

Methamphetamine Abuse in Malaysia: An Interpretive Phenomenological Perspective

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Abstract

Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia play a major role in global drug trade and abuse. Use of amphetamine-type stimulants has increased in the past decade in Malaysia. Methamphetamines, known as "shabu," across much of Southeast Asia, have been on the rise for years and addiction specialists are running out of solutions. Therefore, this study intentions to explore the perspective and experience of Meth. clients who is undergoing a rehabilitation program at the Narcotic Addiction Rehabilitation Centre, Tampin, Melaka (Puspen Tampin, Melaka) through an interpretive phenomenological approach. This study was conducted through in-depth interviews with seven male informants in 2022. Clients' perspectives and experiences of their involvement in Meth abuse well documented through the elements of (1) the trend of Meth. abuse, (2) the impact of Meth abuse, and (3) behavioural contradictions of Meth abuse with self-rationalized thinking. As a conclusion, this present study illustrated attention to the urgent need to strengthen existing intervention programs, drug policies, and professional supports, or to devise improved ones, with the aim of reducing Meth. abuse in Malaysia.

Keywords: Methamphetamine, Substance Abuse, Recovery, Intervention, Relapse Addiction

Introduction

In recent years, there have been evolution of illegal substance abuse from opiate-type drugs to psychostimulants. Meth. is a synthetic stimulant that is addictive and can cause considerable health adversities that sometimes resulting in death. It is sometimes used as a second-line treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and obesity; however, Meth. is better known as a recreational drug. Street names include meth, speed, ice, glass, chalk, and many others. Possible adverse effects include myocardial infarction, stroke,

seizures, rhabdomyolysis, cardiomyopathy, psychosis, and death. Chronic Meth. use is associated with neurologic and psychiatric symptoms and changes in physical appearance. According to the Director of the University of Malaya Centre for Addiction Science (UMCAS), Associate Prof Dr Rusdi Abd Rashid stated that, Meth. most often associated with symptoms of psychosis or severe mental disorders that make the addict act outside of rational thought. Meth. stimulates release and blocks re-uptake of neurotransmitters monoamines (dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin) in the brain. Several areas of the brain are affected: the nucleus accumbent, prefrontal cortex, and striatum. When meth alters levels of neurotransmitters in the brain, it causes feelings of bliss and euphoria. Meth is a neurotoxin and powerful stimulant, which causes cerebral enema, haemorrhage, paranoia, and hallucinations.

In Malaysia during 90s, Meth. was identified in Sabah. Allude to a report titled "Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia: Recent Developments and Challenges 2022", UNODC asserted the distribution of Meth. continues to grow in East and Southeast Asia with higher trade production record. For example, the number of seizures of Meth. has reached 172 tons successfully seized in East and Southeast Asia in 2021, an estimated seven times more than a decade ago. Kavinadee Suppamongtevasakul as a UNODC Regional Synthetic Drug Analyst for the Global SMART Program mentioned the decrement in the price of crystal Meth. is very worrying because it is more accessible and available. Various criminal cases in Malaysia involved Meth. users and this has a negative impact on society. For example, on 11 February 2021, there was a case of a stepfather who was arrested for initiating the death of a 4-year-old girl in Gemas, Negeri Sembilan and the suspect have a criminal record. In 2020, a grandson examined positive for Meth. had killed his grandmother in Kuching, Sarawak due to his grandmother's refusal to give money.

The significance of this topic is based on a study by Darshan et al (2020) which declares Meth. and Amphetamine-Type-Stimulants (ATS) are drugs that stimulate physical violent behavior and intervention rehabilitation programs should be actively implemented for individuals who are seeking rehabilitation treatment. Empirical findings state that an individual is normal before abusing drugs, but after abusing drugs, it turns out that behavioral and emotional changes leading to the outbreak of criminal cases. The results of a survey by Sujit & Erwin (2016) found that the majority of individuals involved in crime are users of Meth., ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and marijuana. In addition, they are often involved in the crime of theft and burglary. According to the study by Ezarina (2020), the majority of prisoners or clients who are following drug rehabilitation programs (57.8%) and involved in criminal cases have irregular and low-paid work experience. There is no denying the consumption of Meth. also helps individuals to increase energy, productivity and creativity in work so that they have good work performance. The relationship between job demands and the use of Meth. in line with some international research (Fast, Kerr, Wood, & Small, 2014; Hoffmann, Schumann, & Richter, 2017) which mentions on creativity and energy quality as much as possible (Brecht et al., 2004).

In-depth observations also being examined between the relationship of Meth abuse. with the COVID-19 pandemic. When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in 2020, the community complied with the movement control order announced by the government. However, despite the movement control order that requires individuals to stay at home, it turns out to invite

various intrapersonal pressures coupled with the issue of layoffs by employers and so on. The increment of abuse cases during the Covid 19 pandemic is very related to research by (Rodriguez et al., 2020) that some individuals use addictive behavior to relieve stress during the pandemic. The repetitive cycle of Meth usage during the pandemic also due to social isolation under movement restrictions (Kim et. al., 2020). Allocation aspects using Meth. also being investigate in the current literature. Fauziah (2020) asserted that a client or prisoner of a total of 62.1% disclosed the money allocation of RM 100 a day to buy drugs. This situation certainly affects the family's financial position because the majority of client and prisoner families are under the B40 category. When an individual lack of money to buy drugs, crime alternatives such as stealing, looting, etc. become an option to get drug supplies. The situation urges individuals to commit crimes to obtain sources of income to buy drugs (Richard & Jeremy, 2020; Langfield & Payne, 2021). In addition to several elements above, individuals who have an addiction to synthetic drugs such as Meth. also face personal challenges that make them more prone to start using substances until addicted. Few factors documented such as lack of access to medical care, employment, and finances (Neupert et al., 2017), having catastrophic trauma (Galea et al., 2020), having bad experiences as a child, such as abuse, neglect, or other forms of trauma (Hotton et al., 2019), mental health disorders (Wand et al., 2020) general and behavioral stress (Lin et al., 2020).

Refer to the initial interview on 5 October 2021 with Puan Nik Nur Nadia Faziera binti Che Ngah who is the former deputy director of the Narcotic Addiction Rehabilitation Center (Puspen Tampin), she expressed her concern about the abuse of Meth. She insisted that in-depth research should be study on how Meth. abuse emerged in Malaysia till the occurrence of various criminal cases every year. According to her, this study rarely investigate in Malaysia and this study should provide new knowledge to the community parallel with the current's trends of synthetic drug. Her statement coincides with the limitations of the study that have been stated by Norliza et al (2014) in *A review of substance abuse research in Malaysia*, the Medical Journal of Malaysia. According to Norliza et al (2014), epidemiological study on the changes from traditional drugs in Malaysia to the Meth quite limited and the perspective of the frequency of disease, the variety of factors that increase or decrease the incidence of disease, the cause-and-effect relationship between exposure to a certain factor and in certain human population should be engrossed. Bolinski et al. al (2022); Gili et. al (2021) in their study also mentioned the research on the Meth. abuse should be discovered because the contributory factors of abuse, character of users, and the impact of abuse are very different according to respective population and geography. Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the perspective and experience of clients involved in the Meth. abuse at Puspen Tampin, Melaka.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the researchers used a qualitative research method to answer the research question through an interpretive phenomenological approach. Creswell & Miller (2000) identified that qualitative research as a process of understanding based on different research methodologies and explores social and human problems. This research paradigm aims to understand the situation, group or interaction that being studied. Referring to the research question, the qualitative method is applied due to the lack of information related to the context of the study and did not confirm the hypothesis (Maxwell, 2012). Phenomenology is

one of the main approaches in qualitative research that developed as a different disciplinary and philosophical movement in the early 20th century. The main objective of the phenomenological approach is to explore the subjective experience of humans. The perspective of this approach is very broad, holistic, and includes social, cultural, environmental, political, economic, psychological, and physical contexts. Researchers have applied one of the branches of the phenomenological approach which is interpretive phenomenology which directs to interpret the descriptive meaning of individuals (Heidegger 1977; Pringle et al., 2011). According to Smith & Sparkes (2009) interpretive phenomenology began in the fields of psychology and health psychology, clinical psychology, counselling psychology, and educational psychology. Smith & Sparkes (2009) explained interpretive phenomenology as a systematic observation of life experiences and state that individual experiences can be mental and affective responses to the process of remembering, regretting, wanting, and others.

The core justification for researchers using qualitative methods through an interpretive phenomenological approach is that scholars have identified a lack of qualitative research that focuses on the issue of synthetic drug abuse such as Meth. and changing attitudes towards the addictive behaviour (Carbone & Lopez et al., 2012; Sheridan et al., 2009). In addition, various research has been done on the impact of Meth abuse globally, but the majority is focused on quantitative and experimental methods (Yoosefi et. al., 2020). Carbone & Lopez et al (2012) have stated the need for consistent specifics should be done to identify how users using Meth., their motivation to using Meth. and how users describe their initial experience of stopping the addictive behaviour. Schmidt et.al (2019) identified that qualitative studies have the potential to provide a holistic and unique picture in understanding the consumption of Meth. because users can share such experiences in the context of individual lives, including relationships with family and friends, use of polydrug, and provide an opportunity to inform their drug use style.

In this study, the researchers used the concept of “bracketing” to reduce any perception of the study and minimize any assumptions about the phenomenon being studied. The concept of bracketing starts at the beginning of research until the process of analysing data (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Researchers believe that interpretive phenomenology is part of the inevitable involvement of researchers in understanding the descriptions of informants (Fleming et al., 2003). The phenomenological approach was operationalized inductively and implemented through semi-structured interviews so that the research informants have autonomy in voicing their perspectives (Englander, 2012). The researcher is a listener who asks questions and accepts the thoughts of the study informant extensively.

Research Population and Sample

In this study, the population consists of an in-patient client who have experience in Meth addiction. at Puspén Tampin, Melaka in 2022. During the first phase of the study, the researcher did not plan the number of study informants in line with Merriam & Tisdell's (2016) statement that qualitative studies do not have a specific approach to setting the sample size. However, researchers support Patton's (2002) in his statement that the sample size should not too large because seems very difficult to conduct an in-depth study, but sufficient if it has reached the saturation level. As a conclusion, only seven in-patient clients involved in this study and all are Malay. The research informants were able to answer the research questions

and provide detailed information until reaching the level of data saturation during the second interview process. Non-probability sampling was used in this study by implementing purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria of this study are specific to individuals involved in the abuse of Meth., individuals who have experienced recovery for six months or more and still refer to Puspén Tampin for medical issues.

Research Ethics

In this study, the researchers were guided by the APA code of ethics by the American Psychological Association which requires the researcher to obtain consent from the informant involving certain matters. Among them, study informants must be clearly informed using understandable language about the type of study being conducted, all consent must be documented, all risks and possible side effects. Limitations to confidentiality must be communicated from the outset and informants must not be misled about aspects of the research that may affect their consent to become study informants, especially risks or unpleasant emotional experiences. In addition, the purpose of the study can be hidden only when necessary to maintain the integrity of the study.

Data Analysis

The data were thematically analysed based on the themes from the general issues that are identified and the categorization. Researchers are individuals who organize and analyse data based on the main themes. The researcher has also read the entire interview transcript and then reanalysed the transcript to see the accurate interpretation of the informants. After analysing the interview transcripts, the main ideas were identified using an inductive approach in the formation of the main themes.

Results

Demographic background

Table 1

Demographic background of informants

Informant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Age	34	40	24	35	35	39	40
Education level	Secondary school	Secondary school	Diploma	Diploma	Secondary school	Degree	Secondary school
Number of siblings	3	8	2	7	2	5	8
Marital status	Single	Single	Single	Single	Divorced	Married	Married
Number of children	-	-	-	-	1	8	7
Previous occupation	Army	Self-employed	Self-employed	Draughtsman	Driver	Consultant	Driver
Length of Meth. addiction	5 years	2 years	2 years	4 years	4 years	2 years	20 years
Number of rehabilitation centers registered (Prison)	3	4	3	-	-	-	1
Number of rehabilitation centers registered (Puspén)	1	1	1	-	-	-	1

Table 1 shows the demographics of informants in this study. The majority of informants were men from Selangor and the highest age is 40 years. In terms of marital status, only four informants were single, two informants were married and only one divorced. Furthermore, three informants received tertiary education and four of them attended secondary school. The highest number of siblings recorded was eight and only two informants had family members who abused substances. Referring to the parents' marital status, there are two pairs of informants' parents who are divorced and others are married. Intended for clients who are married, they have seven and eight children while for those who are divorced, they have only one child. In terms of previous employment, informants have been engaged in military, self-employment, draughtsman, driver, and consultant. Meanwhile the highest period of addiction recorded which is relatively 20 years and the lowest is 2 years. In addition, the informants also experienced in using heroin and marijuana. Furthermore, three clients had rehabilitation experience in prison almost four years and three years while the rest had just entered Puspren only. Table 2 below shows the list of theme and sub theme in answering the research question.

Table 2

List of theme and sub theme

No.	Theme	Sub-theme	Source
1	The trend of Meth. abuse	Improved job performance	
		Influence of family members	Interviews with key informant and field notes
		The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic	
2	The impact of Meth abuse	Forming hyperactivity behaviour	
		Negative emotions	Interviews with key informant and field notes
		Individual hallucinations	
3	Behavioural contradictions of Meth abuse with self-rationalized thinking	Meth abuse. seems very contrary to self-belief	Interviews with key informant and field notes
		Meth is not a 'tool' to forget social pressure	

- **The trend of Meth. abuse**

Majority of the clients at Puspen Tampin acknowledged the existence of Meth primarily from friends, and social media. In addition, clients also used heroin and marijuana to reduce some social problem. The trend of Meth. abuse could be explained through improving work performance, the influence of family members, and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Improved Job Performance

Indisputably Meth. client at Puspen Tampin employed such a variety of jobs to support their family. Majority if the work employed by clients required maximum energy and cognitive skills such as truck drivers, draughtsman, and consultants. The informant also stated the consumption of Meth. able to provide satisfactory job performance. The informant statement;

to get more double effects... to be more active... to have more fun... for us to work with that spirit is ok.... after the intake of Meth. I couldn't sleep in 3 days

Informant B, (10022022) 10-12

I choose Meth. for workload... the second is the dopamine...working as a runner's provides so much energy.... I did the part time jobs too... I can focus more, confident

Informant C, (07032022) 31-34

Meth. helped me to achieve my creativity level... creative is like thinking outside the box and can create more new ideas....

Informant D, (08032022) 10-14

just for fun... the second reason is to work...

Informant E, (09032022) 11-12

if I consume Meth. a day I can easily do my work....my situation is normal.... more calm

Informant G, (15032022) 28-29

Influence of family members

The influence of family members also plays an important role in explaining the trend of Meth abuse. Family member that involved actively in Meth abuse seems a strength factor the cycle of addiction in the family fails to stop. In the informant's statement, they were influenced by their wives and grandfathers who actively abused Meth. The informant's statement is;

My wife is an active user of Meth. since 15 years old and help me a lot in household affairs... in 2000 she was exposed to Meth she is indeed a heavy user...

Informant F, (14032022) 17-19

it started when I was 9 years old during primary school from my late grandfather... my late grandfather used to be a former addict.... I'm not mistaken, he had a story with me before he died, from the beginning until he died...

Informant G, (15032022) 4-7

The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic

The informant also specified when the movement control order during Covid 19 pandemic became a main reason they being trapped in the commercializing of Meth. Uninterrupted supply and freely access make them interested in selling and abusing Meth. This sales activity is in high demand from consumers consisting of youth and adults. Furthermore, informants and friends managed to establish a Meth processing laboratory. This sale simultaneously increases the informant's income and helps reduce the financial stress during the pandemic.

My experience during MCO..., I took a few of the substance near the palm oil plantation, right they make ports there... it's easy to get the substances ... there are many ports in my village...

Informant A, (07022022) 15-17

The incident starts during the early of MCO during 2020.... the pandemic is really addicting.... I don't even realize why I became like this.... the pandemic is just a moment, right? I want to stop my addiction phase but I'm shy 😊... I think if there's no pandemic, I'm not involved in addiction.... because I'm close to home and that's the only thing I can do...

Informant C, (07032022) 110-115

I'm not a heavy user but during pandemic what can we do in our house? I got an idea with my wife to create a laboratory together, commercialized Meth in the near residential area..... then I'm good in rolling money....

Informant G, (14032022) 4-8

- **The impact of Meth abuse**

In further explaining the experiences and perspectives of informants, the next dimension of discussion focused on the impact of Meth. abuse. This can be observed through three conditions as stated by the informants, specifically forming hyperactive behaviour, triggering negative emotions, and instigating individual hallucinations.

Forming hyperactivity behaviour

Hyperactivity is a state of being unusually or abnormally active. It's often difficult to manage for people around the person who's hyperactive, such as teachers, employers, and parents. The informant statements;

I became a hyperactive person in few days after consuming Meth....

Informant A, (07022022) 31

The intake of Meth in a much quantity would make individually more afraid and anxiety... but there is one thing that I like to do...it's like driving a car, right, even if it's near a public road I like to drive like a crazy person...I drift at a corner, there's a place to turn, I'll drive a little faster then pull the handbrake...

Informant C, (07032022) 53-60

Little hyperactive...I use meth to go to the gym for exercise, if you sit alone, there is also something that can make you react actively....

Informant D, (08032022) 26-27

Negative Emotions

Emotions are regarded as 'lower level' responses. They first occur in the subcortical areas of the brain such as the amygdala and the ventromedial prefrontal cortices. These areas are responsible for producing biochemical reactions that have a direct impact on your physical state. Negative emotions are unpleasant and disruptive emotional reactions. Examples of negative emotions include sadness, fear, anger, or jealousy. These feelings aren't just unpleasant; they also make it hard to function in your normal daily life, and they interfere with your ability to accomplish goal. The informant's statement is;

more emotional...like almost hitting someone but being patient.... We're already like that,

Informant B, (10022022) 31-33

I failed to control my emotions... I can't be rational, just look at one thing and it's like I don't care.... I forgot, I totally lost myself..

Informant C, (07032022) 58-62

Sometimes I am overthinking and being more emotional... a little bit like getting angry to the family members...

Informant D, (08032022) 23-24

Individual hallucinations

Hallucinations are false perceptions of objects or events involving the senses. Hallucinations are typically a symptom of a psychosis-related disorder, particularly schizophrenia, but they can also result from substance use, neurological conditions and some temporary situations. A person may experience a hallucination with or without the insight that what they're experiencing isn't real. When a person thinks their hallucination is real, it's considered a psychotic symptom.

The reaction to meth is someone would become a hallucinating...sometimes when you take it, you can't sleep...you hallucinate talking to someone...

Informant A, (07022022) 31-3

in fact, when we have been stressed for a long time... we do feel all kinds of negative feelings with our hallucinations which are not true

Informant B, (10022022) 44-45

The overdose of Meth. would bring someone to the overthinking then listening to those subtle voices

Informant F, (09032022) 24-25

- **Behavioural contradictions of Meth abuse with self-rationalized thinking**

The last theme in this study is the behavioural contradiction of Meth abuse with self-rationalized thinking. Informant believes that Meth. abuse is a behaviour that contrary to

their self-belief. This contradiction can be understood through two main dimensions (1) Meth. abuse very contrary to self-belief and (2) unsuccessful to overcome negative pressure.

Meth abuse. seems very contrary to self-belief

The majority of informants affirmed that, Meth. abuse very contrary to their values, practices, beliefs, and thoughts. This behaviour should not happen and must find a way out so that peace of mind can be achieved. Informant statements;

for me this clearly looks like a bad activity... whether or not we have to get out of there....

Informant A, (07022022) 39-40

more bad effect.... but we use that thing every day so we don't see it.... but when in the Puspen, when I haven't used it for a long time, it looks more respectable.... I think there's only one way for me to succeed, which is to stop using this thing...I'm already 40...but I want to pursue that success

Informant B, (10022022) 40-44

I can't sleep... the longest you can stay is 2 days... once you spend RM 50 a day... the highest is RM 100 a day.... not a normal person like that...

Informant D, (08032022) 5-6, 18-19

This thing is not a behaviour for normal person... that desire comes when I saw my grandfather who made that thing, it's fun, right.... first, I was sneaky then when he found out he couldn't accept it... I was wrong...

Informant G, (15032022) 6-8

Meth is not a 'tool' to forget social pressure

The consumption of illegal substances such as Meth. is known to increase calmness and overcome the social stress. This statement strongly contradicts the informant's belief when Meth. unsuccessful to forget the social pressure. Informant statements;

it's true that Meth helped me to relaxed... the problem becomes empty... then the stress comes back with no end...

Informant A, (07022022) 36-38

in fact, when we have been taking stress for a long time, we really feel all kinds of negative feelings with our false hallucinations

Informant B, (10022022) 44-46

I just found out that if we want to reduce those things, we have to fasting... the impact of Meth. just for a moment. don't believe it easily

Informant E, (09032022) 33-34

Actually, I am more stressed that using Meth due to the overthinking because you're doing things you shouldn't do

Informant F, (14032022) 53-55

It's clear that you can't forget stress... the reason you want to overcome stress is not to use dangerous substances... it makes someone angry quickly because his impression is high....

Informant G, (15032022) 37-38

Discussion

According to the analysis above, Meth. abuse is a worldwide problem and the abuse of psychoactive substances is associated with many harmful effects on health. In this situation, the trend of Meth. abuse is acknowledged by the influence of family members. A family member who has been abusing Meth in a long period seen as a driving factor why clients involved in the drug abuse. The initiation of drug use generally begins during teenagers and there is a change in the trend of abuse from traditional drugs to synthetic drugs. This issue emerged in the informant's family members such as their grandfathers and wives who are also involved in drug use. The initiation to follow family members to get involved in the addiction reflects the lack of education related to substance abuse awareness. Furthermore, the informant's environmental elements unsuccessful to curb substance abuse activities in the family. The element of lack in substance abuse education and lack of religious approach is the elementary trigger that the addiction cycle unsuccessful to break in the family (Rahmadona & Agustin, 2014).

In general, the informant's career consists of psycho-motor rather than cognitive applications. Therefore, maximum emotional stability and energy is very significant to increase work productivity to stay wide-awake for a long period of time (Moszczynska & Callan, 2017). Meth. really helpful among the informants that working as a truck driver to boosting their energy during night since their schedule is indeterminate. In addition, the elements of creativity and confidence are important elements in the job performance indicators. According to the informant's, Meth. use is a 'tool' to produce creativity in jobs such as draughtsman that require the informant to create a design that attracts the attention of customers. The element of confidence in job performance can be seen through the courage of informants to represent their image to the public and achieve more opportunities in future. At this level, informants did not aware the impact of Meth use. to themselves because the purpose of use is only for job performance. The job performance intention is closely related to several international research that discussed on the trend of Meth. abuse (Hoffmann et al., 2017; Maxwell, 2014). Meanwhile the intention of Meth. use to increase productivity in work is very related to study by (Brecht et al., 2004; Hoffmann et al., 2017).

In addition, the trend of Meth. abuse closely related to the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Movement control orders that require people to stay in residential areas is a vital factor informants felt bored and get involved in the Meth. abuse. Furthermore, online sales activities really smooth the transaction process between informants and their customers. The informant's residential area is also close to the customer house. Directly, hang out with friends slightly improved the informant's emotional state during the movement control order. The movement control order also became a vital factor among informant and friends to establish Meth. processing laboratory at their residential area. Boredom and being laid off during the pandemic caused the informant to have an immediate plan to get money easily. The establishment of the Meth processing laboratory resulted in the informant having a decent income that was able to support themselves and their families. Specifically, addictive behaviour during the Covid 19 pandemic is very related to research by (Rodriguez et al., 2020)

which is that few individuals use addictive behaviour to relieve stress during the epidemic, especially addiction related to the internet and synthetic substances. Meth abuse, which is repeated during the epidemic is also due to social isolation under movement restrictions (Kim et al., 2020). Some studies also show that individual mental problems related to substance use (Wu et al., 2010) or due to social isolation under movement restrictions.

The impact of Meth. abuse also acknowledged in several issues such as negative emotions, forming hyperactivity behaviour, and hallucinations. This situation arises to the extent that it causes a high level of anxiety and restlessness to Meth users. (Lappin et al., 2016). Specifically, depression and anxiety are two negative emotions that happen as a result of Meth abuse. The effects of these negative emotions cause mental health problems as well as violent activities (Cunningham et al., 2009; Fernández-Montalvo et al., 2012). The emotional problem experienced by the informant indicates their level of social relationships is very weak, lack of maturity in dealing with small issues, and being irrational when being disagreements. Consume Meth. in uncontrolled quantities leads to more severe emotional. However, the informants in this study were never involved in any crime or serious disagreements.

The impact of Meth. abuse related to the two types of hallucinations, specifically visual hallucinations and auditory hallucinations (Mahoney et al., 2010). Visual hallucinations are the ability to see a person, object, pattern, or light but the person, object, pattern, or light does not exist in the real world. Whereas, auditory hallucination is a condition where a person hears voices that cannot be heard by others. Sometimes, the impact of such hallucinations directly leads to the belief that they have supernatural powers and can conquer the whole world. In this study, the informant is often suspected of experiencing auditory hallucinations that stimulate the informant to hurt themselves and others. Furthermore, there was an incident where the informant automatically had intention to kill their friends in the hall after hearing someone whisper to the informant to do so. Throughout the incident, the informant did not understand why he should act in such a way.

The third impact mentioned by the informant is being a hyperactive individual. Hyperactivity means a person may seem to move about constantly, including in situations when it is not appropriate, or excessively fidgets, taps, or talks. In adults, hyperactivity may mean extreme restlessness. Hyperactivity is often a symptom of an underlying mental or physical health condition. One of the main conditions associated with hyperactivity is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In the Meth. population in a psychiatric centre in Canada, the diagnosis of those patients against ADHD increased to 55.6% (Saito et al., 2005). The informants in this study are more oriented towards impulsive hyperactivity, which is the tendency to do things quickly. Impulsive hyperactivity in this study causes informants to act without thinking rationally, failure to control emotions, and having problems with society. Undoubtedly, hyperactivity helps informants to carry out their work quickly and efficiently.

After experiencing the impact of Meth. abuse which is very significant from the view of mental health, informants began to experience instability of thoughts and beliefs regarding Meth abuse behaviour. Informants have begun to think that, Meth. abuse is very contrary to their own beliefs. Furthermore, the Meth. abuse is violating social norms and unbeneficial as a normal human being. In other words, there is a discrepancy between the behaviour of Meth. abuse with informant thought. The informant acknowledged the Meth. abuse very contrary

to self-belief because they only seeing negative instead of positive effects. The negative impact from the Meth. abuse turns out to endless regrets. Furthermore, the pleasure experienced by the informant is only temporary and as a normal human being been happy every day is not a normal. Informants began to express the Meth abuse could not be accepted by the society. This situation shows that individuals need to obey general behaviour and attitudes, opinions and behaviour with the normal society known as social compliance (Orsi et al., 2014).

There are also beliefs state the consumption of Meth. would help individual to overcome the social stress. However, the informant disagreed with the statement because illicit substances are not the key solution to overcome social stress. This belief is very contrary to the informant's thought because the social stress are endless and appropriate techniques quite important to overcome it. Then, the informant began to realize that they had to find a method to stop the addiction. This situation led the informant to find alternative by registered in the rehabilitation program. When an individual behaves differently from the majority, they become suspicious of themselves, and regulate their behaviour to conform to social norms (Campbell et. al., 2010).

This contradictory of thought emerged among the informants because they have already spent thousands of moneys only to bought Meth. Obviously, this situation leads financial pressure among them. In addition, the informant also experienced extreme weight gain because they rarely do outdoor activities. Contradictions between Meth. abuse behaviour and informant's thought is closely related to cognitive dissonance theory and social judgment theory. Through the elements of forced compliance in cognitive dissonance theory as well as elements of inconsistency in social judgment theory, informants acknowledged addiction is a negative thing and very contrary to their beliefs. Directly, there has been an outbreak of mental conflict caused by instability between values or attitudes and leaving a negative impact on them. This negative effect prompts the client to organize strategies to reduce the rate of dissonance (Sebastian et al., 2018). Forced compliance very in line with elements of logical inconsistency. A contrary belief and thought will result in an attitude change, but will appear until the point crosses the latitude of the recipient's rejection of the issue, meanwhile a message close to the recipient will not result in an attitude change viewing conformity with the existing attitude (O'Keefe et. al., 2019).

When the forced compliance and inconsistency appear, informants would start to searching new information in dealing with the dissonance as stated in the theory of cognitive dissonance. The reception of new information can cause a feeling of dissonance by an individual when an attitude or belief has a negative effect on oneself. In this study, the impact of Meth. abuse which is prevalent as new information has had a negative impact on mental health such as negative emotions, hyperactivity, and hallucinations. Furthermore, the informant also suggested by a family member to registered a rehabilitation program and specifically produce a new positive attitude to the recovery.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Some limitations of this study should also be considered when interpreting our findings. The present study was targeted towards Meth. clients in the Puspén Tampin, Melaka only. Some of the selected informants also hesitated to tell the truth about their past experiences and

were unable to communicate well about what they were asked to share, especially about drug-related events and activities in the past. In addition, some informants remained fearful and suspicious, since they were worried about how the information supplied to the researchers might be used. It is recommended that an approach be used which can obtain access to sections of the populations that are more hidden and harder to reach (including adolescents attending school, college students, professionals, and blue-collar workers). Overall, this study demonstrated the current prevalence, experience, and perspective of Meth. abuse in Puspen Tampin, Melaka. The results also explaining in the three main dimension (1) the trend of Meth. abuse, (2) the impact of Meth abuse, and (3) behavioural contradictions of Meth abuse with self-rationalized thinking. Further research is needed to confirm these findings, especially to ascertain whether the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic influenced the pre-existing factors disposing clients to the Meth. abuse. This study also drew attention to the urgent need to strengthen existing intervention programs, drug policies, and professional supports, or to devise improved ones, with the aim of reducing Meth. abuse in Malaysia.

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