

Causes of deviant behaviour

Peer pressure, lack of self-control among contributing factors: UMS study

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KOTA KINABALU: Peer pressure and lack of self-control were identified as among the contributing factors to deviant behaviour among youths, according to a study being carried out by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

UMS' Psychology Research and Social Health Unit head Madya Dr Hj Rosmah Ismail said the study carried out in nine schools within Kota Kinabalu also revealed that family did not factor prominently as a cause for deviant behaviour among youths.

"The respondents said that they were largely influenced by their peers. It had little to do with family as they had good relations with their families," she said in a TAJMA Personality Profile Study seminar in UMS yesterday.

Rosmah added that lack of self-control is also a major factor contributing towards deviant behaviour, such as trying cigarettes for the first time.

"They (youths) are willing to try bad things without realising the implications... deviant behaviour is prevalent among SPM leavers and youths aged between 18 to 19 years.

"Even more so for those who failed in the exam (SPM). These youths do not know what to do after completing their SPM, and this is aggravated by

their environment and peer pressure," she added.

The study involved nearly 6,000 youths aged between 15 to 20 years, including 1,157 students from two schools during their preliminary study and 4,764 more from nine schools in the actual study.

The schools involved included SMK Lok Yuk and SMK Likas in the preliminary study while the actual study covered KK High School, SMK Bandaraya, SMK All Saints, SMK Bahang, SMK Tobobon, SMK Perempuan Likas, Tshung Tsin Secondary School, SMK Telipok and SMK Agama Kota Kinabalu.

The study was conducted with the objective of profiling youths in Sabah that are involved in deviant behaviour, apart from determining factors influencing deviant behaviour among youths.

Rosmah added the study would be used to set up a database containing information regarding profiles of youth behaviour and also to update suggestions on ways to handle deviant behaviour among youths in Sabah.

She said deviant behaviour covers a wide spectrum, which includes smoking, drug abuse, vandalism, extortion, truancy and surfing the Internet, among other things, that go against school discipline.

Rosmah said the most effective

measure to tackle deviant behaviour among youths would be constant attention from family towards their children.

"Families should build up youths so they will grow to be good people," she said and urged all parties, particularly parents, to shoulder the responsibility of educating youths to ensure they become useful citizens.

Meanwhile, a joint study conducted by UMS and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), showed that the elderly people would mingle more with neighbours than their own children, siblings and relatives, as they do not reside at the same place.

Talking to 109 men and 109 women aged between 60 and 85, who live in rural areas in Sabah, the two-year project also discovered that they are healthier compared to their urban counterparts.

"The women are in better shape compared to men," said Dr Rosmah, adding those aged between 60 and 74, and 65-84, would normally complain of arthritis, high blood pressure, numbness on legs and hands, gastric and Alzheimer.

Touching on self-esteem, she said 90 per cent of them believe they can still contribute based on their skills and positive thinking.

Overall, the elderly are satisfied with their life but hope to be more respected by the younger generation.