



**MATERNAL STRESS, SOCIAL SUPPORT, COPING AND DEPRESSION
AMONG B40 WIVES OF DRUG ADDICTS IN MALAYSIA**

By

NURUL SAIDATUS SHAJA'AH BINTI AHMAD SHAHRIL

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

August 2024

FEM 2024 15

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The prevalence of depression is higher among women in the general population as demonstrated in previous studies, however, there is a scarcity of studies on depression issues among women who experienced life as a wife to a drug addict. Hence, the present study is conducted to determine the association between maternal stress and depression among B40 wives of drug addicts. Moreover, the study intended to examine the mediating role of social support and coping between the relationship of maternal stress and depression.

This correlational study is conducted using a cross-sectional design. The target population was recruited from ten states in Peninsular Malaysia using purposive sampling, resulting in participation from 132 wives of drug addicts in total. Four instruments were administered in this study namely Parental Stress Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale Short Form (CAPS-Short Form) and Zung Self Rating Depression Scale. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics V22.0 and SmartPLS 4 software.

The statistical analysis found that 73.5% of B40 wives of drug addicts exhibit clinical symptoms of depression. The finding also yielded evidence of correlations between study variables in which maternal stress was correlated to depression ($\beta = .317$, $t = 2.361$, $p < 0.05$), coping ($\beta = -.409$, $t = 3.293$, $p < 0.05$) and social support ($\beta = -.342$, $t = 3.531$, $p < 0.05$). Besides, coping is identified to have a negative correlation with depression ($\beta = -.351$, $t = 2.389$, $p < 0.05$). Nonetheless, no significant correlation was obtained between social support and depression ($\beta = -.038$, $t = 0.344$, $p > 0.05$).

Additionally, bootstrapping analysis of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) demonstrated the existence of a mediation process between maternal stress and depression as mediated by coping ($\beta = .144$, $t = 2.176$, $p < 0.05$). This finding revealed that coping holds an intervening power in the effects of maternal stress on depression in this study. In other words, maternal stress does not only directly affect depression, but as well as indirectly through coping. Meanwhile, the results of the study show that social support is not a mediating factor between maternal stress and depression ($\beta = .013$, $t = 0.304$, $p > 0.05$), where the findings are contrary to previous studies.

In summary, depression could be alleviated by reducing maternal stress experienced by wives of drug addicts through the application of effective coping strategies. The study findings hold significant implications for developing intervention programs targeted to strengthen the coping capability of wives of drug addicts when experiencing maternal stress as a proactive effort to mitigate depression issues within this community. Additionally, psychologists could benefit from the study findings by identifying the wives' coping behaviour in handling maternal stress, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of treatment for depression. Moreover, the study findings provide an

opportunity for future research to explore different factors potentially contributing to depression within this community. Altogether, collective action by academicians, practitioners, and policymakers is important in empowering B40 wives of drug addicts in Malaysia toward optimum psychological well-being.

Keywords: Coping, Depression, Maternal Stress, Social Support, Wives of Drug Addicts

SDG: GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-Being, GOAL 4: Quality Education, GOAL 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**TEKANAN IBU, SOKONGAN SOSIAL, DAYA TINDAK DAN
KEMURUNGAN DALAM KALANGAN ISTERI B40 KEPADA PENAGIH
DADAH DI MALAYSIA**

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Prevalens kemurungan adalah lebih tinggi dalam kalangan wanita dalam populasi umum seperti yang ditunjukkan dalam kajian lepas, namun terdapat kekurangan kajian mengenai isu kemurungan dalam kalangan wanita yang menjalani kehidupan sebagai isteri kepada penagih dadah. Oleh itu, kajian ini dijalankan untuk menentukan perkaitan antara tekanan ibu dengan kemurungan dalam kalangan isteri B40 kepada penagih dadah. Selain itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peranan pengantaraan sokongan sosial dan daya tindak antara hubungan tekanan ibu dan kemurungan.

Kajian korelasi ini dijalankan menggunakan reka bentuk keratan rentas. Populasi sasaran direkrut dari sepuluh negeri di Semenanjung Malaysia menggunakan pensampelan bertujuan, menghasilkan penyertaan daripada 132 isteri kepada penagih dadah secara keseluruhan. Empat instrumen telah ditadbir dalam kajian ini iaitu *Parental Stress Scale*, *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support*, *Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale Short Form (CAPS-Short Form)* dan *Zung Self-*

Rating Depression Scale. Data telah dianalisis menggunakan perisian IBM SPSS Statistics V22.0 dan SmartPLS 4.

Analisis statistik mendapati 73.5% daripada isteri B40 kepada penagih dadah menunjukkan simptom klinikal kemurungan. Dapatan juga menghasilkan bukti korelasi antara pembolehubah kajian di mana tekanan ibu dikaitkan dengan kemurungan ($\beta = .317$, $t = 2.361$, $p < 0.05$), daya tindak ($\beta = -.409$, $t = 3.293$, $p < 0.05$) dan sokongan sosial ($\beta = -.342$, $t = 3.531$, $p < 0.05$). Selain itu, daya tindak dikenal pasti mempunyai korelasi negatif dengan kemurungan ($\beta = -.351$, $t = 2.389$, $p < 0.05$). Namun begitu, tiada korelasi yang signifikan diperolehi antara sokongan sosial dan kemurungan ($\beta = -.038$, $t = 0.344$, $p > 0.05$).

Selain itu, analisis bootstrap bagi *Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) menunjukkan kewujudan proses pengantaraan antara tekanan ibu dan kemurungan oleh daya tindak ($\beta = .144$, $t = 2.176$, $p < 0.05$). Penemuan ini mendedahkan bahawa daya tindak mempunyai kuasa intervensi dalam kesan tekanan ibu terhadap kemurungan dalam kajian ini. Dalam erti kata lain, tekanan ibu bukan sahaja secara langsung mempengaruhi kemurungan, tetapi juga secara tidak langsung melalui daya tindak. Sementara itu, hasil kajian menunjukkan sokongan sosial bukan faktor pengantara antara tekanan ibu dan kemurungan ($\beta = .013$, $t = 0.304$, $p > 0.05$), di mana dapatan tersebut bertentangan dengan kajian terdahulu.

Kesimpulannya, kemurungan dapat dibendung dengan mengurangkan tekanan ibu yang dialami oleh isteri kepada penagih dadah melalui penerapan strategi daya tindak yang berkesan. Dapatan kajian ini mempunyai implikasi yang signifikan bagi membangunkan program intervensi yang menyasarkan pengukuhan keupayaan daya

tindak isteri kepada penagih dadah apabila mengalami tekanan ibu sebagai usaha proaktif untuk mengurangkan isu kemurungan dalam komuniti ini. Selain itu, ahli psikologi dapat memanfaatkan penemuan ini dengan mengenal pasti tingkah laku daya tindak mereka dalam mengendalikan tekanan ibu, dengan itu dapat meningkatkan keberkesanan rawatan bagi kemurungan. Selain itu, dapatan kajian juga memberikan peluang untuk penyelidikan masa depan bagi meneroka faktor berbeza yang berpotensi menyumbang kepada kemurungan dalam komuniti ini. Secara keseluruhannya, tindakan kolektif oleh ahli akademik, pengamal dan penggubal dasar adalah penting dalam memperkasakan isteri B40 penagih dadah di Malaysia ke arah kesejahteraan psikologi yang optimum.

Kata Kunci: Daya Tindak, Isteri kepada Penagih Dadah, Kemurungan, Sokongan Sosial, Tekanan Ibu

SDG: MATLAMAT 3: Kesihatan dan Kesejahteraan Baik, MATLAMAT 4: Pendidikan Berkualiti, MATLAMAT 16: Keamanan, Keadilan dan Institusi Yang Kuat

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises to Allah and His blessings for the completion of this thesis. First and foremost, my deepest appreciation is directed towards my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Zarinah Arshat, for her invaluable knowledge, insightful feedback, unwavering encouragement, and patience throughout these five years of pursuit for excellence. I also wish to acknowledge my co-supervisor, Dr. Nellie Ismail, for her knowledge, guidance and support. My heartfelt thanks go to my beloved husband, Khirul Akmal bin Abdullah Shohim, and my dear daughter, Putri Arraudhah, for their constant understanding, support, and the sacrifices they made of our shared time.

Furthermore, I regret not having the chance to express my profound gratitude to my foremost supporter, my late mother, Allahyarhamah Mrs. Latifah binti Chek Pi. I owe my resilience to my backbone, Mr. Ahmad Shahril bin Din, who inspires me to strive for the best, even in the face of adversity. May Allah bestow wellness and blessings upon both of you. I am also thankful to my mother-in-law, Mrs. Asmini binti Othman, and my father-in-law, Mr. Abdullah Shohim bin Markiman, for their continuous encouragement that has propelled me to reach this milestone.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my siblings and in-laws, Muhammad Rijaluddin, Muhammad Shahrul Na'im, Nur Sofiyana Sa'adah, Nur Jannatul 'Ajilah, Muhammad Syahid 'Azeemi, Effa Mulia Zainurdin, and Nour Azwa Abdullah Shohim, for their unwavering support during my most challenging times. Lastly, I cannot adequately express my gratitude to my dearest friends, Nur Ain Nabisya Azmi and Sopiyyatun Ibunu Suhoodhu, for their understanding and support throughout the completion of this thesis.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CALC	Centre for the Advancement of Language Competence
CAPS-Short Form	Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale Short Form
CB-SEM	Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling
CCRC	Cure and Care Rehabilitation Centre
CMB	Common Method Bias
CP	Coping
CR	Composite Reliability
DEP	Depression
FRGS	Fundamental Research Grant Scheme
GLC	Government linked company
HOC	Higher Order Construct
HTMT	Heterotrait-monotrait
JKEUPM	<i>Jawatankuasa Etika Untuk Penyelidikan Melibatkan Manusia Universiti Putra Malaysia</i>
LOC	Lower Order Component
MS	Maternal stress
MSPSS	Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support
NGO	Non-government organization
OL	Outer Loading
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SS	Social support
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter initiates the background and fundamentals of the present study regarding depression in wives of drug addicts, followed by the presentation of the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, research objectives, research hypotheses, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, significance of study, and definition of terminology. Lastly, the final section resolves the outlining of this whole chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

Depression has caught the attention of people all around the world due to its commonality nowadays. World Health Organization (2023) reported that 5 percent of adults in the global population suffer from depression, with women having a higher susceptibility to being affected by this mental disorder. This propensity was strengthened by the findings from several studies conducted across the world which suggested that women are more exposed to the risk of suffering depression than men. The higher prevalence of depression among women was believed to be rooted from several aspects including biological, psychological, and environmental factors (Kuehner, 2017). Kuehner (2017) has summarized that the potential risk factors of depression for the biological factors incorporate genetic risk, hormonal influence, and physiological stress response. Besides, psychological factor consists of neuroticism and negative affect, absence of positive affect, interpersonal orientation, coping style, rumination and co-rumination, also body shame and dissatisfaction. Meanwhile,

environmental factors include early adversity (i.e. childhood sexual abuse), interpersonal violence after childhood, stressful life events, and societal structural gender inequities. In the context of married-couple households, researchers have established ranges of risk factors for depression among wives including poor spousal relationships (Md. Abdul Wadood et al., 2023).

Various issues could potentially arise in a marriage with drug addiction being one of the examples. Drug addiction is generally characterized by a chronic and recurring condition indicated by compulsive drug seeking and drug consumption, regardless of the detrimental consequences of the drug intake (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2024). Globally, statistics have reported that one in every 17 people in the whole world has used drugs (United Nations, 2021). Over decades, drug addiction has been proven to destroy people's lives and it is even more damaging if the drug addict is the head of a family household. This is due to drug addiction not merely changing the individual but also switching the lives of their affected family members. The deterioration in physical, psychological, and cognitive aspects resulting from the drug addiction, has hindered the husband from optimally performing their responsibilities in the family. This situation has caused piles of incomplete responsibilities left alone which then mostly shifted to the wives of the drug addicts which exposed them to various stressors in the family. Thus, this stressful household condition might contribute to the onset of depression among wives of drug addicts.

In the context of a family with drug addiction, it is crucial to first comprehend the possible issues and risks that might create a stressful household environment as drug addicts are prone to be aggressive, neglectful, and violent under the influence of drugs (Freisthler et al., 2017). Besides, drug addicts are likely to commit crimes under

substance influence in order to have a constant supply of drugs which are commonly overpriced (Fauziah et al., 2020). In addition, drug addiction also worsens the family members' physical and emotional well-being, family relationships, emotional stress, physical abuse, job issues, financial strain, and discrimination (Paramjit Singh, 2015). Drug intake also causes changes in the husband's behaviour and emotions which steer into domestic and family violence (Isaacs et al., 2019). Wives commonly face stigma and social discrimination ensuing from the husband's drug addiction issues that might cause emotional distress and strained interpersonal relationships with other people. Additionally, wives are also found afflicted by health deterioration, physical illness, higher stress, and impaired life quality that result from lower family income and higher domestic abuse, following the drug addiction issue of the husbands (Dawson et al., 2007). This implies that drug consumption by the head of the family indirectly adds stressors in a household, especially for the wives. Moreover, the existence of drug addiction in a family has alleviated self-confidence, social isolation, social issues, and feelings of fear and anxiety among family members (Moriarty et al., 2011). Thus, wives of drug addicts might feel overwhelmed by the range of physical, social, and economic challenges ensuing from the husband's drug addiction issues that contribute to the incompetent feeling to solve their stressful encounters, thus leading to depression. As proposed by Bandura (1971), the reciprocal interactive process that takes place between personal, environmental, and behavioural aspects is crucial in influencing an individual's goal-directed behaviour (i.e. positive or negative) which might result with depression. In agreement with this theory viewpoint, drug addiction issues in a family apparently risk the wives' capacities to cope with the family stressors, particularly maternal stress, leading to the development of depression.

Besides, wives of drug addicts might experience difficulties in performing their parental responsibilities while struggling to support the expenses for family needs alongside, which can cause maternal stress. In Malaysia's patriarchal culture, fathers are expected to work in order to earn a wage for fulfilling the family needs, while mothers play their parental role mostly in managing the household chores and taking care of the children. Parenting tasks should be equally shared among mothers and fathers to ensure that each parent executes their responsibilities more effectively. However, in a family facing the drug addiction issue of the male head of the family, the inequitable share of responsibilities might lower the wives' capabilities to carry out all responsibilities alone, especially during the rehabilitation phase of the husbands. Thus, maternal stress is viewed as a beneficial associating factor to be explored which can lead to the development of depression among wives of drug addicts in Malaysia.

In consequence, wives of drug addicts require external resources such as social support in order to face the issues of their husband's drug addiction. Precisely, social support has been established as an important resource for mothers to reduce the maternal stress experienced during the process of raising their children (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020; Fatkuriyah & Nastiti, 2022). Moreover, individuals are also encouraged to rely on social support networks during stressful life encounters (American Psychological Association, 2022). In addition, social support is also shown to reduce depression experienced by wives. Individuals within the social circle of wives of drug addicts especially family and friends play important roles in providing consistent support to the wives in facing the issues arising, hence the risk of depression could be diminished. Inversely, a lack of perceived social support was found linked to higher psychological

distress experienced by wives (Taylor et al., 2017). This was bolstered by the finding from a study that indicates that social support is affirmed to reduce depression among mothers in female-headed families (Lau et al., 2022). The significant role of social support was appraised in many studies as it enhances the individual's confidence and resiliency in facing life adversities. During the rehabilitation period of the husbands, wives of drug addicts have to rely on support from family and friends that usually comes in four aspects either esteem support, instrumental support, informational support, or emotional support.

On the other hand, in the presence of challenging life circumstances, it is imperative for the wives to possess the capacity to effectively cope with these issues resulting from drug addiction. In general, effective coping allows an individual to tolerate and navigate a stressful situation more competently. Conversely, an ineffective approach to coping potentially leads to psychological issues including depression. In the context of the drug addict family, the coping capacity of wives of drug addicts is viewed as highly crucial as it influences their psychological outcomes. A study has demonstrated that coping applied by family members of drug addicts exerts influence on their depression (Nivetha & Majeed, 2022). In addition, Ravindran and Joseph (2017) reported in their study that the application of ineffective coping practices affects higher mental distress in wives of substance abusers. In brief, high intrapersonal coping opportunities for wives of drug addicts to confront risen stressors more effectively, while reducing the risk of developing depression.

1.2 Problem Statement

A problem statement is a section that precisely explains the problem of an issue with sufficient circumstantial information to establish its significance (Rassel et al., 2020). Commonly, a problem statement is addressed in a concise description of the issue raised in a research study. Based on the reference, the problem statement for the present study is further explained.

The present study focuses on investigating the depression of B40 wives of drug addicts for it is reviewed that this group of community might face additional stressors compared to wives of non-drug addicts. Statistics from the National Anti-Drugs Agency (2024) indicated that 137,176 of the Malaysian population are involved in drug misuse which recorded an 11.4 percent increment compared to the previous year. Additionally, the statistics also demonstrated that the involvement of drug addiction is major in men (95.8%) than women (4.2%). Based on this percentage, it was assumed that women with drug-addicted husbands are more than men with drug-addicted wives. Besides, 98.2% of the drug addicts belong to the B40 group which categorizes the household income as less than RM5250 (National Anti-Drugs Agency, 2019). This allusively explains that wives of drug-addicted husbands might face multiple family stressors as they are shouldered with extra burdens as breadwinners, caretakers, and managing house chores to take over the dysfunctional role of the drug-addicted husbands which will lead to higher depression.

As the prevalence of depression among the world population is getting higher each year, the national statistics also demonstrated an alarming rise in mental disorder cases which ranked depression as the highest case of mental disorders. The national survey

further revealed that the susceptibility is higher among women and low socio-economic backgrounds (National Health Morbidity Survey, 2015). This report reinforces the necessity of a particular investigation into the risky community. While wives of drug addicts are observed as inclusive in the abovementioned criteria, their exposure to other multiple stressors is viewed as apprehensive as documented in several studies including economic stress, physical violence, mental abuse, primary needs problems, relationship with the community, and psychosocial problems (Farzizadeh, 2018; Ólafsdóttir et al., 2020; Maghsoudi et al., 2019). In concordance with that, a study conducted in Malaysia revealed that the drug addiction of the husband has impacted the rest of the family members in various aspects incorporating physical and emotional well-being, family relationships, emotional stress, physical abuse, job issues, financial strain also stigma and discrimination (Paramjit Singh, 2015). In the context of dynamic changes in the household facing the drug addiction issue, wives of drug addicts were burdened by multiple responsibilities to keep the family functioning well. This was mainly due to the deterioration in physical health, and cognitive and sexual dysfunction by men who were involved in drug abuse (Montoya-Filardi & Mazón, 2017; Zainah et al., 2014; Rostami et al., 2010). Therefore, wives of drug addicts were obliged to perform supplemental roles to fulfil the family needs including wage earners and household managers along with parenting tasks which exposed them to mental disorders (Bruns & Pilkauskas, 2019). Subsequently, wives of drug addicts were evinced as the most affected figure among any other family members in the matter of psychological health as they experienced the highest stress, anxiety, and depression (Ólafsdóttir, Hrafnisdóttir, & Orjasniemi, 2018). Likewise, a comparative study demonstrated that the spouse of a substance-dependent husband perceived a much more severe level of depression compared to the

spouse of a non-substance-dependent husband (Sumathi, 2018). Based on these studies, an investigation on depression particularly focused on wives of drug addicts in Malaysia was considered beneficial.

Due to the issue of the husband's drug addiction, the responsibilities to nurture and raise children are commonly taken over by the wives, especially during the husband's placement at drug rehabilitation centers. Hence, wives of drug addicts predominantly play a major role as influential models for the development of their children in this situation. Ensuing the dysfunctional role played by the husband, sole parenting responsibility has burdened wives of drug addicts to manage and overcome the associated parenting issues. Parenting involves the process of raising children and also providing physical, psychological, and emotional security to ensure their healthy development into adulthood. Commonly, parenting tasks encompass six fundamental responsibilities that are; (1) provide security and sustenance directed on ensuring the physical survival and wellness; (2) provide emotional and social support aims to accord a child emotional stability, a positive self-perception, adequate emotional regulation, and encouragement to actively involve with the environment and cope with the presented challenges; (3) provide stimulation which is essential to ensure competency and sustained effort in pursuing the objective of life improvement; (4) provide supervision of the child's activities and whereabouts, as well as the encircling circumstances; (5) provide structure particularly targeting at optimizing the compatibility between the opportunities presented by the environment and the child's capabilities and inclinations in order to achieve optimal well-being; and (6) provide establishment of social connections to magnify children's opportunities for sustenance, security, support, surveillance, stimulation, and structure (Bradley & Caldwell, 1995).

Based on these six fundamental tasks of parenting, both parents need to be actively involved in order to reduce stress as it is supported that parental involvement from both parents plays a significant role in reducing parenting stress (Sev'er & Pirie, 1991). Additionally, Zimic and Jukic (2012) reported that children of drug addicts are vulnerable to being involved in drug addiction. This will indirectly contribute to the nation's drug addiction numbers continuing to rise, which leads to the vicious cycle of drug-addict families that is difficult to break and abide by generation after generation. Thus, the capability of handling maternal stress is crucial to ensure effective parenting practices which could protect their children from the risk of drug misuse activities (Eslami-Shahrbabaki & Iranpour, 2016).

In facing life difficulties, a person should benefit from the resources from the social settings whether physical or emotional form of support. Social support has been widely proven to encourage individuals to face their life conflicts more successfully. In the context of the present study, social support especially from family and friends is crucial in motivating wives of drug addicts to deal with their life challenges encompassing parenting challenges. In contrast, low perceived social support is commonly linked with depression (Lau et al., 2022; Nur Asyikin et al., 2020). This emphasizes the key role of social support in protecting in-crisis individuals from depression. Based on the previous studies, it was recognized that social support in this community is measured using qualitative study. Hence, the present study intends to examine to what extent this community perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others statistically.

In the face of adversities, the wife's capability to adapt to the issue of her husband's drug addiction is important to reduce the level of depression. This includes the coping

strategies applied to adjust to the changes in their husband as drug addicts become depressed, stressed out, lose trust, and lose their jobs after being involved with drug misuse. Nevertheless, as coping is essential in the midst of drug addiction issues, wives of drug addicts were found to perform a more emotion-oriented coping style compared to problem-oriented coping style (Kahrazee et al., 2018). In addition, women also were found to be more emotion-focused and have a social orientation to receive help and support as coping strategies during the adaptation process toward life stressors (Gabriel et al., 2010, 2016). Emotion-focused coping was noticed as a coping style that focuses on reducing negative emotional reactions to stress experienced by an individual, which is always associated with a maladaptive coping strategy as it does not provide a long-term solution to the root issue (Kovács et al., 2022). Additionally, maladaptive coping strategies are also found to be associated with poor psychological health (Moore et al., 2011). Conversely, problem-focused coping is applied through the vision to solve the problem faced. Hence, the determination of coping applied by wives of drug addicts is also being appraised in the present study to identify its association with depression. In addition, the present study also intends to investigate how coping mediates the relationship between maternal stress and depression experienced by wives of drug addicts in the present study.

Moreover, it was also identified that the previous studies lack in exploring the role of mediators in the proposed model involving wives of persons with substance use disorders. This shows that the researchers might have overlooked on investigating how an independent variable influences an outcome which in this case is depression. Specifically, mediational assessment is beneficial to be explored to determine the possible intervention through factors that might affect the relationship between

maternal stress and depression. Therefore, the study intends to examine the mediating role of social support and coping in the relationship between maternal stress and depression to explore potential intervention strategies to reduce depression issues.

Furthermore, prior studies focused more on male drug addicts as the unit analysis (Montoya-Filardi & Mazón, 2017; Rostami et al., 2010; Lex, 1990) which investigated the aspects of the effect of drug addiction on drug addicts, treatment, and rehabilitation program for drug addicts (Ghasemi et al., 2018; Fauziah & Naresh, 2009). It was identified that fewer studies focus on wives of drug addicts who have at least one child as unit analysis. This underlines the importance of the current study to investigate the relationship between maternal stress, social support, and coping with the depression of B40 wives of drug addicts in Malaysia context.

This study is advantageous to bridge the gap in research regarding the depression of B40 wives of drug addicts in Malaysia. Existing local studies only studied wives of drug addicts using a qualitative approach which focuses on experiences, stress, and coping in facing the issue of their husband's drug addiction (Paramjit Singh et al., 2019; Ezarina & Fauziah, 2021). This study was motivated to be carried out by the dearth of research on depression among drug addicts' wives. While the existing qualitative studies provide the best in explaining the deeper and underlying meaning of the issue regarding the study, the present study which employed quantitative research design contributed statistical numerical findings of depression and associated variables. Thus, the present study is conducted to investigate depression and its associating factors including maternal stress, social support, and coping concerning B40 wives of drug addicts in Malaysia as an at-risk group.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the statement of problem discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, three research questions were derived and stated as follows:

1. What are the personal profiles of respondents (state of residential, age, educational level, total years of education, duration of marriage, number of children aged 17 years and below, occupation, monthly income, and family monthly income), personal profile of respondents' husbands (age, educational level, total years of education, occupation, monthly income, frequency of rehabilitation centres admission, starting age of drug intake and duration of addiction)?
2. What are the levels of maternal stress, social support, coping and depression of B40 wives of drug addicts?
3. Is there any relationship between maternal stress, social support, and coping with depression of B40 wives of drug addicts?
4. Does social support and coping mediate the relationship between maternal stress and depression among B40 wives of drug addicts?

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the aforementioned research questions raised in the study, general objectives and specific objectives are addressed as follows.

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to determine the relationship between maternal stress, social support, and coping with depression among B40 wives of drug addicts in Malaysia.

1.4.2 Specific Objective

1. To describe the personal profile of B40 wives of drug addicts and their husbands.
2. To describe the maternal stress, social support, coping, and depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.
3. To determine the relationship between maternal stress, social support, coping, and depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.
4. To determine the mediating role of social support and coping between maternal stress and depression among B40 wives of drug addicts.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The hypotheses in the present study were derived from research questions to guide the research objectives constructed. Alternative hypotheses were adopted to declare an argument in the hypothesis tests. While the null hypothesis refers to the proposal statement that no statistical significance exists in the tests, the alternative hypothesis on the other hand claims by indicating expectation between associations of two variables tested in a study. There were seven alternative hypotheses (H_a) stated below as guided by the specific objectives clarified in the earlier section:

Objective 3: To determine the relationship between maternal stress and depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_1 : Maternal stress is significantly related to depression in B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_2 : Maternal stress is significantly related to social support of B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_3 : Maternal stress is significantly related to coping of B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_4 : Social support is significantly related to depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_5 : Coping is significantly related to depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.

Objective 4: To determine the mediating role of social support and coping between maternal stress and depression among B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_6 : Social support significantly mediates the relationship between maternal stress and depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.

H α_7 : Coping significantly mediates the relationship between maternal stress and depression of B40 wives of drug addicts.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This subsection describes the theories and theoretical framework developed according to the main variables in the study. Basically, there were two theories applied to explain

the association between maternal stress, social support, coping, and depression specifically Social Cognitive Theory and ABCX Model Family Stress and Coping. Following that, the conceptual framework based on these theories is further described.

1.6.1 Social Cognitive Theory

The application of Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1971) in the present study explains the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors that might influence B40 wives of drug addicts' mental health. Personal factor explains the individual with learned experience (i.e. maternal stress). Meanwhile, the environmental factor describes the external social context (i.e. social support). Behavioural factor expresses the reaction or responses to stimuli to achieve the goal targeted (i.e. coping). This theory emphasizes the dynamic and reciprocal interaction of these factors in achieving a goal-directed behavior which leads to the successful adjustment and mental health of an individual.

Bandura also suggested that people are shaped by the interactions between their thoughts, behaviour, and environmental events. He made the distinction between the self-concepts of depressed and non-depressed people. Specifically, people who are depressed frequently hold themselves completely accountable for the negative aspects of their lives and tend to self-recrimination and self-blame. On the contrary, they are prone to take success as the result of uncontrollable external forces which is out of their control. Additionally, depressed people also gravitate to have low self-efficacy which is understood by one's conviction of capability of influencing their circumstances. Depressed people also have a flawed judgmental process, they set their

own goals too high and then fail to achieve them. The repeated process of failure lowers their self-efficacy feelings and leads to depression.

Applying this theory to the life situation of wives facing drug addiction issues of the husbands, the interaction between maternal stress experienced in the process of raising children, perceiving insufficient social support, and possessing low capability of applying effective coping are assumed to lead to depression. According to Bandura, these factors might influence individuals to have the view on themselves as being incapable of influencing events in their daily lives. Specifically, the interaction of these factors might develop a learning behaviour that ends up viewing themselves as incapable of handling maternal stress. This belief may cause the individual to eventually experience depressive symptoms such as continuous sadness, low self-esteem, and feeling hopeless and helpless.

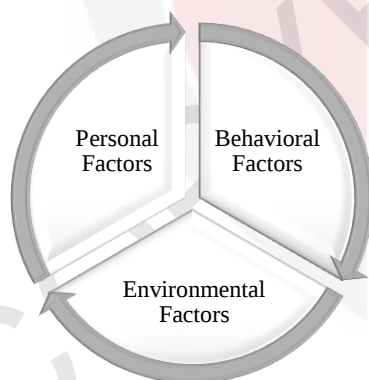


Figure 1.1: Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1971)

1.6.2 Family Stress Theory and ABCX Model of Family Stress and Coping

In early study, Hill (1949) developed the Family Stress Theory which was interested in studying the disruptive effects of separations and reunions among war-torn families during World War II and the Great Depression on family structures in order to explain differences in the family abilities to remain intact and functional when faced with the stresses of social and economic changes. Family stress theory initially explored the dynamic changes that occur in a family system resulting from a stressful event taking place. Concerning that stressful event possibly resulted in a family crisis, Hill constituted that the damaging effect of stressors on family well-being can be alleviated through quality internal or external resources and perception of the event. The key components of this theory were then detailed using the representation of the ABCX Model Family Stress and Coping to analyse the interacting components between stressor events, resources, and perceptions that lead to the possible crisis in a family (Hill, 1958). This model is perceived as a major contribution to understanding the basics of family crisis development which gives rise to his title as the father of family stress theory (Boss et al., 2002; Weber, 2010).

Based on the diagram, the model alluded to pre-crisis variables in which the interaction between variables led to the development of depression among B40 wives of drug addicts in the present study. Initially, **(A)** refers to the stressor a family face (i.e. maternal stress). A drug addict's family is possible to face many other stressors including financial constraints, stigma, and discrimination. In addition, **(B)** is defined by the available resources a family has which consist of human and non-human resources. The available resources assist a family in overcoming stressful family stressors (i.e. social support). Furthermore, **(C)** corresponds to the family's appraisal

towards the stressor and available resources (i.e. coping). It is the perception of the family towards the condition that leads to the behavioural outcome of adjusting to the stressful condition. The interaction between these three components determines the family's success in adapting to the stressful event. As a result, successful adaptation to the family stress brings the family resolution. Contradict, maladaptation to the family stress will instead bring the family to a crisis in which the current study presumed the onset of depression as a resulting crisis (**X**) faced by wives of drug addicts.

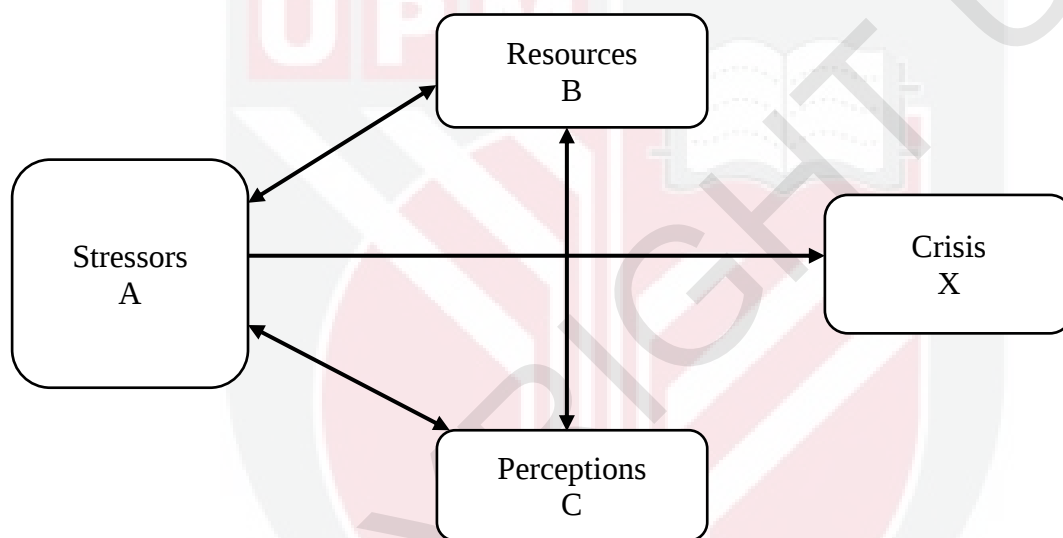


Figure 1.2: ABCX Model of Family Stress and Coping by Hill (1949)

1.6.3 Integration of Theories

The integration of the Social Cognitive Theory and ABCX Model of Family Stress and Coping was illustrated in Figure 1.3. Referring to the figure, the interaction of three components that are stressors, resources, and perception is assumed to lead to a family crisis. Respectively, the reciprocal interaction of personal factors (i.e. maternal stress), environmental factors (i.e. social support), and behavioural factors (i.e. coping)

might determine the success of adaptation or depression of wives of drug addicts in the present study.

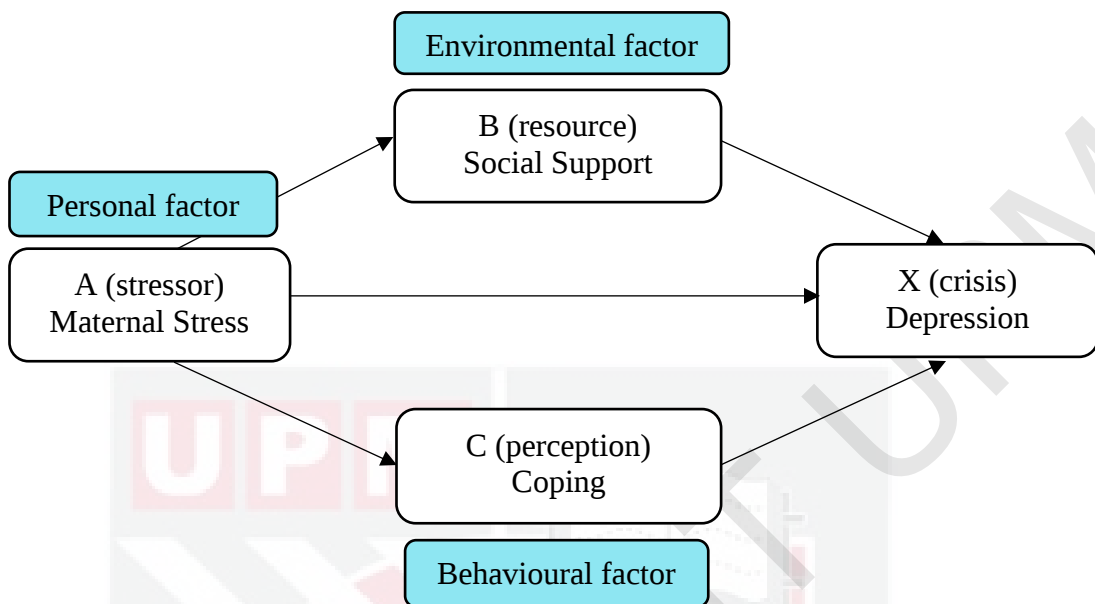


Figure 1.3: Integration of Social Cognitive Theory, Family Stress Theory and ABCX Model of Family Stress and Coping

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was illustrated to represent the associations of the main variables investigated in the present study. The development of the conceptual framework was based on the theories and existing studies characterizing the interrelations of components that are antecedent variable (respondent profile and husband profile), independent variable (maternal stress), mediating variable (social support and coping), and dependent variable (depression). As pictured in Figure 1.4, maternal stress is assumed to be the stressor, while social support and coping were assumed to mediate the effect of the stressor toward the possible crisis which is depression.

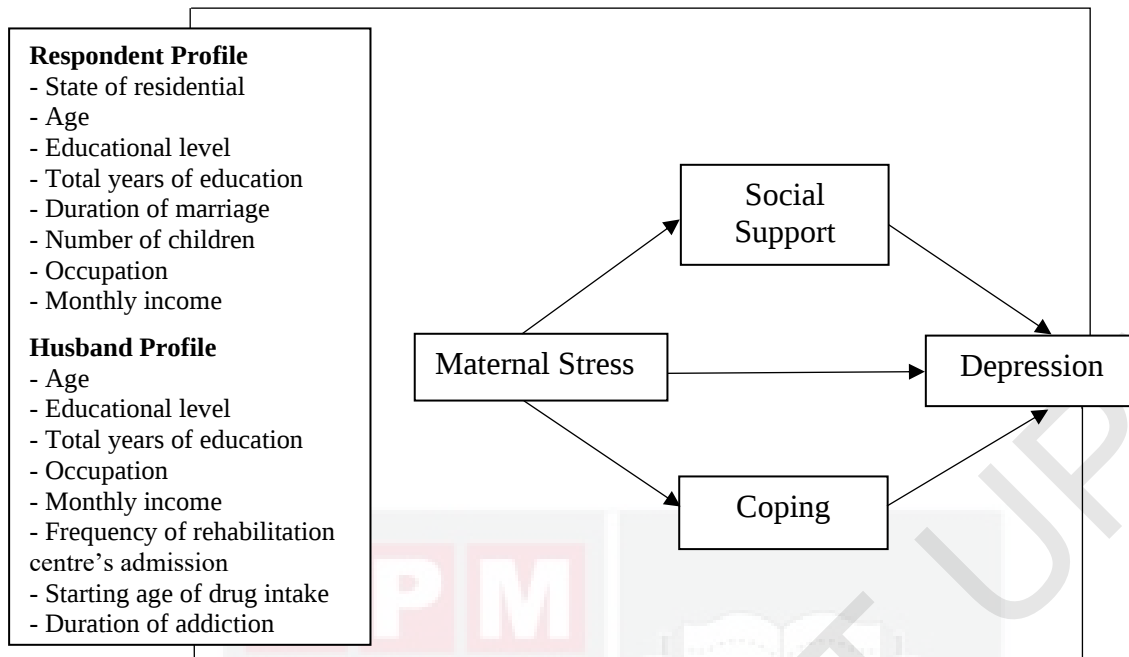


Figure 1.4: Conceptual Framework of “Maternal Stress, Social Support, Coping and Depression among B40 Wives of Drug Addicts in Malaysia”

1.8 Significance of Study

In recent years, the number of people suffering from depression has risen. The consequences create worry within the members of society as much as the nation. Depression is one of the challenges in achieving a holistically healthy individual which leads to individual dysfunction in many aspects such as physical and emotional. Mental illness is ranked as the second highest illness in the country and concerns every level of society. Specifically, most of the mental illness suffer most from depression. Unless fundamental changes are made, Malaysia might face a tremendous health, economic, and social burden as an effect of these ever-rising depression cases.

Scientific evidence is required to discern and verify possible associating factors of depression. Based on the past literature, it is identified that quantitative studies on depression of B40 wives of drug addicts are still scarce, especially in Malaysia. While

few qualitative studies are carried out to explore the stress experiences, economic challenges, marital relationships, and depression among wives of drug addicts, there are limited quantitative approach studies that could contribute to the numerical findings and the association between these variables. Therefore, a quantitative approach study aspired to set forth a broader contribution to the body of knowledge. This distinct methodological approach dispenses opportunities in many aspects: (1) the statistical findings for the target population, (2) cross-sectional findings that focus on the period in which the respondents have to face the absence of their husband during the rehabilitation period, (3) discovering trends of depression of B40 wives of drug addict in the country. Moreover, the quantitative approach offers unique advantages including allowing the researcher to reach a higher sample size of respondents, quicker process of data collection, and recruitment of best-fit participants which assist in maximizing the relevant information to the research context. Even though the generalization of the findings is limited to the studied population, the present study at least has contributed to providing numerical information regarding depression issues among this population.

Depression is a mood disorder that influences the way an individual faces their daily life activity. It acts as a major contributor to the wives' coping skills and adaptation in facing daily life challenges. Thus, it is essential to discover the influence of associating factors such as maternal stress, social support, and coping on the depression of B40 wives of drug addicts. This study is beneficial to the target population itself, family, society, and relevant policymakers for intervention programs. A depressive state incapacitates the targeted population to positively cope and adapt to the stressors of taking over the role of dual parents simultaneously. This indirectly influences the

succession of effective parenting and family activities with the children. Depression among wives of drug addicts should be critically curbed as they are the influential model for the development of their children who are also found susceptible to drug misuse activity (Zimic & Jukic, 2012). Thus, the importance of investigating depression issues in this vulnerable community is accentuated to ensure positive child development thus resulting in positive child outcomes. Additionally, wives of drug addicts who do not experience depression are viewed as more capable of performing their roles as a mother and supporters of their husband's rehabilitation.

Lastly, the findings of the present study served as a reference to future researchers in related fields to encourage deeper exploration regarding the depression of this specific community. The investigation of varieties of associated factors of depression might strengthen the strategies to combat depression thus encouraging a more resilient and healthy community.

1.9 Definition of Terminology

Several key terms used in the study are conceptually and operationally defined based on the context of the current research:

1.9.1 B40 Wives of Drug Addicts

Conceptual definition:

B40 wives of drug addicts refer to wives of drug addicts who earn a monthly income below RM5250. The income threshold is based on the Household Income Survey

Report and Household Expenditure Survey Report as reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022).

Operational Definition:

The wife of a drug addict in the present study refers to the wife of a drug addict who undergoes rehabilitation at the Cure & Care Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) managed by the National Anti-Drugs Agency in Malaysia and earns a monthly income below RM5250.

1.9.2 Maternal Stress

Conceptual definition:

Maternal stress in the present study referred to parental stress experienced by the wife of a drug addict in the study. Conceptually, parental stress is defined as a negative psychological response to parenting demands (Deater-Deckard et al., 2005). Hence, maternal stress refers to a negative psychological response to parenting demands experienced by the mother.

Operational Definition:

Maternal stress of the respondents in this study refers to the respondent's score on the Parental Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Berry and Jones (1995). An increase in the overall score for this scale indicates a higher level of maternal stress experienced by respondents.

1.9.3 Social Support

Conceptual definition:

Social support refers to interpersonal networks and support provided by social institutions that aim to provide well-being to individuals (Costello, Pickens & Fenton, 2001).

Operational Definition:

Social support perceived by respondents was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Malay version (MSPSS-M) (Ng, Nurasikin, Loh, Anne & Zainal, 2012). This scale is comprised of three subscales which are social support from family, friends, and significant others. A higher score indicates higher perceived social support for the subscale respectively.

1.9.4 Coping

Conceptual definition:

Coping refers to "patterns of natural and acquired intake in, handle, and respond to the changing environment in everyday situations and in critical periods that direct behaviour towards survival, growth, reproduction, mastery, and transcendence (Roy et al., 2016).

Operational Definition:

Coping in the present study refers to the respondent's score in the Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale Short Form (CAPS) (Roy et al., 2016), where high scores indicate more consistent use of identified coping strategies.

1.9.5 Depression

Conceptual definition:

Depression is defined as an emotional state in which a person experiences persistent sadness and hopelessness (Madden, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 2000). Severe depression can affect a person's ability to enjoy their life.

Operational Definition:

Depression in the present study refers to the respondent's score on the Zung Self-rated Depression Scale (1965). An increase in the overall score indicates the level of depressive symptoms experienced by the respondents.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter initiated with the study background which shed light on the issues and importance of the study to be conducted, followed by the statement of problems. Afterwards, the chapter described the main purpose of the study and the research questions raised, ensuing the research objectives comprised of general objectives and

specific objectives. Research hypotheses were then described based on the research objective stated. The chapter progressed to explain the theories applied in the study, followed by the theoretical framework and the development of the conceptual framework. Finally, the significance of the study was explained and the definition of terminologies used in the present study was clarified in detail. The next chapter explicates a review of the literature to support the current study.



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