

EXPLORATION OF PEER PRESSURE ON SMOKING BEHAVIOR IN PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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Abstract. Peer pressure is often a significant factor in behavioral decision-making, including smoking habits in young adults. This study used a qualitative approach with an in-depth interview method with 5 psychology students who had smoking experience. The results showed that peer pressure appears in various forms, such as direct invitations, social environmental influences, and efforts to conform to group norms. The main factors that trigger this pressure include the need for social acceptance, the desire to appear more mature, and the influence of intense friendships. In addition, it was found that students who have low rejection skills tend to be more vulnerable to such pressure. This study underlines the importance of psychological interventions and educational programs to increase students' awareness of the impact of peer pressure, as well as equip them with the skills to deal with similar situations assertively.

Keywords : pressure, environment, smoking, peers.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transition period between childhood and adulthood which is marked by changes in various aspects, namely physical and psychological aspects. These changes have an impact on the mental and social development of children. Social interaction patterns enable adolescents to adjust to the social environment and to themselves. Especially with the peer environment. In this peer environment, many adolescents form groups, both small and large groups. According to Monks (1992), a careful analysis of all aspects of development in adolescence, which globally takes place between the ages of 12 and 21 years, is divided into 12-15 years of early adolescence, 15-18 years of middle adolescence, 18-21 years of late adolescence.

Friendship with peers during adolescence becomes a dominant thing or influence in the process of self-identification and development compared to the family environment. Friendship begins with one, two people and gradually the number will increase and allow the formation of a group of teenagers (gangs) which are basically based on similarities in hobbies, ideas, lifestyles and so on. Peer groups have a very big impact, such as in terms of appearance, social activities, behavior and so on. The process of socialization through peer media can influence adolescent smoking behavior. Smoking activities are often done by individuals starting in high school, most male students smoking is an activity that becomes their social activity. Smoking is a symbol of socializing for them. In adolescence there is something else that is just as important as maturity, namely group solidarity and doing what the group does. If a group of teenagers have smoked, then the individual teenager feels that they have to do it too. The individual teenager starts smoking because the individual in the group of teenagers does not want to be considered a stranger, not because the individual likes cigarettes. For a smoker himself, smoking will cause such real pleasure, to the point of being felt to provide freshness and satisfaction so that every day they have to set aside money to smoke. Other groups,

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especially male teenagers, consider smoking to be a proud sign of masculinity, so that those who do not smoke are actually ridiculed and considered weak.

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that the percentage of Indonesians aged 15 years and over who smoked was 28.62% in 2023. This percentage increased by 0.36% points from last year's 28.26%. Based on gender, the percentage of men in the country who smoked reached 56.36%. Meanwhile, only 1.06% of Indonesian women smoked this year.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research method is a way as an effort to find, develop and test the truth of knowledge in an effort to solve a problem using scientific methods. By using research methods, research work will be more focused, because research methods are intended to provide convenience and clarity about what and how researchers conduct research. Therefore, in this case, various things included in the research method will be explained .

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1 Types of research

This type of research is qualitative research. According to Creswell (2016) qualitative research is a method to explore and understand the meaning that a number of individuals or groups of people consider to come from social or humanitarian problems. This qualitative research process involves important efforts, such as asking questions and procedures, collecting specific data from participants, analyzing data inductively from specific themes to general themes and interpreting the meaning of the data.

1.2 Research Subject

Subject and Object of Research The subject of research is something that is studied, whether it is a person, object, or institution (organization). The subject of research is basically what will be subject to the conclusions of the research results. In this subject of research there is a research object (Saifuddin Azwar, 1998:35). The subjects in this study were 5 students in the Psychology Study Program.

1.3 Data Collection Methods

1.3.1 Interview

Interview is a conversation that is a means to obtain information about something with the aim of explanation or understanding. The results of the interview are a subjective report about a person's attitude towards the environment and towards themselves (Arikunto, 2007). Interviews can be conducted face to face interviews with participants, interviewing them by meeting them directly, or engaging in focus group interviews consisting of three to four participants per group. Interviews are conducted with research subjects and informants. The interview method used is a form of direct interview by means of researchers meeting face to face with subjects and informants, with the category of unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews are interviews where the questions asked by the interviewer are accidental questions according to the atmosphere when the interview

takes place, but adhere to the guidelines and direction of the interview that has been made (Moleong, 2012).

1.3.2 Smoking behavior in NTT Province is at an alarming level.

NTT Province is the province with the highest cigarette consumption rate, which is 55.7%, far above the national consumption, which is 29.3% (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2013). Compared to all provinces in Indonesia, NTT ranks third in the number of smokers. Smokers in NTT are not only found among adults, but also in the adolescent age group. Data from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (2013) shows that the prevalence of adolescents aged 15-19 years who smoke in NTT province is increasing. Beginner smokers aged 10-14 years in 2013 were 18% and in 2014 this number increased to 20.5% (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2013).

The number of teenage smokers in Kupang City is also increasing every year. Data from the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University 207 Journal of Health and Behavioral Science, Vol.1, No.4, December 2019, pp. 207~215 BPS (2014) states that the statistics of smokers among teenagers in Kupang City are 24.1%.

1.4 Background Smoke

Smoking in teenagers is a complex phenomenon, with various factors influencing their decision to start smoking. Here are some of the main aspects that underlie this behavior according to the 5 sources:

JAB revealed that he started smoking in 2018, when he was in the 2nd grade of junior high school. The main reason for trying smoking was curiosity:

"My reason was because of curiosity and that's it."

This curiosity factor is often the initial motivation for many teenagers to try smoking, especially during the period of exploring their identity.

Meanwhile, RBU said that he started smoking when he was in the 2nd grade of junior high school. The main reason for trying to smoke was because of the influence of friends and the lack of understanding of the consequences of such behavior:

"Because of friends, I don't know what's good and what's bad."

Social factors such as friends are often the main motivator for teenagers to try smoking, especially when they are in a period of searching for identity and social acceptance.

In addition, ABCN started his smoking behavior since 1st grade of junior high school. The main reason was the invitation from classmates:

"What made me smoke for the first time was an invitation from my classmate."

Invitation from friends is often the initial motivator for teenagers to try smoking, especially when they are in a social environment that supports this behavior.

There is also FAPW, he started smoking since 3rd grade of junior high school. The main reason that encouraged him to try smoking was because he followed his friends' behavior: *"The main reason for smoking is because I follow my friends."*

Social factors such as the desire to fit in with the friends' environment are often the initial cause for teenagers to start smoking habits.

Lastly, VVK, he started smoking when he was in the 3rd grade of high school. The main reason that drove him to try smoking was the emotional experience after losing his parents: *"What made me smoke was when my parents died, so since then I started smoking and consuming alcohol."*

This shows that deep emotional experiences can trigger someone to try new things, including smoking, as a form of escape or emotional diversion. Overall, it appears that the background to the smoking behavior of the informants stems from the pressure of the need for social acceptance, the desire to appear more mature, and the influence of intense friendships.

1.5 Peer Influence in Behavior Smoke

The influence of peers on smoking behavior in adolescents is very significant, because adolescence is a period full of searching for self-identity and the need to be accepted in social groups.

Unlike many other cases, the informant stated that he was not influenced by his peers to smoke. On the contrary, JAB often teased his friends to smoke even though it was just a joke: *"No friends pushed me because I smoke, on the contrary I pushed them to smoke even though it was just kidding."*

This shows that the dynamics of peer influence are not always in the form of pressure, but can also be in the form of social interactions that are not serious but still influence group behavior.

RBU, explained that peers played a big role in encouraging him to start smoking. Initially, he tried to refuse the offer, but after hanging out often and feeling "different" because he didn't smoke, he finally tried it:

"After school my friends asked me to sit down, and after that they started offering me cigarettes. I refused once or twice, but when I hung out often and felt like I was the only one who didn't smoke, I finally started smoking too."

This reflects that peer pressure is often indirect, but arises from the need to fit in with group norms. In addition, ABCN mentioned that he was encouraged by peers to smoke in order to look cool and be seen as a real man:

"Yes, peer pressure is encouraged in order to look cool and be seen as a real man."

This shows that peer pressure can come in the form of direct invitations that seek to build a certain self-image.

FAPW acknowledged the direct influence of peers that encouraged them to smoke: *"Yes, there is."*

This acknowledgement shows that peer pressure has a significant impact in shaping smoking habits among adolescents.

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VVK explained that peer influence comes in the form of opportunities offered when hanging out together:

"I was already vaping, long story short I was hanging out with friends and I happened to forget to bring my vape. I also wanted to smoke, so a friend offered me Sampoerna cigarettes, and from there I started smoking until now."

Smoking habits often start from social interactions that allow or facilitate access to cigarettes.

1.6 Factors Influencing the Decision to Smoking in the Environment Campus

JAB believes that students' decisions to smoke on campus are often influenced by the comfort of the place:

"In my opinion, students who smoke on campus are driven by the comfort or discomfort of the place to smoke. Sometimes there are those who smoke carelessly."

RBU identified several key factors that drive students to smoke on campus, such as stress from college assignments and peer influence:

"Because of the stress of assignments and possibly because of peer influence."

These factors reflect that smoking is often used as a coping mechanism or escape from academic and social pressures in the campus environment.

According to ABCN, the main factor that drives students to smoke is the influence of friendship. He feels comfortable smoking on campus because almost all of his friends also smoke:

"The friendship factor where I see almost all of my friends smoking, and I feel that we have something in common so I feel comfortable smoking on campus."

The sense of solidarity in social groups is one of the main drivers that influences smoking habits on campus.

FAPW, states that the main factor influencing students to smoke on campus is a habit that is difficult to break:

"The habit factor that cannot be broken from smoking."

This shows that habits that start in adolescence often continue into adulthood, especially if there is no significant effort to stop them.

Finally, according to VVK, the inability to control the urge to smoke is the main factor for students smoking on campus:

"According to me, most students can't control the urge to smoke so they can't distinguish between places where smoking is allowed and places where it is prohibited."

This highlights the importance of awareness and self-control in forming habits that are in accordance with norms and rules.

1.7 Perception to Peer Pressure

JAB defines peer pressure as an encouragement that someone does to force someone else to try something against their will:

"For example, I am friends with A but I already know that he doesn't smoke. But I force him and persuade him to smoke, so that puts pressure on A."

This highlights that peer pressure is often explicit, such as direct invitations, or implicit, such as constant joking.

Meanwhile, RBU defines peer pressure in the context of smoking as a strong influence that can affect a person's decision, especially if friends around are used to smoking:

"In my opinion, peers put a lot of pressure on me, especially my peers in junior high school who introduced me to cigarettes."

This shows that peers are often the main agents in introducing smoking behavior to individuals, both directly and indirectly.

ABCN confirms that peers play a major role in my involvement in becoming a smoker:
"Peers play a major role in my involvement in becoming a smoker."

This suggests that a social environment filled with smokers can exert significant pressure, both explicitly and implicitly.

FAPW explained that peer pressure had a big impact on him.

"My friend always asks me to smoke even though I have refused many times, finally because I feel bad about my friend I start smoking too"

VVK sees peer pressure as a major factor influencing smoking habits, especially in friendship circles:

"Of course, I think peers are the biggest influence in influencing someone to smoke. For example, in a hangout, sometimes I don't want to smoke, but because all my friends smoke, it can influence friends who don't smoke."

This influence can be implicit, with the presence of group norms that are not always recognized.

1.8 Strategy for Dealing with Peer Pressure

JAB mentioned the importance of having intention and principle to avoid peer pressure. According to him, these two things are the main keys to staying consistent in decisions:

"The first thing I do is intention and principle. If I have planted those two from the beginning, anyone who offers me a cigarette will refuse."

Jouhary also suggests keeping a distance from friends who put pressure on me:

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"If you are already under pressure, then don't be friends or keep your distance. Because good friends make us comfortable, not stressed."

This strategy reflects the importance of building healthy boundaries to avoid negative influences. After quitting smoking, RBU developed several strategies to deal with peer pressure, such as strengthening his faith, focusing on his studies, and staying away from cigarettes. He also has principles that guide him in making decisions:

"Because I have quit smoking, I worship, strengthen my faith, focus on my studies so I have to avoid cigarettes. I also have a quote for myself, 'I will not try cigarettes before I have my own money.'" This strategy reflects the importance of having clear principles and a supportive environment in dealing with negative peer influences.

The ABCN states that a key strategy for dealing with peer pressure is to be socially savvy and unaffected:

"Be socially savvy and unaffected."

The ability to set boundaries in relationships is key to avoiding social pressure that can have negative effects.

FAPW states that its main strategy for dealing with peer pressure is to be brave and open in refusing invitations to smoke:

"Be brave and open in refusing invitations to smoke."

The courage to say no is an important strategy in dealing with social pressure, especially in environments that encourage smoking.

VVK has a simple strategy to avoid peer pressure, such as using health as an excuse: *"For me, my strategy to avoid peer pressure is that I will say that I have a cough or a sore throat."* This strategy shows that personal reasons such as health can be an effective way to avoid social pressure without having to cause conflict.

CONCLUSION

After we examined the results of interviews with 5 psychology students, we found that peer pressure played a significant role in influencing students' smoking habits. This pressure appears in various forms, such as direct invitations, the influence of the social environment, and the need to conform to group norms. The main factors that trigger stress include the need for social acceptance, the desire to appear more mature, and the influence of close friendships. Students with low resistance skills are more susceptible to this pressure. Therefore, it is important to carry out psychological interventions and educational programs to increase awareness and equip students with knowledge about the influence of peers on smoking behavior in adolescents in order to be able to deal with peer pressure.

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