The Role of Civil Society in Preventing Children from Smoking at Malaysia

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Abstract. Smoking among teenagers has become a global issue that concerns both society and governments. Global data shows that, on average, more than 25 percent of children in each country smoke. In developing countries, this number far exceeds that of developed countries. The latest trend among children under 18 years old is shifting from conventional to electronic cigarettes. The dangers of both are no longer being considered as the trend of electronic cigarettes is on the rise. Statistics from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) indicate that the majority of children who smoke come from smoking families. Children exposed to adult smokers will experience health problems in addition to participating in smoking. The Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) is concerned about children picking up the habit of smoking; therefore, they hope to raise awareness among children to protect them from the dangers of smoking, both conventional and electronic. The aim of this Community Service is to increase awareness among students at SIKL to understand the dangers of smoking. The method used includes lectures and interactive discussions to stimulate children to think positively. The results of the community service show that children were enthusiastic and willing to remind each other if they encounter peers or friends smoking, including reminding their extended family members who smoke. Children were also enthusiastic about avoiding smokers to prevent themselves from becoming passive smokers. Therefore, it can be concluded that raising awareness about the dangers of smoking and the involvement of civil society in preventing smoking among children are crucial in controlling the spread of smoking-related diseases.

Kata Kunci: Children, Smokers, Electronic Cigarettes, Civil Society

Introduction

Smoking in children is a common symptom that occurs at the global level. The prevalence of smoking among children in Indonesia ranks second in the world. The smoking habit among children is nothing new. History records that children in environments where people grow tobacco taste smoking from a young age by paying attention to the behavior of their parents (Wagner dkk., 2021).

Researchers at the Center for Social Security Studies at the University of Indonesia (PKJS-UI) found that various global surveys prove that Indonesia is ranked second in the world for the highest prevalence of child smoking. Multiple surveys in 2019 found that the prevalence of child smoking (13-15 years) in Indonesia was at 19.2 after Timor Leste at 20.4 (Hermawan & Suryono, 2016)

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that 3.65% of children aged 18 and under in Indonesia smoked in 2023. This percentage increased by 0.21 percentage points compared to the previous year, which was 3.44%. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that as many as
70.23% of the young children in Indonesia live with household members (ART) in 2023. This condition is most often found in children under one year old, with a proportion of 72.25% of total children living with ART smokers. There are 70.14% of children aged 1-4 years who live with ART smokers and 69.62% aged 5-6 years (Amul dkk., 2020).

China puts the smoking rate at 29 percent per population, followed by India with 144 million smokers or 12.5% per population, and Indonesia with only around 65 million smokers. Even though China ranks first in the world in cigarette consumption, amazingly, no children are found consuming cigarettes. In contrast to Indonesia, as a developing country that consumes cigarettes, it turns out that Indonesia has been named the only country with baby smokers. Through its report, the National Commission for Child Protection found that as many as 1.2 million Indonesian children aged less than 13 years were active smokers, and around 293 thousand children under the age of 10 were also active smokers. This data does not include passive smokers where there is more than one smoker in the family, and children are in a smoking environment (Abidin, 2016).

In Indonesia, the number of baby smokers is increasing from year to year. Baby smokers are prospective and long-term smokers and expose them to generational quality damage and premature death that could otherwise be prevented. Smoking is also considered normal and normal. Smokers generally understand that smoking causes disease but deny that it will affect them. They think smoking is interesting, makes socializing easier, makes it easier to concentrate, and makes life easier. The impact of nicotine addiction is less recognized among early smokers. It is assumed that smoking is only one way to be considered an adult human being whom peers and the environment accept. Another reason is economic. Cigarettes are easy goods; they can be bought in various places, easy to obtain, and there are no strict consequences from the government. Another thing that makes young smokers more and more uncontrolled is the environment, especially families, who don't seem to care about what these young people do (Susan, 2019).

WHO, based on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, recognizes the substantial harm caused by tobacco use annually, killing up
to 6 million people and causing more than half a trillion dollars in economic damage. To prevent a deadly epidemic, implement the 6 most effective tobacco control measures to reduce tobacco use. These measures are monitoring tobacco use and prevention with policies, protecting people from secondhand smoke, offering help to stop using tobacco, warning people about the dangers of tobacco, enforcing bans on cigarette advertising, promoting and sponsoring cigarette companies, and raising taxes on tobacco products. This provides assistance to countries to reduce related diseases, disabilities, and deaths caused by tobacco use (Wen dkk., 2021)

Smoking from an early age is considered a family transmission; fathers and men in the family tend to be followed by children in their environment. Several cases occurred in children who smoked in schools or non-children's environments such as coffee shops, cafes, or tourist attractions. Starting from passive smoking in this environment, social transactions occur where smokers motivate each other so that non-smokers are interested in becoming smokers. The beginning of trying to become dependent (Kalousova, 2023).

An interesting thing about the smoking habit in children is the use of electronic cigarettes or vapes. Smoking with a vape is the act of inhaling a small cylindrical substance that contains carbon monoxide, nicotine, tar, and other substances that are harmful to the smoker's health (Mahardhani dkk., 2020). The use of electronic cigarettes as a substitute for conventional cigarettes, especially among children aged 18 years and under. History records that electronic cigarettes began to be marketed in 2012. Since their appearance, electronic cigarettes have become attractive for sale, targeting teenagers or children. Electronic cigarettes are considered safer than conventional cigarettes, even though they are equally dangerous. The Japanese Ministry of Health found carcinogens or substances that can cause cancer in the vapor exhaled after smoking e-cigarettes. Acetaldehyde (CH3CHO) is higher than tobacco cigarettes. Despite warnings, e-cigarettes are popular and even favored among young people (Ceasar dkk., 2024).

These electronic cigarettes became known in Malaysia and became popular in 2015. Approximately 300 school students throughout the
country were found to be trapped in the use of electronic cigarettes, better known as vapes. The use of electronic cigarettes increases the risk of non-smokers becoming smokers (Kusumastuti & Suarsih, 2023). It has been proven that teenagers who use electronic cigarettes are at risk of switching to conventional smoking.

Apart from that, vapes are electronic cigarettes that can produce smoke like cigarettes in general. The health risks of vaping are often underestimated because vaping is considered safer than cigarettes. In fact, even though vape does not contain tobacco, it still contains various chemical substances that can harm the body. This was also explained by WHO (World Health Organization). According to WHO, the dangers of vaping come from the nicotine content and other toxic substances which can have an impact on vape users and non-users. Some of these impacts include brain development in children and adolescents, increasing the risk of heart disease, and lung disorders (Chatia Hastasari, 2020).

Malaysia has warned that the causes of e-cigarettes are inflammation and damage to epithelial cells in humans, the respiratory tract, and an increased risk of infection. Electronic cigarettes contain more carcinogens, such as formaldehyde and acetaldehyde, compared to regular cigarettes. Long-term vaping is associated with a long-term risk of cancer. E-cigarettes are neither safe nor effective in helping smokers quit. There is sufficient evidence that in children, adolescents, pregnant women, and women of childbearing age, the potential for e-cigarettes to have long-term consequences on the fetus (Metzger dkk., 2021).

In contrast, it impacts brain development and emotional and cognitive function in adolescents. The effects of nicotine. Two-thirds of major countries in the world do not recommend the promotion of e-cigarettes as an alternative to conventional cigarettes (Aly dkk., 2022). Malaysia has encouraged doctors, Health care workers, and medical students to be armed with facts about e-cigarettes, their dangers, and their legal status and used to counsel patients and young people.

Governments worldwide have taken preventive measures through various programs via mass media or special student forums. Unfortunately, the various efforts made are not comparable to the incessant smoking advertisements that are also broadcast through
mainstream and non-mainstream media. The government is in a dilemma: on the one hand, cigarettes are an additional commodity for government income; on the other hand, the impact of cigarettes is very dangerous for citizens. The role of civil society in preventing children from smoking is also not reliable, and it is not easy to prevent smoking in (Kalmthout, 2023).

The Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School (SIKL) has a strategic role and is at the forefront of educational diplomacy in Malaysia. Since its founding on July 10, 1969, SIKL has consistently provided educational services to the Indonesian community in Malaysia, which refers to the basis of national education, carrying out a dual role in preserving and promoting Indonesian culture in Malaysian society, even to the people of friendly countries. To keep up with the rapid development of the world of education and science as well as the flow of globalization and modernization, the school, which is under the auspices of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) Kuala Lumpur, always pursues educational achievement and quality, starting from educational and educational staff, facilities, output, as well as all components that support the implementation of learning activities both inside and outside the school environment. SIKL thinks about the dangers of smoking for its students and hopes to reach out so that children know the dangers of both conventional and electric cigarettes. This Community Service aims to increase awareness for students at SKIL to understand and comprehend the dangers of smoking (Kertati dkk., 2022).

2 Method

The subjects of this community service are grade 7 children from SKIL. The socialization method used is participatory. This method stimulates creativity and interaction between students and the community service team. The participatory method strengthens the subjects, namely children and the community service team, in designing activities that strengthen socialization results.

The participatory method is to move the community willingly. The participation model integrates multi-dimensional aspects in decision-making so that it becomes a practical procedure in three forms of knowledge: knowledge based on common sense and personal experience,
knowledge based on technical expertise, and knowledge obtained from social interests and advocacy. These three forms of knowledge are integrated into sequential procedures where different societal actors are given specific tasks according to their capacities.

This understanding shows that participation must begin with the ability to absorb knowledge, then institutionalize it with attitudes and manifest it in behavior. Participation can also be direct, which occurs when individuals perform certain activities in the participation process. This participation occurs when each person can submit views, discuss key issues, raise objections to other people's wishes or words, and indirect participation occurs when individuals delegate their participation rights. In this international PKM, direct participation occurs where children are involved in class to listen to socialization.

This participation method is effective because (1) participation creates a sense of self-esteem and personal ability to be able to participate in important decisions involving the interests of the subject; (2) participation creates a feedback environment for the flow of information about attitudes, aspirations, needs and regional conditions which without its existence would not be revealed; (3) participation provides a conducive environment for the actualization of community potential and growth and; (4) participation is seen as a reflection of individuals' democratic rights to be involved in their development. Through this participation, the material presented will receive a response and can be used to increase the subject's capacity.

Participation is defined as sensitization (sensitizing) to increase the willingness to accept and ability to respond to the material or materials presented. Participation is not just asking for support for all the programs that have been prepared but encouraging awareness to do something after the program is implemented. Participation is defined as voluntary contribution and participation in decision-making (Quick & Narvaez, 2015). The achievement of this participation is support for programs run by the government and institutions concerned with reducing the use of electronic and conventional cigarettes. Participation is a process of active involvement in joint decision-making while encouraging civil society to prevent cigarette use.
3 Results

In the effort to prevent children from smoking in Malaysia, the role of civil society is crucial. Firstly, they actively monitor the sale of cigarettes to children in various places, from small stalls to large stores. Through networks of volunteers and non-governmental organizations, they observe and report violations of the ban on selling cigarettes to minors to the authorities. Additionally, civil society participates in organizing educational campaigns in schools and local communities. They provide information about the dangers of smoking to children and offer strategies and resources for those who want to quit smoking.

Moreover, the role of civil society is evident in their efforts to develop stricter tobacco control policies. They engage in public consultations with the government and NGOs to advocate for tougher regulations on cigarette advertising, sales near schools, and law enforcement against violations. Thus, civil society contributes to creating a healthier environment for children by prioritizing progressive policies.

Furthermore, civil society provides practical and emotional support to children who want to quit smoking. They support smoking cessation programs organized by health institutions and community organizations, through fundraising and counseling services. By providing easy access and
sustainable support, they help strengthen children's commitment to changing their smoking behavior. Through active collaboration and various initiatives, civil society plays a crucial role in protecting the younger generation from the harmful effects of smoking.

4 Discussion

Learning activities were reopened after the Education and Culture Attaché was handed over to Muhammad Alwi Oemry. The initiative to establish SIKL received full support from Major General H. A. Talib Deputy Santio Bawo, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Kingdom of Malaysia, and his staff. SIKL was inaugurated on 10 July 1969 with a ribbon cutting by Nurdjanah Talib, wife of the LBBP Ambassador, and welcoming remarks from His Majesty Dato’ Haji Abdul Rachman Yakob, Malaysian Minister of Education at that time. Muhammad Alwi Oemry was assigned as the first head of SIK. Officially, the establishment of SIK was determined based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 05/1971, dated January 7, 1971.

The school's motto is i-DIPLOMASI, namely integrity, ideological, innovative, intellectual, and international as an ambassador for Indonesia Pancasila who is loyal, optimistic, independent, and competent. The school's vision is to create graduates who are loyal, optimistic, independent, and competent ambassadors of Indonesia Pancasila. The school's mission is (1) to provide educational services for Indonesian citizens with integrity and quality; (2) to carry out the functions of an Indonesian cultural and language center with the Pancasila ideology; (3) to implement an innovative teaching and learning process based on science and technology and IMTAQ; (4) develop intellectual culture and critical thinking in responding to current developments; (5) and carrying out educational and cultural diplomacy functions in improving Indonesia's image in the international world.

This community service is carried out through outreach to students and parents. It is important to determine the subject of community service to disseminate the dangers of smoking for children. Socialization is the process of conveying news from one person to another. Socializing means
turning a person into a social creature, gradually instilling different ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. All of this is achieved through a process of psychosocial transmission but also by assimilating certain attitudes, values, concepts, or models in a group or community for a person's formation, adaptation, and social integration (Maria & Pescaru, 2018).

The issue of smoking for children that SIKL is concerned about is very reasonable, considering the development of data regarding smoking in children. The family environment is difficult to prevent because the father’s role in the family is dominant, so the wife is unable to prevent her husband from smoking. The social environment also does not protect children from the dangers of smoking. Relatively open relationships provide space for smoking to spread from when you are a teenager. The school environment also still finds it difficult to carry out prevention because it can still be controlled inside the school. However, when the children come home from school, it is difficult for teachers to carry out prevention outside the school. One way that is considered capable of controlling it is to understand the dangers of smoking in children directly.

New developments in the growing vape industry in Malaysia. The government decided to regulate the industry in 2016, but this regulation has not been implemented until now. Malaysia's vape industry continues to thrive and is estimated to be worth RM2.27 billion. This industry more than 3,300 businesses involved in the vape industry in Malaysia, with a workforce of more than 15,000 people. This industry makes a positive contribution to the country's economy, contributing to the country. It is natural for the kingdom to issue regulations to oversee industries recording growth in Malaysia. The regulations implemented relate to the sale and use of nicotine in vape products, imposed on nicotine under the Poisons Act 1952. Two contradictory things on the one hand, the Kingdom allows it with a certain tolerance limit, while the School is concerned about the use of vape in children.

This policy did not cause widespread controversy because the public could translate what the Vape Business Council expected. This view is from the government's point of view, which hopes that the excise tax on vape will contribute to the country. The other side is concerned about the rise of vaping on children's development. Continuous socialization is an
alternative for teachers and parents to equip children with the right information.

Socialization describes the interaction between one or more to strengthen programs transmitted through various existing media. This outreach was carried out to 7th-grade SKIL children with the theme of the dangers of smoking for children. The sub-theme chosen was about the role of civil society because this role still needs to be optimally implemented. This socialization also encourages children to do something important for their lives.

The success of socialization is very dependent on motivation and interaction. The looking-glass self-developed by Cooley describes how individuals base their feelings on how they believe other people perceive them. By using social interactions as a mirror, people use the assessments they receive from others to measure their values and behavior. According to Self, Symbols, and Society, Cooley's theory is important because it states that the self-concept is built in solitude and the social environment. In this way, society and individuals are not separate but complementary aspects of the same phenomenon (Abd_Elmoaty, 2011)

This pattern includes: (1) a person in a social situation imagines how he or she appears in the eyes of others; (2) the individual imagines other people's assessments of their appearance; (3) individuals develop feelings and respond to perceived judgments. Ultimately, the process of seeing yourself is a process of attunement. Humans constantly try to create consistency between their internal and external worlds and continue to understand, adapt, and strive for balance throughout their lives. The number of socialization participants was 34 students and teachers, while the community service team was five people. The socialization process is as follows:
The role of civil society is interesting to discuss in this socialization because the issue of the role of civil society still needs to be addressed. Civil Society is a concept in the form of society that is often discussed today. The meaning and meaning of civil society itself is varied and varied. Civil Society is interpreted as civil, civic, and civil society. Whatever the term, civil society is society according to its respective classes.

Another meaning of civil society is emphasizing the space where individuals and community groups interact in a spirit of tolerance in a region or country. In this space, the community participates in making public policy. Civil society is an association of civilized and voluntary communities living in a social order with high mobility and cooperation between all elements of society (Sani & Mursak, 2022).

Civil society, as a political space, is an area that guarantees independent behavior, action, and reflection, not confined by material conditions and not absorbed in the networks of official political institutions. It implies the importance of a free public space as a public space that residents can freely use. Civil society is a space for community participation in voluntary associations, mass media, professional associations, workers' and farmers' unions, churches, or religious associations, often called mass organizations (Ufen, 2023).

Civil society is not only an important requirement or precondition for democracy alone, but the order of values in civil society, such as freedom and independence, is also inherent both internally (in horizontal...
relationships, namely relationships between citizens) and externally (in vertical relationships, namely relationships state and government with society or vice versa) (Grande, 2023). It will be stronger in community life if civil society forms a group that integrates all communities with the same interests and goals.

Several practices encourage the role of civil society to be carried out with multi-stakeholder collaboration. Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice, offered by Chris Ansell Alison Gash (Guo dkk., 2024), shows that implementing a civil society goal does not have to be done alone but can involve various parties to make it happen. This role is known as multi-party collaboration involving the government, regional governments, and the private sector.

The socialization results showed that 68 percent of participants understood the material presented, 20 percent understood quite well, and 12 percent understood only partially. During the socialization, they were also asked about their willingness to play an active role in transmitting knowledge about the dangers of smoking to the audience. Almost 87 percent expressed willingness to pass on this knowledge, while the remaining 13 percent were still unsure. Meanwhile, the participants' commitment not to smoke in any form expressed 100 percent of their willingness. To take part, 56 percent will participate in prevention in the family environment, 35 percent will play a role in the school, and 9 percent will try to play a role in the school environment.

Based on the results of this socialization, it cannot be said to have been 100 percent successful; apart from the limited time, the socialization was only carried out once, so several events are still needed which not only encourage children to understand the dangers of cigarettes and vaping but also parents and other civil society. The role of schools, especially teachers, is important because they are the ones who meet face-to-face with students every day, thus enabling teachers to continue this socialization to prevent widespread impacts.
Another effort is through school committees containing parents to provide information on the dangers of smoking and vaping for children. This is important so that children avoid the dangers of smoking and get used to living a healthy life. The family situation is also free from cigarette smoke because passive smoking also has the same dangers as active smoking. This learning model for parents and school committees is part of civil society’s participation in preventing and controlling smoking in children.

5 Conclusion

Socialization about the dangers of smoking and the role of civil society in preventing smoking for children is very necessary to be able to control the spread of diseases caused by smoking. Any cigarette, whether conventional or electronic, has been proven to be useless for health. It is
not just cigarettes that cause disease, including lung cancer; it turns out exposure to cigarette smoke can also affect health.

Socialization regarding the dangers of smoking and the role of civil society is carried out by targeting children and teachers. The results of the socialization show the commitment of both students and teachers to maintain and control the very rapid development of smoking. Parents and the wider community have a responsibility to prevent and control smoking for children.

The role of civil society in preventing and controlling smoking still needs to be stronger. Smoking is still considered a public domain that is difficult to prevent. The Malaysian government has made efforts to control the circulation of cigarettes, and the kingdom has even set a threshold limit for vape cigarette levels to control damage or bad effects on the body. This effort clashes with the contribution of the vape industry, which provides quite a large amount of input to the country. Therefore, strengthening the role of civil society in preventing and controlling smoking with the support of stakeholder collaboration is a feasible thing to do. Civil society will not stand alone but will be supported by the strategic role of government and the private sector.

Apart from the role played by stakeholders within the family and social environment, a smoking control movement is needed, especially for children. The no-smoking movement in the family will inspire children to live healthy lives without smoking and reduce passive smoking, which is common in smoking families. The role of school teachers and even students themselves is a challenge that must be realized so that children are wise not to be interested in trying or even consuming cigarettes or vape.

In the process of conducting this research, there are limitations that may influence the results of the research, namely the limited research time, energy and abilities of researchers, the conclusions drawn are only based on data analysis, it is hoped that there will be further research regarding the quality of service on patient satisfaction with different research methods, wider samples, and the use of different and more complete research instruments.
6 Confession

Thank you to those involved in this service activity, especially to the Indonesian Embassy of Kaula Lumbur for providing the opportunity to be involved in protecting the nation's children from the dangers of smoking.

7 References


