



**FACTORS INFLUENCING DRUG ADDICTION AND
REHABILITATION TREATMENT FOR JUVENILES AT ABU
DHABI JUVENILE CARE CENTRE**

KHALED MOHAMMED ABDULRAHMAN ALBLOOSHI

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Institute of Technology Management and Entrepreneurship

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Khaled Mohammed Abdul Rahman Al Blooshi

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KHALED MOHAMMED ABDULRAHMAN ALBLOOSHI

**A thesis submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Institute of Technology Management and Entrepreneurship

UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

2024

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “Factors Influencing Drug Addiction and Rehabilitation Treatment for Juveniles at Abu Dhabi Juvenile Care Centre” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature :



Name :

KHALED MOHAMED ALBLOOSHI

Date :

20 March 2024

APPROVAL

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my opinion, this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signature

:



Supervisor Name

:

.....
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safiah Sidek

Date

:

.....
21 March 2024
.....

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved family and my parents who have been a great source of inspiration and strength for me. There is no doubt that without their continual support, moral, spiritual, and financial, I would not have completed this thesis.

ABSTRACT

The rising incidence of drug addiction and drug-related crimes among juveniles in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has become a growing concern. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study of the factors contributing to this trend. While numerous studies on juvenile addiction have been conducted in the Western countries, research on the individual, peers, family and social influences on drug addiction among the UAE's youth is still scarce. Furthermore, in an era of digitalization, the role of social media in drug addiction remains largely unexplored, as do the treatment and recovery facilitation provided by rehabilitation centers. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the individual, peer, parental, family, social, and social media factors influencing drug addiction. It also seeks to study the treatment programs available and their efficacy in facilitating recovery among juveniles. Employing a qualitative case study methodology, this research was conducted at the Juvenile Care Center (JCC) in the UAE, involving interviews with ten juvenile inmates and two social workers. Additionally, an analysis of documents detailing the implementation of programs at the JCC was carried out. The data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that the factors influencing juvenile drug addiction can be categorized based on the stages of initiation of drug use, drug use behavior, and the consequences of such behaviors. This study identified that treatment and facilitation of recovery at the JCC are focused on behavior modification through integrated awareness and discipline, comprehensive skill development, health and behavior modification, robust support and monitoring systems, and the monitoring of progress and facilitation of re-entry into society. This study emphasizes the need for a multi-tiered, culturally sensitive approach to addressing juvenile drug addiction in the UAE. Treatment programs that incorporate an understanding of the various influences at each stage of addiction can offer more effective support and a higher chance of successful reintegration for juveniles. This study recommends that policymakers, rehabilitation centers, and community leaders consider these findings in the development of targeted interventions. It suggests that incorporating culturally relevant content, especially in digital literacy and awareness programs, could mitigate the impact of social media on drug use. Moreover, enhancing family and community support systems is crucial for the successful recovery and reintegration of affected juveniles into society.

FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI KETAGIHAN DADAH DAN RAWATAN REHABILITASI BAGI JUVANA DI PUSAT PENJAGAAN JUVANA ABU DHABI

ABSTRAK

Peningkatan kejadian penagihan dadah dan jenayah berkaitan dadah dalam kalangan juvana di Emiriah Arab Bersatu (UAE) telah menjadi kebimbangan yang semakin meningkat. Oleh itu, terdapat keperluan untuk menjalankan kajian tentang faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada trend ini. Walaupun banyak kajian mengenai ketagihan juvana telah dijalankan di negara-negara Barat, kajian tentang pengaruh individu, rakan sebaya, keluarga dan sosial terhadap penagihan dadah di kalangan belia UAE masih berkurangan. Tambahan pula, dalam era pendigitalan, peranan media sosial dalam penagihan dadah masih belum diterokai, begitu juga dengan kemudahan rawatan dan pemulihan yang disediakan oleh pusat pemulihan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menangani jurang ini dengan meneroka faktor individu, rakan sebaya, ibu bapa, keluarga, sosial dan media sosial yang mempengaruhi penagihan dadah. Ia juga bertujuan untuk mengkaji program rawatan yang ada dan keberkesanannya dalam memudahkan pemulihan dalam kalangan juvana. Menggunakan metodologi kajian kes kualitatif, penyelidikan ini dijalankan di Pusat Jagaan Juvana (JCC) di UAE, melibatkan temu bual dengan sepuluh banduan juvana dan dua pekerja sosial. Selain itu, analisis dokumen yang memperincikan pelaksanaan program di JCC telah dijalankan. Data dianalisis secara kualitatif menggunakan analisis tematik. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penagihan dadah juvana boleh dikategorikan berdasarkan peringkat permulaan penggunaan dadah, tingkah laku penggunaan dadah, dan akibat daripada tingkah laku tersebut. Kajian ini mengenal pasti bahawa rawatan dan pemudahcaraan pemulihan di JCC tertumpu kepada pengubahsuaian tingkah laku melalui kesedaran dan disiplin bersepadu, pembangunan kemahiran komprehensif, kesihatan dan pengubahsuaian tingkah laku, sistem sokongan dan pemantauan yang teguh, dan pemantauan kemajuan dan kemudahan kemasukan semula ke dalam masyarakat. Kajian ini juga menekankan keperluan untuk pendekatan pelbagai peringkat, budaya yang sensitif untuk menangani ketagihan dadah juvana di UAE. Program rawatan yang menggabungkan pemahaman tentang pelbagai pengaruh pada setiap peringkat ketagihan boleh menawarkan sokongan yang lebih berkesan dan peluang yang lebih tinggi untuk integrasi semula yang berjaya untuk juvana. Kajian ini mengesyorkan agar penggubal dasar, pusat pemulihan dan pemimpin masyarakat mempertimbangkan penemuan ini dalam pembangunan intervensi yang disasarkan. Ia mencadangkan bahawa memasukkan kandungan yang berkaitan dengan budaya, terutamanya dalam program literasi dan kesedaran digital, boleh mengurangkan kesan media sosial terhadap penggunaan dadah. Selain itu, meningkatkan sistem sokongan keluarga dan komuniti adalah penting untuk kejayaan pemulihan dan penyepaduan semula juvana yang terjejas ke dalam masyarakat.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBT	-	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
COVID-19	-	Coronavirus Disease 19
EST	-	Ecological Systems Theory
GCC	-	Gulf Cooperation Council
IM	-	Inmates Juveniles
IPR	-	Interview Protocol Refinement
JCC	-	Juvenile Care Centre
NIDA	-	National Institute on Drug Abuse
NCR	-	National Rehabilitation Centre
RQ	-	Research Question
SAMSHA	-	Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services
SLT	-	Social Learning Theory
SW	-	Social worker
UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
UNODC	-	United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime
UTeM	-	University Teknikal Malaysia Melaka
WHO	-	World Health Organization

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The followings are the list of publications related to the work on this thesis:

Alblooshi, K. M. A. M., Abdullah, N., and Yunus, A. R., 2019. Drug addiction among juveniles in the digital era of UAE. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, 8(5), pp.547–553.

Alblooshi, K. M. A. M., and Abdullah, N., 2020. Integrated model of factors affecting drug addiction among juveniles in UAE. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11(12), pp. 160–166. doi: 10.31838/srp.2020.12.26.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of drug addiction among juveniles is a complex and alarming issue that has been escalating in recent years. This problem spans across diverse cultural, societal, and economic contexts, thereby demanding a more comprehensive understanding. It is not merely a personal issue; it affects families, communities, and societies as a whole, extending its impact to multiple facets of life. The intricate nature of juvenile drug addiction necessitates a thorough examination of the contributing factors, encompassing individual, family and societal aspects.

1.1 Background of study

1.1.1 Drug addiction among juveniles

Drug addiction has become an increasing problem worldwide (Singh and Gupta, 2017; United Nations, 2020; Nawi et al., 2021). According to the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime, (UNODC) (2022) report, there were an estimated 275 million drug users globally in 2020; around 284 million people aged 15-64 used drugs worldwide in 2020, a 26 per cent increase over the previous decade. This problem is not limited to any specific demographic, socio-economic class, or geographical location but rather extends its impact across societies, trapping individuals in a cycle of dependency that is detrimental to themselves, their families, communities, and the nation at large (United Nations, 2020). The statistic also reflects the magnitude of the problem and its far-reaching consequences for society and public health.

The increased prevalence of drug addiction shows there has been a surge among the youth population. Drug addiction among juveniles has expanded quickly in many nations in the world (UNODC, 2022). The UNODC (2022) has reported that juveniles are using more drugs, with use levels today in many countries higher than with the previous generation. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the risk of developing drug abuse (drug use disorders) among juvenile due to uncertainties regarding academics, careers, social life, and other general concerns (Horigian et al., 2021). In this regard, drug addiction among juvenile has expanded in both manner and frequency and has become a serious issue that causes harm not only to users but entire communities.

Drug addiction is a chronic disease characterized by compulsive or uncontrollable drug use despite negative consequences (UNODC, 2020). It has led to an alarming rise in the abuse of drugs such as opioids, cannabis, and amphetamines (UNODC, 2020). Cannabis use plays a causal role in drug addiction among juveniles and is among the highly addictive drugs (Trangenstein et al., 2019).

Consuming drugs at a young age can slow down the development of the brain, which will influence their growth and almost certainly lead to several dangers on the long run (Argyriou et al., 2018). Moreover, the earlier juveniles begin utilizing drugs, the higher the possibilities of them continuing to use them and becoming addicted later in life. Besides, consuming drugs at a very young age also contributes to causing health problems in the future, for example, hypertension and coronary illnesses (Ruisoto and Contador, 2019). Juvenile drug addiction can have long-term behavioral, mental, and social impacts since the young mind is still in its formative stage. Juveniles will be affected by mental problems, which can crucially hinder the mental development of a person to the extent where they can no longer function normally in society (Brand et al., 2019).

Juveniles' behavior will also be negatively affected as a result of the psychological and mental impacts of drug addiction (Onaolapo, 2018). Researchers have indicated that a diversity of negative behavioral responses will occur which include antisocial and delinquent behavior as a result of drug addiction (Neale et al., 2018). Therefore, identifying the factors affecting the tendency towards drug addiction among juveniles at the early stages is required to devise the suitable intervention and prevention strategies.

The escalating prevalence of drug addiction, especially among the youth, poses significant threats to the nation's health, social fabric, and economy. The consequences of drug addiction extend beyond personal suffering and have devastating effects on public health. Overdoses result in a surge of hospital admissions and fatalities, while chronic drug abuse contributes to long-term health issues, including cardiovascular diseases, mental health disorders, and infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C (UNODC, 2020). These health burdens place a strain on healthcare systems, diverting resources from other critical areas.

Given the increasing prevalence of drug addiction among juveniles, it is imperative to understand the risk factors that contribute to their involvement in drug addiction and how these factors influence their attitudes, preferences, and behaviors related to drug use. However, little is known on the factors that influence juvenile to become drug addicts; or they are many factors

1.1.2 Drug addiction among juvenile in the UAE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a federation of seven emirates established in 1971, has seen a drastic increase in its population, from about 344,512 in 1971 to 10.17 million in 2023. This population is heavily dominated by expatriates, who make up about 88.5% of the total population (UAE Population Statistics, 2023). This rapid societal shift

from a nomadic lifestyle to an urban one, coupled with the cultural influences of a vast expatriate community and the UAE's prominence as a major tourist destination, has posed substantial challenges in which one of them is the issue of drug misuse and addiction (Fouché et al., 2023).

The country has seen a considerable increase in drug-related cases. This was highlighted by the rise in drug-related crime arrests, which grew from 6 973 in 2020 to 8428 in 2021 (Ministry of Interior, 2022). Furthermore, there was a marked rise in admissions to the Government's National Rehabilitation Center (NRC) for treatment, from 545 in 2013 to 1 750 in 2018 (Alhassan et al., 2021). Recently, Dubai Police arrested four Arab men for attempting to smuggle more than 1.1 million Captagon pills with an estimated value of 58 million Emirati dirhams into the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Arab News, Dec 23, 2021). In addition, the UAE National Rehabilitation Centre reports that juveniles in the city are now craving party drugs, such as cocaine and ecstasy, which are equally bad if not more harmful (Mariannes, 2021).

Table 1.1 provides a snapshot of the prevalence of juvenile drug abuse in Abu Dhabi, one of the main cities in the UAE, over a four-year period. The data presented is crucial in assessing the scale of the problem, understanding trends, and informing strategies to address this significant public health concern.

Table 1.1 Annual statistics on juvenile drug abuse in Abu Dhabi (2019-2022)

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Juvenile	610	281	327	571
Drug abuse: All	106	33	64	97
Drug abuse: Juvenile Male	92	28	52	74
Drug abuse: Juvenile Female	14	5	12	23
Drug abuse: Juvenile Local	81	29	51	88
Drug abuse: Juvenile International	25	4	13	9

Source: Abu Dhabi Police (2022)