the person who appears before it understands fully. He claims that the courts are not dealing systematically on this issue and he proposed that courts should handle it in a systematic manner to evaluate¹⁰ each person to identify the literacy level which seems to be an obstacle to their full employment and a contributing factor to their criminal behavior.

It is interesting to note the opinion of Phil Knight when he stated that the criminal justice system can cause injustice because it does not recognise legal literacy as a disadvantage. His comment alerted the courts of criminal justice system to be more efficient and to ramp up the courts' system to ensure justice is properly carried out.

This research proposes to look further at the importance of engagement of lawyers, educators, political activists, NGOs and family members to develop a coherent framework for action that could be used to reduce and if possible, to eliminate the use of drugs for illegal purposes in the society.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This survey-research adopted an ex post facto research methodology. Through this method, a survey was used to collect data whereas quantitative descriptive techniques were utilized to analyze, interpret, and discover the research findings. The design and characteristics of the information under the data analysis allowed the usage of descriptive statistical analysis since it involves the application of theoretical framework based on the survey conducted in the study.

Under the research, the researcher has employed questionnaire to collect the information needed for the research and it consisted of demographic characteristics and perceptions questionnaire and legal literacy test. The questionnaires were distributed to approximately 5000 members of PEMADAM nationwide who were the participants of the three days colloquium. A total of 2809 participants (56.2%) completed the questionnaires which were distributed to them.

Besides survey-research methodology, the researchers also used qualitative library-based research. Books, journals, newspapers and other periodicals were used for maximum research output in the light of theoretical framework. Internet access has also been utilized as the secondary source of data for a comprehensive data collection.

5.1 Survey Sample

Respondents in this study were participants of Colloquium II PEMADAM. Approximately 5000 members of PEMADAM nationwide participated in the colloquium for three days.

A total of 2809 participants (56.2%) completed the questionnaires used in the study. Demographic characteristics of the respondents are as follows:

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents		
Frequency	%	Age
Below 18 yrs	547	19.6
19 – 30 yrs	752	26.9
31 – 40 yrs	399	14.3
41 – 50 yrs	657	23.5
Above 50 yrs	442	15.8
Highest Academic Qualification		
SRP	737	27.0
SPM/IV Thanawi	874	32.0
STPM	136	4.8
Diploma/Degree	775	28.4
Others	207	7.5
Marital status		
Unmarried	1378	49.4
Married	1411	50.6
Courses/Seminar (organized by PEMADAM)		
One time	2266	81.5
Two times	312	11.2
More than two times	201	7.3
Colloquium I (organized by PEMADAM)		
Did not attend	2668	95.9
Attended	113	4.1
Occupations		
Teacher	515	18.3
KEMAS/Nursery/Kindergarten	54	2.6
Clerk	190	9.0
Uniformed Personnel	97	4.6
Nurse	110	5.2
Trader	78	3.7
Pensioner	36	1.7
Housewife	316	15.0
Student	716	33.9

- Data shows that the samples for this study are those between 18 years old and above 50 years old. The distribution of the participants according to age category was balanced: the majority (26.8%) was in the range of 19 to 30 years old.
- Almost all participants had SRP qualification; close to one third of the participants had diploma or degree qualification.
- The sample showed a balanced distribution of married and unmarried participants.
- A total of 2112 respondents identified their occupations that could be classified under ten categories as shown in Table 1. Approximately half of the sample was unemployed or underemployed, students and pupils (33.9%), housewives (15%) and pensioners (1.7%). Teachers (including 17 lecturers) were the majority (18.3%); followed by clerks, nurses, uniformed personnel, traders, and KEMAS nursery and kindergarten teachers.
- More than 80% of the participants had at least attended the course/seminar organized by PEMADAM once. But, only 4% reported that they had participated in the first colloquium organized by PEMADAM.

5.2 Data Collection Instrument

This research employed questionnaire to collect the information needed for the research.

The research instrument consisted of:

- ⇒ Demographic characteristics questionnaire
- ⇒ Perceptions questionnaire
- ⇒ Legal literacy test

In the perception section there were nine items to gauge the interest and efficacy belief among the participants in the drug abuse prevention program. Every item was in the form of positive proposition and adopted 5-choices scale to indicate participant agreeableness to each item.

Responses to eight items indicated that there were two valid psychological constructs, (i) interest towards drug abuse prevention activities (4-items), and efficacy belief towards the activities (4-items). Data showed that both constructs described 55% of response pattern. Reliability coefficient based upon alpha Cronbach for each construct was .77(interest) and .66 (efficacy).

In the legal literacy section there are 10 items on the criminal penalty of drug abuse, parental responsibility, and types of substances categorized under illicit drugs (Table 2). Each item was prepared into dichotomous answer category; 'Yes' or 'No'. This section also contained two items to capture participants' opinions.

5.3 Data Collection Procedure

- ⇒ The research instrument was distributed to all participants during the Colloquium PEMADAM II.
- ⇒ All participants were requested to complete the instrument.
- ⇒ The participants submitted the instrument on the last day of the program.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The design and characteristics of the information in this study allowed the usage of descriptive statistical analysis to discover the findings of the study.

To answer the first two questions in the study, the basic statistical techniques, frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation utilized to estimate the result of the analysis.

For question three, cross tabulation and mean score differences were adopted. In this study the differences between frequencies must exceed 10% to be considered as "a difference of practical importance."

Furthermore, the strength between the variables was measured with relationship studies; to include coefficient, phi, contingency coefficient and "eta-squared".

6.1 Result of Data Analysis

6.1.1 Legal Literacy amongst Participants of Colloquium PEMADAM II

To survey the readiness of members of PEMADAM to implement activities for prevention of drug abuse, test on the legal literacy was distributed together with the data collection instrument. The test measured three general knowledge categories that should have been acquired by the social workers to prevent drug abuse, namely knowledge on (i) criminal penalty, (ii) parental responsibilities, and (iii) types of illicit drugs. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive findings on legal literacy.

6.1.2 Members' Knowledge on Criminal Penalty

- ⇒ Literacy test consisted of four items on criminal penalty.
- ⇒ More than 90% responded correctly to the criminal penalty as follows:
 - differences between penalty to own and to consume drugs
 - death penalty for trafficking drugs equal to or more than 1kg
- ⇒ More 1/3 reacted wrongly when suggested that "It is a crime if a person carries drugs even though he/she is not aware that the substance is a drug"
- ⇒ Data analysis showed a balance distribution between respondents who acquired the knowledge and respondents who have no knowledge of owning drugs without intention.

6.1.3 Members' Knowledge and Perceptions on Parental Responsibilities

- ⇒ There were three items to test the general knowledge of respondents on the responsibilities of parents. One question was posted to ask the perception of the respondents on the responsibilities of parents.
- ⇒ Almost all reacted correctly to the items as follows:
 - to protect a child who abuse drugs is a criminal act
 - to report to police against the involved child
- ⇒ The majority of the respondents (46.7%) had the understanding about the responsibilities of parents on children below 18 years old that were arrested because of drug abuse.
- ⇒ The majority of the respondents (94.3%) agreed with the suggestion that children below 18 years old are not supposed to go out from the house after 2:00 a.m.

Table2
Legal literacy with regard to Drug Abuse

	Respondents		N
	Correct	Incorrect	
Criminal penalty for owning drugs is heavier than consuming it.	96.2	3.8	2760
If found guilty, death penalty is for trafficking drugs of more than 1kg	92.7	7.3	2757
It is a crime if a person is in possession of drugs even though he/she is not aware that the substance is a drug	68.6	31.4	2714
To own drugs unintentionally is not a crime	50.4	49.6	2733
Parents who do not protect their children from drug abuse are presumed accomplices to the crime	95.7	4.3	2750
Parents should report to police if their children are found involved with drug abuse	94.4	5.6	2740
Parents are responsible for their children below 18 years old who are caught for drug abuse	53.3	46.7	2756
Gum inhalation is not categorized as drug abuse	91.4	8.6	2738
Ecstasy pills are categorized as illicit drugs	46.8	53.2	2738
Cough syrup is categorized as an illicit drug	45.3	54.7	2722

6.1.4 Knowledge of Members on Illicit Drugs

To measure the knowledge of the colloquium participants on the categories and types of illicit drugs, this literacy test on laws consisted of three items. One extra item was included in the test to find out whether members of the colloquium have the skill to identify the illicit drugs. Results from analyzed data showed more than 90% of the respondents knew about the crime of gum inhalation. Yet, more than half responded wrongly on the position of (a) ecstasy pills, and (b) cough syrup. Only 37.6% of the respondents reported that they could differentiate between cannabis and ornamental trees.

6.1.5 Psychological Readiness to Prevent Drug Abuse

Psychological readiness in this study comprises the interest and efficacy belief of the respondents towards their involvement in the drug abuse programs. Table 3 shows the frequency distribution according to categorized scores.

6.1.6 Efficacy Belief

In this research, efficacy belief was the level of confidence of the members of PEMADAM with regard to their abilities to help the risked group to overcome the possibilities of this group to get involve in drug abuse. The findings showed that the efficacy belief scores distributed between zero and 20; mean was 15, with SD 2.27.

The majority of the respondents (44.4%) obtained efficacy belief scores between 13 and 15. The distribution of scores of the respondents was normal; yet, there was some negative crookedness of the items to indicate that some of the items used to measure efficacy belief were relatively easy. Research design and data characteristics did not allow labeling and generalization of the overall findings on the efficacy belief in this research.

Table 3
Distribution of Frequency and Percentages on the Psychological Readiness

Interval Score	Efficacy Attitude		Interest	
	n	%	n	%
Less than 3	7	.3	9	.3
3 – 6	6	.2	20	.7
7 – 9	22	.8	16	.6
10 – 12	246	8.9	97	3.5
13 – 15	1221	44.4	753	27.4
16 – 18	1096	39.9	1367	49.7
More than 18	151	5.5	487	17.7

6.1.7 Interest towards Assistantship Jobs to Prevent Drug Abuse

The results showed that distribution of interest scores among respondents were between zero and maximum of 20; mean 16, SD 2.53. The distribution of scores of the respondents was normal, yet, there was some negative crookedness of the items to indicate that some of the items used to measure interest were relatively easy. The majority of the respondents (49.7%) obtained the second highest interval scores, between 16 and 18. Research design and data characteristics did not allow labeling and generalization for the overall findings on the interest this research.

6.1.8 Relationship between Legal Literacy and the Demographic Background

The results indicated the relationship between some of the demographic characteristics and the frequency of the correct answer given by the respondents towards the statement, "It is a crime if a person carries drugs even though he/she is not aware that the substance is a drug."

Percentage of the correct answer showed consistent increment with the increase of participants' age. Only 48.1% of the respondents aged below 18 years old and 78% of the respondents above 50 years old gave the correct answers. The correlation coefficient was at .241 (coefficient phi and Cramer's V). Marital status: Probability of responses to the correct answers were obvious among married respondents (77.3%) and only 60.1% among unmarried respondents. The correlation coefficient was at .185 (coefficient phi and Cramer's V). Participation in the courses: The correct responses in this item were related to frequency of attending the courses or seminars for drug prevention. The high frequency to give the correct answer was realized among those participants who attended the courses at least twice (77.3%) and those who did not attend the course even once (66.6%) The correlation coefficient was at .089 (coefficient phi and Cramer's V). Types of occupations: Results indicated that the correct answer depended on the types of respondents' occupations. Types of occupations were related to some of the items in the legal literacy (Table 4). Precisely, the types of occupations were related to responses from (i) three items with regard to criminal penalty, (ii) one item with regard to parental responsibilities, and (iii) two items with regard to types of illicit drugs. Even though the majority of the respondents especially nurses (98.2%), KEMAS teachers (98.1%), and pensioners (97.1%) knew that death penalty is for drug trafficking of 1kg; only 88.8% of pupils gave the correct answer.

More pensioners (67.6%) knew about the penalty for owning drugs unintentionally as compared to traders (44%) and teachers (44.2%). Majority of pensioners (90.6%) gave the correct response about carrying drugs without knowledge. On the other hand, approximately half of the students knew about this.

KEMAS teachers (73.6%) and pensioners (67.6%) knew about the responsibilities of parents on their underage children that were caught for drug abuse. Only 36.4% traders reacted correctly on the matter. The status of ecstasy pills as illicit drugs were well known among nurses (60.7%) as compared to the other groups. Data from the findings have shown that less than half of the respondents from other occupations had answered

correctly. More than half of the housewives (57%) and pensioners (56.3%) understood the status of cough syrup in the category of illicit drugs; only 35.3% nurses responded correctly.

Further analysis showed that there were relationship between types of occupations and perceptions of respondents on the ability to identify cannabis trees. More traders (61%) and uniformed personnel (57.3%) reported that they could differentiate between cannabis trees and ornamental trees. Only 25.5 % teachers and 30.3% pensioners reported the same.

Otherwise, there is no relationship between responses of the participants towards questions in the literacy test (except for one item) and the demographic characteristics. There was no evidence to relate the "correct and incorrect" answers with the differences in age, educational background, or marital status.

6.1.9 The Relationship between Psychological Readiness and Demographic Characteristics

Comparatively, the mean score for efficacy attitude and demographic characteristics did not show any significant relationship. The mean score for each category like age, education, occupations, marital status, and participation in the courses and colloquiums were almost the same. Eta-squared method that measured the relationship between efficacy belief with each of the characteristic of the participant was at .0001 and .044; thus a weak relationship. This meant that for the sample researched, the level of efficacy among respondents was not influenced by age, education, occupation, marital status and attendance in the course and colloquium. The results have shown that members of PEMADAM have the efficacy to prevent drugs abuse.

Comparatively, the mean score for interest and demographic characteristics did not show any significant relationship. The mean score for each category like age, education, occupations, marital status, and participation in the courses and colloquiums were almost the same. Eta-squared method that measured the relationship between interests with each of the characteristic of the participant was at .0001 and .014; thus still a weak relationship. This meant that for the sample researched, the level of interest among respondents was not influenced by age, education, occupation, marital status and attendance in the course and colloquium. The results have shown that members of PEMADAM have the interest to prevent abuse of drugs.

The analyzed data also did not show any significant relationship from the practical aspect between legal literacy with the two aspects from the psychology; namely efficacy and interest to prevent drug abuse.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two aspects of readiness namely legal literacy and psychology among the volunteers were the main items in the research. Important findings in the research are as follows:

Legal literacy among the participants can be improved. From the 10 items surveyed, the majority of the participants responded successfully with regard to two items on the criminal penalty for drug abuse, two items on parental responsibilities, and one item on illicit drugs. Findings showed that the majority of the participants could get half of the items correct to measure their legal literacy to prevent drug abuse.

Type of occupation was the variable that showed relationship between the answers given and the literacy in laws. Pensioners were consistent and responded correctly to items in the survey as compared to other groups. This is due to the fact that this group had vast experiences in occupation and life. As a suggestion, the involvement of pensioners should be considered to boost the readiness of others in PEMADAM.

The design and the data analysed did allow levels of readiness in psychology to be named or labeled (i.e. high, medium, low). But, results from the findings have shown that high mean scores for efficacy belief ($M=15$, $SD=2.27$) and interest ($M=16$, $SD=2.53$), as compared to maximum mean (Maximum scores=20) for every aspect.

Respondents' psychological readiness did not relate to demographic characteristics. These findings meant that efficacy belief and interest (high) among social workers were influenced by the differences in the demographic characteristics. In addition, the results have showed that all the participants in PEMADAM have high psychological readiness to prevent drug abuse.

However, the result in this survey has few limitations. For example, legal literacy test could only be investigated on three aspects, namely criminal penalty, parental responsibilities, and types of illicit drugs. There are other aspects that need to be tested like communication concept and skill, guidance and counseling, identification and test on risked individuals, and strategy and technique for prevention which were tested.

Furthermore, this research was not planned to test on legal literacy, efficacy belief and interest towards the effectiveness of drugs prevention program. These issues should be taken into consideration and followed by further research to allow PEMADAM to effectively realize its noble objective that is to prevent any further increase in the number of drug abuse especially among Malaysian youths.

ENDNOTES

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Law, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, and Dean, Centre for Postgraduate Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia

² Associate Professor, Centre of Education and Human Development and Dean, Admission and Records Division, International Islamic University Malaysia

³ Assistant Professor and Research Coordinator, Centre of Education and Human Development, International Islamic University Malaysia

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- ¹⁰ For example, to evaluate individuals who has been accused of a crime as to alcohol abuse or substance abuse.

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