



Analysis The Role of Peer Influence Towards Smoking Behavior Among Adolescent

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ABSTRACT

Smoking behavior among adolescents is a serious concern in public health efforts due to its long-term impact on health into adulthood. One of the main factors driving this behavior is peer influence, which plays a significant role in shaping habits and behavioral decisions, including smoking. At the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar, students who are expected to serve as role models for healthy behavior are frequently observed engaging in smoking activities, even within the campus environment. This phenomenon highlights the strong social influence within peer groups, making it essential to investigate the extent to which peer influence affects smoking behavior among students as an initial step in formulating effective interventions to create a smoke-free campus environment. The objective of this study was to analyze the role of peer influence on smoking behavior among students at the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar. This research employed a quantitative observational design with a cross-sectional approach. The study utilized a simple random sampling technique, given the homogeneous nature of the population, with a total sample size of 281 participants. The results indicated a significant relationship between peer influence and smoking behavior among FIKK UNM students. The analysis revealed that students with peers who smoke were more likely to smoke themselves. Future researchers are advised to explore other factors, such as the duration of smoking habits in relation to the length of friendships among adolescent smokers.

INTRODUCTION

Smoking behavior among adolescents has become a serious concern in public health efforts due to its long-term health impacts that persist into adulthood. One of the main factors driving this behavior is peer influence, which plays a significant role in shaping habits and behavioral decisions, including smoking. At the Faculty of Sports Science and Health, Universitas Negeri Makassar, students who are expected to serve as role models for healthy behavior are often found engaging in smoking activities, even within the campus environment. This phenomenon highlights the strong social influence of peer groups, emphasizing the importance of investigating the extent to which peer influence affects smoking behavior among

students. Such research serves as a foundation for developing effective interventions to create a smoke-free campus environment.

The objective of this study was to analyze the role of peer influence on smoking behavior among students of the Faculty of Sports Science and Health, Universitas Negeri Makassar. This research employed a quantitative observational approach with a cross-sectional study design. The study utilized a simple random sampling technique, as the population was homogenous, with a total sample size of 281 participants.

The results indicated a significant relationship between peer influence and smoking behavior among students at FIKK UNM. The analysis revealed that students with smoking peers were more likely to engage in smoking themselves. Future researchers are encouraged to explore additional factors, such as the duration of smoking habits in relation to the length of peer relationships among adolescent smokers.

METHODS

This study is a quantitative observational study with a cross-sectional approach. The sample was obtained using a simple random sampling technique. The population consisted of 700 male students from the 2023 cohort of the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences at Universitas Negeri Makassar, divided into six study programs. Therefore, the researcher selected 40.2% of the total population of 700 individuals. Thus, the total sample size for this study is 281 smoking students. The research instrument used was a questionnaire, and the data analysis was conducted using the SPSS application.

RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics		n = 281	%
Smoking Age	< 10 years	78	27,7
	> 10 years	203	72,3
Type of Cigarette	Filtered Cigarette	191	67,9
	Electronic Cigarette	90	32,1
Reasons for Smoking	Curiosity	46	16,3
	Peer Influence	167	59,4
	To Appear Mature	25	8,8
	Stress	24	8,5
	Imitation	19	6,7

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 1 shows that the majority of student smokers at the Faculty of Health Sciences and Education, UNM, have been smoking for more than 10 years, totaling 203 individuals (72.25%). The most commonly used type of cigarette is filter cigarettes, with 191 individuals (67.9%) using them. The primary reason for smoking among the students is peer influence, as they were encouraged by their friends.

Table 2. Distribution of Smoking Behavior Among Peers

Characteristics	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Having a friend who is a smoker	274	97,5	7	2,5
Smoking because of peer influence	85	30,2	196	69,8
Smoking while hanging out with friends	132	47	149	53
Feeling accepted because of smoking	38	13,5	243	86,5
Group rule that everyone must smoke	18	6,4	263	93,6
Sharing cigarettes with friends	145	51,6	136	84,4
Smoking and alternately puffing with friends	39	13,9	242	86,1
Refusing when a friend invites to smoke	149	53	132	47
Masculinity is measured by smoking	212	75,4	69	24,6
Started smoking because a friend invited	110	39,1	171	60,9
A friend offers their cigarette when I run out	141	50,2	140	49,8
Being teased for not smoking	51	18,2	230	81,9
Smoking in the campus environment	72	25,6	209	74,4
Having seen a friend smoking	234	83,3	47	16,7

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on table 2, FIKK UNM students showed the highest value in the question about having friends who smoke, with 274 respondents (97.5%). Additionally, 234 students (83.3%) reported having seen their friends smoking, and 212 students (75.4%) associated smoking with masculinity. Meanwhile, Table 3 indicates that the majority of FIKK UNM students have a moderately close relationship with their peers, accounting for 60.9% or 171 respondents.

Table 3. Distribution of Smoking Proximity to Peers

Characteristics		n = 281	%
Proximity of Smokers to Peers	Adequate	110	39,1
	Inadequate	171	60,9
Smoking Behavior Level	High	116	41,3
	Moderate	165	58,7

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 4. The Relationship Between Peer Group and Smoking Behavior Level

Peer Support	Smoking Behavior Level				Total		p-Value
	High		Moderate		n	%	
	n	%	n	%			
Low	37	21,6	134	78,4	171	100	0,000
Moderate	79	71,8	31	28,2	110	100	
Total	116	41,3	165	58,7	281	200	

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 4 shows the results of the study, where the Chi-Square test yielded a p-value of 0.000, indicating that $p < 0.05$. Based on the statistical test, it was found that there is a significant relationship between peer proximity and smoking behavior, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a).

DISCUSSION

The prolonged duration of smoking among students indicates that this habit often begins during adolescence and continues into young adulthood. This highlights the formation of a strong and persistent habit, where interventions to prevent smoking behavior should ideally be implemented early, even before adolescents reach university age. Smoking can also be viewed as a form of nicotine addiction. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance, and the longer a person smokes, the harder it becomes to quit (Aslam, Leslie, and Morris, 2024). Smoking habits that start at a young age and persist into adulthood demonstrate how addiction develops and becomes increasingly difficult to stop without appropriate intervention (Strong, Juon, and Ensminger, 2016).

This study is supported by research conducted by Barrington, which found that smokers in the United States often begin smoking and develop addiction after more than ten years of smoking (Barrington-Trimis et al., 2020). The research showed that many adolescents begin smoking during school age and continue into university, with some starting as early as 8 years old. Regarding the reasons for smoking, the findings show that the primary reason FIKK UNM students start smoking is peer influence. Friends play a major role in initiating the intention to smoke among students. Most of these friends are from their junior or senior high school years. The smoking behavior of students reflects the significant influence of social environments in shaping this habit.

Peer influence is one of the most significant driving factors, indicating that smoking is often perceived as a social activity (Lowenstein, Dow, and White, 2020). Adolescents and young adults tend to smoke as a way to adapt to their social groups or to meet social and emotional needs, such as a sense of belonging or simply following current trends (Health, 2012). The reason for smoking due to peer influence aligns with a study conducted by Robalino on school adolescents in the United States. The study revealed that most adolescents initiate smoking due to peer influence during their teenage years, leading to sustained smoking behavior into adulthood (Robalino and Macy, 2018).

Adolescents often mimic the behavior of their peers. If their close friends smoke, they are more likely to try smoking themselves. Peer behavior is seen as a model to follow, both consciously and unconsciously. The closer and longer the relationship with smoking peers, the greater the influence on the likelihood of smoking. Emotional closeness strengthens the acceptance of smoking norms and habits within the group. This study shows a relationship between peer influence and smoking behavior among FIKK UNM students. Specifically, students with close relationships with their peers are more likely to engage in smoking behavior. The Chi-Square test yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates a significant relationship between peer influence and smoking behavior among FIKK UNM students.

Individuals learn by observing and imitating the behavior of others, particularly those with close relationships, such as peers (Laursen and Veenstra, 2021). In the context of smoking, individuals with close relationships to smoking peers are more likely to imitate the behavior due to strong social influence and the desire to be accepted within the group (Zhang et al., 2022). Smoking behavior is socially reinforced through praise (Cole et al., 2022) or acceptance from peer groups (Thomeer et al., 2019). In this regard, peers act as "models" who provide behavioral examples that others follow (Adeyemi, Adejoke, and Bassey, 2019).

The influence of peers aligns with research conducted by N.M.F. G. Gemilang in 2022 on adolescents in Banjar Pegok, Sesetan Village, South Denpasar. The study found a positive correlation between peer influence and smoking behavior among adolescents in Banjar Pegok, indicating that the closer the peer interaction, the higher the likelihood of smoking behavior (Ni Made Fajarini Gemilang, 2022).

The influence of peers has been proven to be a very strong determinant of smoking behavior among students. Students with smoking peers are more likely to smoke as well. This underscores the importance of social influence in shaping individual behavior, particularly in the context of smoking. Therefore, smoking prevention strategies should include efforts to change social norms among students. Further research is needed to examine the relationship between the duration of smoking and the length of friendships among adolescent smokers.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that there is a relationship between peer influence and smoking behavior among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UNM. The analysis shows that students with peers who smoke are more likely to smoke themselves. Future researchers are encouraged to explore other factors, such as the duration of smoking and the length of friendship bonds among adolescent smokers.

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