

A Review on Adolescents' at Risk of Crime Risk Behavior

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Abstract

Adolescent who grow up under negative environmental are at greater risk of developing psychological and social problems. The aim of this systematic review paper is to provide an overview of the current state of the research concerning on the risk factor that lead adolescent involving in crime risk behavior. For that purpose, the ProQuest, Sage, Elsevier, Springer, Ebscohost, Wiley, and MyCite database were searched through December 2017. All the identified publication was screened by using previously develop inclusion criteria. The search yielded 11,503 articles. Thirty-four of these publications (2011±2017) met the criteria for inclusion in the present review. Information on the studies was extracted using an extraction form. The research identified social support, socioeconomic status, resilient, coping skills, depression, aggressive, empathy, truancy, academic achievement and involvement in school activity as factors that lead adolescent involve in crime risk behavior. Most of the included studies were conducted in the United States and employed a cross-sectional design. To develop effective prevention programs, further longitudinal studies and studies assessing the interactions between risk and protective factors are needed.

Keywords: Risky Antecedent, Marker System, Adolescent, Social Support, Socioeconomic Status, Resilience, Coping Skills, Aggressive, Empathy, Depression, Truancy, Academic Achievement, School Involvement Activity, Crime Risk Behavior

Background Of Study

A. Introduction

Adolescence is a milestone in human growth and development as a turbulent period of transition from childhood to adulthood characterized by coexistent changes where it is a critical period of life in which a great deal of biological, psychological, and social changes occurs and comprises a period of development between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Increased rates of student disciplinary cases including crimes involving adolescents in this country are worrying as the increase cases of juvenile crime from year to year. This issue should be addressed by all parties, particularly the authorities and society by working

together to find a holistic solution to these problems. Development programs, treatment and rehabilitation have been carried out by various parties but still difficult to overcome this problem and at the same time, many new cases emerged. One of the approaches to overcome this problem is by the early prevention step through Antecedent Model and Marker System.

In this context, social and environmental factors act as a Risky Antecedent to the adolescents. Adolescents who grow up in a negative environment are very fragile in psychological aspects and can be detected at an early stage through Marker System. Therefore, this study intends to explore the previous study that have been conducted that are related to Antecedents Models and Marker System of adolescents at risk of crime risk behaviour. The model consists of Risky Antecedent (social support from family, friends and school and family socioeconomic status), Psychological at Risk (resilient, coping strategies, aggression, depression, and empathy); Markers System (truancy, academic achievement and school involvement activity) and Crime Risk Behaviours with regard to some of the demographics of gender, race and location.

B. Problem Statement

Children and adolescents are future national assets. To them, there is a great hope to continue the survival of the country's prosperity and success to become a well-developed country by 2020. Thus, their well-being and success in life and education is paramount to achieve the national goals. However, in addition to breakthroughs that have been achieved by the majority of children and adolescents in various fields such as education, sports, arts and so on, there is a small group of children and adolescents who are caught up in a variety of social problems and crime.

Royal Malaysia Police reported a total of 4,474 criminal cases in 2011 were committed by children and adolescents (Daily News, 12/01/2012). Those arrested were children between 7-10 years old involved in 28 cases (0.6%), 11-12 years old involved in 90 cases (2%), 13-15 years old involved in 1,271 cases (28.4%), and 16-18 years old in 3,085 cases (69%). Trends in the involvement of children and youth in crime activity are increasing and alarming (Daily News, 29/03/2014). On the same note, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye reported that there has been a dramatic increase in the involvement of juveniles' activity with crime index 7,816 (in 2013) compared to the previous years of 3,700 (in 2012). In addition, there has been an increase in cases involving students with a total of 1,632 cases (in 2013) compared to 1,042 cases (2012). In 2013, there also an increase in the amount of 47% in the index of violent crime across the country are committed by underage adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 years, and some have been involved in the rape and murder (Straits Times, 17/4 / 2014).

Family Health Development Division, Ministry of Health at a one-day seminar Youth Social Issues held at NCDRC, UPSI on 18 April 2013, reports there are 459 schools across the country at high risk of exposure to the problem of gangsterism and crime problems such as gambling, stealing, against teachers, extortion, bullying, prostitution, drugs, weapons, molesting, threatening students and teachers as well as trespassing. This further explains why today's juvenile and school crime issues need to be taken seriously by the government. The criminal case committed by adolescents and children in Malaysia is a national issue that is serious and must be addressed quickly before it gets worse and becomes more severe.

Crime issues among children and adolescents should be taken seriously and should be prevented before it becomes severe. Therefore, a research to resolve this issue is crucial to assist the government, especially the Malaysian Ministry of Education and the Home Affairs Ministry to plan appropriate action plans for monitoring criminal activities among children

and adolescents in Malaysia. Authorities should also have specific methods or accurate marker systems to identify adolescent who tend to involved in crime. In other words, the issue of adolescent involvement in criminal behavior needs to be addressed more thoroughly and proactively at the early stages by identifying risk characteristics through Antecedents Models and Marker Systems (Burt, Resnick & Novick, 1998).

Literature Review

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the development of children and adolescents is influenced by social factors such as families, communities and wider social institutions. The influence of these social factors includes processes in families, peers, social support and community resources, neighbourhood security, quality of life, and wider institutions such as schools. Children with atypical risk behaviours come from a negative or risky environment, that is families involving failure in family function and not be able to receive parental support (Schulte & Petermann, 2011; Faisal & Mohammad, 2012; and Henggeler & Sheidow, 2012); poverty (McNeil et al., 2013; Yoo, Jeong Ah & Huang, Chien-Chung, 2012; and Calderón-Almendros, 2011); and risky environment comprising neighborhood (Tam & Reisthler, 2015); and Tompsett et al., 2016), peer groups (Weermen et al. 2015; Reynolds et al., 2015; and Rulison et al., 2014) and schools (Synder & Smith, 2015; et al., 2015; Lo et.al, 2011).

Failure of family functions, poverty, peers and neighborhoods constitutes a risky environment and later on becoming antecedents of risk or causal factors leading children and adolescents to involve in problematic behaviors including crime. Within a certain period of time, teenagers who grow up in this risky environment are said to be more fragile, have low resilient and no social competence. With these features, the children will fail to adjust their behavior when facing a stressful environment, and they are prone to engage in problematic behaviors including future crime (Rovis et al., 2015; Mann et al., 2015; and Yates et al., 2012).

Children and adolescents at risk may be detected at an early stage based on certain Markers System prior to emerging symptoms of behavioral problems (Burt, Resnick & Novick, 1998). Among the risky child Markers System is the low level of academic achievement, not interested in school activities and school truancy (Dryfoos 1990), low academic achievement, school truancy and low social competencies (The Consortium on the School-based Promotion of Social Competence 1996, and Muhammad Shariff Mustafa & Suria Abd Jamil 2012).

Apart from the markers system, these risky children can be identified based on psychological characteristics. Some of the examples are low resilience (Flett & Hewitt, 2014; Newsome & Sullivan, 2014; and Fougere et al., 2012), low coping strategies (Mia-Ja Lee & Sung-Je Cho, 2014; Woessner & Schneider, 2013), aggression (Lee et al., 2014) and low level of empathy (Shazia et al., 2014; Marshall & Marshall, 2011; and Owen & Fox, 2011) and high level of depression (Francisco, Loios, & Pedro, 2016; Kurt & Ergene, 2017; Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014; Reynolds & Crea, 2015).

Based on the literature above, children at risk of being involved in crime in this study have the following characteristics: -

- i. Early and mid-level adolescents (12 to 15 years old).
- ii. Experiencing Risk Antecedent: Failure of family function; poor social support system (family, friends and school); and other factors to be identified.
- iii. Risky Psychological Factors: Low resilience; low action strategy; low level of empathy and aggressive.
- iv. Markers system - Truancy, low academic achievement, inactive in school activities, always fighting, damaging property and low social efficiency

According to McWhirter et al. (1995), children and adolescents at risk carrying a set of assumptions of dynamics that put children or adolescents in a negative and dangerous situation in the future. For example, teens who are addicted to cigarettes are at risk for alcohol-use and alcohol-addicted adolescents on the other hand are at risk for drug abuse. These behaviours and attitudes lead to early indicators of problematic behaviour in the future. Aggressive behaviour and low achievement at school act as a marker for antisocial and delinquent behaviour in the future. In conclusion, risk behaviours do not directly refer to the current situation, but rather acting as a potential assumption of potentially problematic behaviour in the future if there is no attempt to identify the characteristics of early behavioural risk and to identify and implement the strategy in the form of development and prevention interventions among adolescents who involved.

Therefore, according to Mohammad Nasir (2006) and McWhirter et al. (1995), if these risky children and adolescents are not assisted in the next development process, they are at risk of being involved in various behavioural problems as follows: -

- i. Discipline problem in school.
- ii. Substance abuse (tobacco, drugs and alcohol)
- iii. Engaged in early sex activities.
- iv. Run away from home
- v. Delinquent and criminal behaviour

Methodology

A. Search Strategy

This part was conducted by following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Moher et al., 2009). To ensure reproducibility, throughout the entire working process, all steps were documented in a review protocol. Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies focusing on Risky Antecedents, Psychology at Risk, Marker Systems and Crime Risk Behaviour were systematically reviewed. Only studies that were published in English or Malay were considered for inclusion. The systematic literature search was conducted in seven electronic databases (ProQuest, Sage, Elsevier, Springer, Ebscohost, Wiley, and MyCite). To ensure that the results were relevant, the search in all databases was limited to articles that were published between January 2011 to December 2017 using the keywords that are listed as below; -

Table 1

Search term and keywords that have been used in literature review part

Search Terms	Keywords
Adolescent	(adolescent* OR teenagers* OR children* OR youth*) AND
Risky Antecedents	(social support* OR family* OR peer* OR friends* OR school* OR teachers) AND
Psychology at Risk	(resilience* OR coping skills* OR aggressive* OR empathy* OR depression) AND
Marker Systems	(truancy* OR academic achievement* OR school activity involvement* OR co-curricular activity*) AND
Crime Risk Behaviour	(crime risk behaviour* OR risky behaviour* OR juvenile* OR delinquent* OR risky behaviour* OR misconduct behaviour* OR externalizing behaviour*)

B. Study Selection Process

First, the titles and all abstract of all the articles that were identified through the database search were screened by the researcher, who selected studies dealing with the adolescent who involve in crime risk behaviour were the centre of the investigation. In the second step, the titles and abstract of the pre-selected studies were rated again using previously define inclusion criteria that can be seen in Table 1. If the studies seemed to be eligible for inclusion, their full text was obtained and carefully examined by the researcher. Studies were included when all the inclusion criteria were met or when information was missing or inconclusive. Studies were excluded when at least one of the criteria was not met.

Table 2

Inclusion criteria (IC)

Category	IC	Explanation
Preselection	IC 1	Study focuses on adolescents who involve in risky behaviour, not adults.
Outcome	IC 2	At least one variable in either one of these construct (Risky Antecedents, Psychology at Risk or Marker System) is examined that either protects or encourage the adolescent to involve in risky behaviour
Population	IC 3	Adolescent- All children or adolescents with mean of age of ≤ 23 years when they first time involved in the study
Publication	IC 4	The study is original, empirical research that published in a peer-reviewed journal (NOT: a dissertation, congress contribution)
Design	IC 5	The design of the study is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longitudinal study OR • Cross-sectional study

C. Data extraction

This information below was extracted from the included studies using an extraction form.

- Citation details (authors' name, title, place and date of publication)
- Information on the study (design, language, procedure, sample size)
- Study population (age or grade, gender)
- Instrument that being used or classification status that being apply
- Factor that lead adolescent to involve in crime risk behaviour

Finding

The database search identified 11,503 potentially relevant publications. After the duplicate were removed, 6,314 were included in screening process. After manual screening, 6,218 were excluded using previously define inclusion criteria. Additionally, 37 publications were excluded, as they were double publication and after that process, only 59 publications were assessed for eligibility based on the inclusion criteria. Finally, 34 publications that analyse all the related variable were included. An overview of the selection process, including the reason for the exclusion of studies is provided in Figure 1. The variables that were related that identified in the 34 included studies were associated adolescent crime risk behaviour summarized in Table 3. These variables were assigned to four categories which were Risky Antecedents, Psychology at Risk, Marker System and Crime Risk Behaviour.

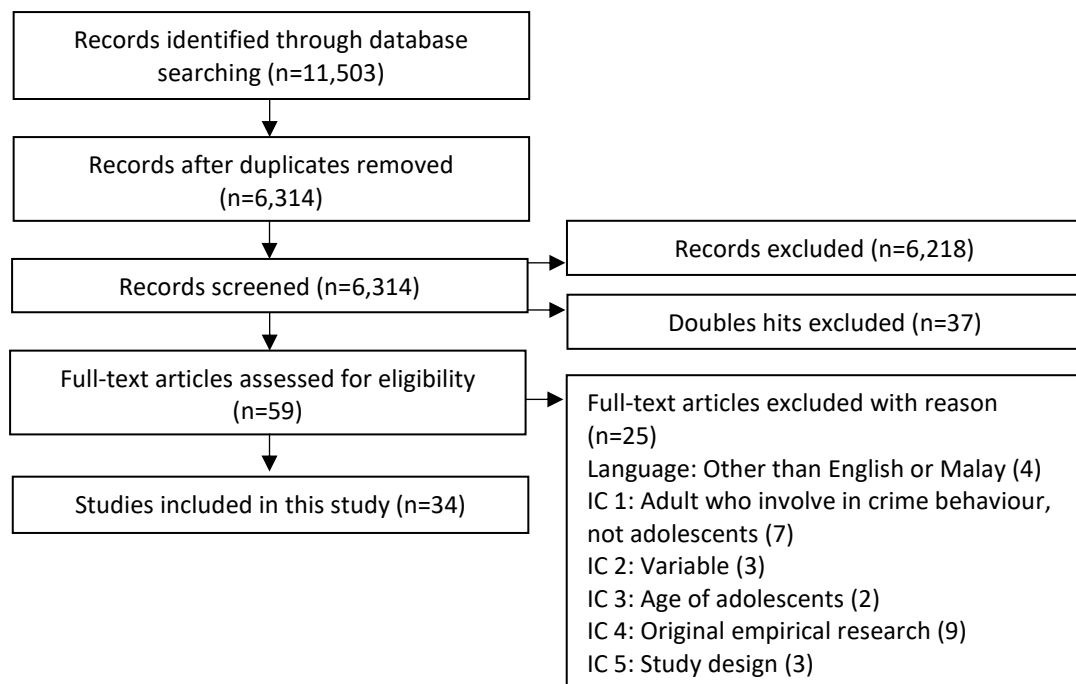


Figure 1. Flow of information through the different phase of systematic review

Phenomenon related to adolescent's delinquency have been studied by various parties over the last few decades. Among the problematic behaviour that are often related to them are drug addiction (Dahl, 2016; Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012), alcoholism (Mason et al., 2010; Salom et al., 2016b; Salom, Williams, Najman, & Alati, 2014), delinquent behavior (Bao, Li, Zhang, & Wang, 2015; Curcio, Mak, & George, 2017; Marotta & Voisin, 2017; Mustafa, Suandi, & Ismail, 2016), rules breaking such as school truancy (Mustaffa & Abd Jamil, 2012; Veloo & Kim, 2014; Yahaya, Hashim, Boon, & Chan, 2005) and aggression (Kamaluddin, Shariff, Othman, Ismail, & Saat, 2015; Lee, Rice, Callan, Brame, & Lee, 2015).

Adolescent development problems involve negative external and internal environments or risk factors that are closely related to behavioral problems among adolescents. Processes in families, peer groups, poverty and social support are among the factors involved as well school as an institution fail to help identify factors related to the problematic behavior (Baharudin, Krauss, Yacoob, & Pei, 2017; Haggerty, Skinner, McGlynn-Wright, Catalano, & Crutchfield, 2013; Kurt & Ergene, 2017; Mendelson, Turner, & Tandon, 2010; Palomar-Lever & Victorio-Estrada, 2016; Reynolds & Crea, 2015; Rovis, Bezinovic, & Basic, 2015; Yahaya et al., 2005).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) through ecological approaches, this approach demonstrates social factors such as families, communities and wider social institutions affect the children and adolescents development where these factors encompass the processes in families that are either direct and indirect. In addition, other social factors that also affect them are peers, social support, community resources, neighborhood security, life satisfaction and institutions such as schools. Hence, through an ecological approach that have been stated, this approach indicates that adolescent who is at risk are more likely to come from negative or risky environment such as failure in family functioning (Francisco, Loios, & Pedro, 2016; Henneberger, Durkee, Truong, Atkins, & Tolan, 2013; Shek & Lin, 2016), failure to

receive support from parent (Gault-Sherman, 2012; Lee, & August, 2011; Moses & Villodas, 2017a), peer (Moses & Villodas, 2017b; Yahaya, Boon, Ramli, Hashim, & Idris, 2010), and school (Snyder & Smith, 2015; Veloo & Kim, 2014) and poverty (Banovcinova, Levicka, & Veres, 2014; Omboto, Ondiek, Odera, & Ayugi, 2013; Yoo & Huang, 2012).

Negative or risky environment which are failure to get support from family, peer and school and poverty become as Antecedents of Risk to adolescent. Within a certain a period of time, children and adolescent who have been or currently been arised in these environment, tend to have one or all of these characteristics which are low level of resilience (Fougere, Daffern, & Thomas, 2012; Palomar-Lever & Victorio-Estrada, 2016), coping skills (Boxer, Sloan-power, Mercado, & Schappell, 2012; Francisco et al., 2016; Schalkwijk, Stams, Stegge, Dekker, & Peen, 2016), empathy (Hepper, Hart, Meek, Cisek, & Sedikides, 2014; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2011; Williford et al., 2016) and high level of depression (Francisco et al., 2016; Monahan, Oesterle, Rhew & Hawkins, 2014; Reynolds & Crea, 2015; Salom et al., 2016a; Saraceno, Heron, Munafò, Craddock, & van den Bree, 2012) and aggression (Fontaine, Brendgen, Vitaro, & Tremblay, 2016; Mustafa et al., 2016) which known as Psychology of Risk.

Children or adolescents who have these above characteristics are vulnerable to situations in which they will fail to adapt when facing a crisis or a stressful situation to them and expose themselves to involve in delinquent behaviour in future (Berger, Batanova, & Cance, 2015; Boxer, Sloan-power, Mercado, & Schappell, 2012; Clapp & Thomas, 2016;; Francisco et al., 2016; S. A. Lee et al., 2015; Newsome & Sullivan, 2014; Piko & Pinczés, 2014; Reynolds & Crea, 2015; Schalkwijk, Stams, Stegge, Dekker, & Peen, 2016).

Adolescent at risk can be identified at early stage based on external charateristics or in this study, cited as the marker system which is before the emergence of a symptom of delinquent behavior. Dryfoos (1990) stated that one of the charateristics adolescent at risk is low level of academic achievement, low involvement with school activity, incolve in truancy activity and adolescents who stayed at welfare centres. His statement supported by researchs that found children and adolescent who involve in delinquent behaviour either have low academic achievement (Bryan et al., 2012; Kwon & Wickrama, 2014; Lee et al., 2011; Mazur, Kowalewska, Zawadzka, Dzielska, & Wais, 2016; Wang, 2014), don't involve too much in school activity (Anthony & Robbins, 2013; Bryan et al., 2012; Henry et al., 2012) and engage in truancy activity (Dahl, 2016; Nawi, Roslan, Idris, & Hod, 2017).

Table 3

Overview of the Studies that were included in this Study

1 st Author	Year	Risky Antecedent				Psychology at Risk					Marker System			Crime Risk Behaviour
		Social Support from			Family Income	Resilience	Coping Skill	Aggressiv e	Empathy	Depression	Truancy	Academic Achievement	School Activity Involvement	
		Family	Peer	School										
Kurt	2017	/	/	/						/		/		/
Nawi	2017	/									/			/
Fontaine	2016	/		/	/			/						/
Mustafa	2016	/	/					/						/

Fran cisco	20 16	/	/	/			/			/				/
Palo mar- Leve r	20 16	/	/		/	/								/
Maz ur	20 16			/							/			/
Dahl	20 16		/							/				/
Yun	20 16	/												/
Willif ord	20 16							/						/
Schal kwijk	20 16					/	/	/						/
Reyn olds	20 15	/	/						/					/
Snyd er	20 15		/	/										/
Man n	20 15	/	/											
Boot h	20 15	/												/
Bao	20 15		/	/										/
Mon ahan	20 14	/	/	/					/					/
Salo m	20 14				/									/
Kwo n	20 14	/			/						/			/

"/" indicates the variable that being studied in that research

1 st Auth or	Ye ar	Risky Antecedent				Psychology at Risk					Marker System			Crim e Risk Beha viour
		Social Support from			Fa mil y Inc ome	Resil ienc e	Co pin g Skil l	Aggr essiv e	Emp athy	Depr essio n	Tru anc y	Acade mic Achiev ement	School Activit y Involv ement	
		Fa mil y	P e er	Sch ool										
Wan g	20 14	/										/		/
New som e	20 14					/								/
Hep per	20 14								/					/
Harri s- Mck oy	20 13	/										/		/
Foug ere	20 12	/	/			/						/		/

Bryan	2012			/						/	/		/
McLeod	2012								/		/		/
Anthony	2012				/						/		/
Yoo	2012	/			/								/
Boxer	2012				/		/						/
Henry	2012									/	/	/	/
Lee	2011	/			/		/		/		/		/
Saraceno	2011	/							/				/
Jolliffe	2011							/					/
Cale	2010							/					/

"/" indicates the variable that being studied in that research

Discussion And Suggestions

The great challenge to understanding the etiology of crime risk behaviour among adolescent is the complexity of the phenomenon itself. Over the past decade we have accumulated a greater knowledge of the issue and of the factors that make adolescents more vulnerable to crime behaviour.

The present review identified 34 studied that assessed 12 factors against crime risk behaviour among adolescent. The factors that were identified in the cross-sectional and longitudinal studies included adolescent’s Risky Antecedents (social support from family, peer and school, family income or socioeconomic status), Psychology at Risk (resilience, coping skills, empathy, aggressive and depression), Marker System (truancy, academic achievement and school activity involvement).

Limitations that need to be taken into account, firstly, almost all the studies were conducted in the United States, so that the generalizability of the findings to other countries is limited. It should be noted that the assessment of all of the variables of interested was based on different measurements and was rated from different perspective. In the study by Kurt (2017), for example, different results were found for the association between social support and depression with crime risk behaviour when compared with study conducted by Reynolds and Crea (2015). As this current review shows, there are currently only a few studies combining Risky Antecedents, Psychology at Risk and Marker System factors in one study to predict adolescent’s crime risk behaviour especially in Malaysia. Most of the study focused on Risky Antecedents especially social support from family as a significant factor that lead adolescent to getting involved in drug risk behaviour without putting much attention on psychological factor.

Additionally, empirical evidence on the factors that were identified in this review was mostly based on the findings from cross-sectional study. Therefore, the predictive significance of the identified factors is not sufficient to draw clear conclusions. So, future research is needed to gain a clear view and solid finding to find the most significant factor predicting adolescent’s crime risk behaviour and how these factors can influence one another either

increase or decrease the risk of adolescent getting involve in crime risk behaviour. Further longitudinal studies that include all of these construct are necessary to verify the finding from cross-sectional study.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations may be made to school counsellors and psychologists working with adolescents at schools or other institutions. This study has shown that social support was the most important factor in predicting adolescent crime risk behaviours. Practicing school counsellors and psychologists may undertake protective and preventive work to increase the social support that students receive from family, teachers and peers. Group guidance programs for peers and psychoeducational programs to develop relationships between counsellors, students, families, and teachers may be useful. Results of this study also indicated that social support has a protective effect against the indicators of internalizing behaviours. Thus, school counsellors and psychologists working with adolescents may ensure that adolescents have higher perceived social support so that the indicators of internalizing behaviours such as depression, aggressive, inefficient coping skill and low level of resilient and empathy are minimized.

Research according to the above construct is crucial to explain issues regarding to adolescent at risk of crime behaviour in Malaysia so that we can find a better and holistic strategies in the form of prevention and development programs to address the problem of crime risk behaviour to buffer the negative effect of risk factor and in future, we can have a better generation which can lead to better nation. Besides, an intervention program or module need to be develop as one of the way to overcome these negative issues.

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