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Illegal Racing Among The Youth: What Exactly Motivate Them?

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**Key Words:** Illegal racing, stress, reward, peers, psychology

#### Introduction

Moving steadily into becoming developing nation with a steady economic growth, will never guarantee for a nation to be in a state conducive enough for everybody to prosper if the social problems keep on threatening the well-being of a nation. From year to year more and more social problems are shaping the nation to becoming alert for their threats. Among the common social problems among the youth that are believed threatening the economic and social well-being of the nation are sex abuse, drug abuse, gangsters, and also illegal racing.

Street racing in Malaysia is illegal. Showing the support through watching a street race is similarly illegal and the Malaysian Police is given the authority to enforce and taken action of any unlawful act associated with illegal racing. From year to year more and more streets, roads, highways and expressways in Kuala Lumpur. Johor Bahru and other cities have become sites for racing. Among the participants are teenagers riding either motorcycles or driving modified cars. The motorcycle street racers in Malaysia are famously known as "Mat Rempit" in Malay Language. These Mat Rempit are famous for their "Superman stunts" and other feats performed on their motorcycles. They are also notorious for their extreme kind of racing in which racers weave in-between moving and

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#### Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the issues of illegal racing that has threatened not only those involved but to the general public as well. Specifically, this study will examine the factors that influence youth to involve in illegal racing. Among the possible factors that seem to be very much related with the study include elements such as stress, attractiveness of reward, role of peers and psychological development among the youths. As this is an exploratory study the focus of the investigation used data that are collected among the youths in the district of Hilir Perak. A sample of 228 guestionnaires was analyzed through convenience sampling for the unknown population among the youth. Only 76 from them were directly involved in illegal racing while the other 152 were not directly involved but knows the development of the activities. The results of the analysis provide a clear reasoning for the involvement in illegal racing. The hypotheses formulated in the study which are symmetrical to those that been discussed by the general public demonstrated to be significantly correlated. Hence, elements such as stress, reward, friends and psychological attachments provide a good explanations and significantly related for youth involvement in illegal racing.

> stationary traffic at high-speed. Taking one of the incidents on July 2006, the Malaysia-Singapore Second Link in Johor became a place of illegal racing. The Johor police and the Road Transport Department, with the highway operator PLUS Expressway, have launched major operations to crack down on illegal racing; More than 600 people have been arrested in these operations.

> In addition to the physical dangers street racing poses to racers and innocent bystanders it also imposed other public nuisance. Speeding reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the roadway, extends the distance necessary to stop a vehicle, and increases the distance a vehicle travels while the driver reacts to a dangerous situation. Like bicvclists and motorists, motorcyclist share the roadway and injury occurs when one of these physical entities make contact with the others (Joseph & Mark, 2008). Realizing the potential threat that illegal racing imposed to the nation, this paper seeks to investigate several possible causes and what needed to be addressed in order to curb the problems. Beginning in a small scale study the investigation decided to conduct the studies in the state of Perak, one of Malaysian Western District. Among the possible variables that were focus in the study include factors that are believed to be prominent involving the act of

illegal racing. Among them were peers role, rewards, stress, and psychological dimension that are believed to be more prominent.

#### Scope of the Study

The study was primarily conducted in the area of Perak. As this is only a small group of the nation, the feeling of the analysis even though may not been able to generalize the wide view of the nation. However to some extent is able to spark the general comment or statement made by many authorities regarding illegal racing in Malaysia. Thus the analysis of associated cultural practices may use any method which may lead to prediction and conformation or disconfirmation (Joao, 2009). Based on the observation of where the activities regularly taken place and considering the meeting places of those who likely participate and others taken the role of watching, the researcher seeks their cooperation to respond to the set of questionnaire. Through this instrument, data were collected, tested and analyzed by using descriptive statistic for the purpose of explaining the relationship.

#### **Problem Statement**

Despite of various efforts taken by the authorities, social problems keep on soaring. Social problem among the youth should be closely monitored as they are the future workforce and some of them could be the future leaders of the nation. Among the social problems that become a great challenge to the nation is the involvement of the youth in the illegal racing. The consequences of their involvement if not seriously addressed will definitely threaten the nation similar to other problems such as drug abuses. gangsters, unacceptable social relationship, and even too much life enjoyment at the expense of been non productive.

The public facilities that are supposed to be the mean for providing economic, social and other positive growth are affecting the engine for the nation prosperity and positive development. Added to the problem much of the effort, funds, and time are wasted into addressing the issue of illegal racing. As more road accidents are occurring, public are exposed to more tension while families of the unfortunate racer are suffering psychological traumas. Despite of various effort taken by the authorities but reported cases of the illegal racing keep on airing the whole nation.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

This paper intends to achieve these following objectives:

- 1. To investigate factors influencing people involved in illegal racing.
- 2. To examine the levels of awareness about the potential problems of illegal racing affecting the nation prosperity.
- 3. To determine which are among the factors that are highly critical towards influencing people involved in illegal racing?

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The focus of our discussion is the involvement of several identifiable groups in the activities of illegal racing. Even groups do not behave, but the behavior of persons in groups has been of interest to behavior analysis. While groups do not behave, the behavior of persons grouped together produces unique results (Joao, 2009). Therefore four independent variables that are stress, rewards, friends and psychological are viewed as the determinants for the factors that influence person involved in illegal racing.

The centre of our discussion therefore evolved in the discussion of the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant relationship between friends and illegal racing involvement among the youth.

H2: There is a significant relationship between rewards illegal racing involvement among the youth.

H3: There is a significant relationship between stress and illegal racing involvement among the youth.

H4: There is a significant relationship between psychological factors and illegal racing involvement among the youth.

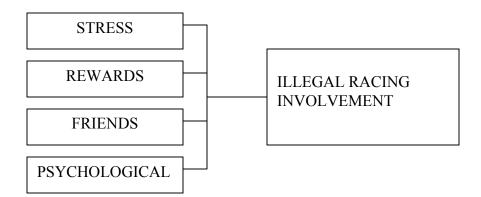


Figure 1.1 Schematic diagrams for the theoretical framework

# Literature Review

Illegal racing involved activities that demand competition in speeding the automotive which at the end of the whole program there will be a winner prohibited by law. As continuously been must be reminded. parents aware of entertainment products that glorify extreme driving and Illegal Street racing including DVDs, home videos, and computer and video games. Speeding is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes. In monitoring the safety of the road users The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in United States for example considers a crash to be speeding-related if the driver was charged with a speeding-related offense or if an officer indicated that racing, driving too fast for conditions or exceeding the posted speed limit was a contributing factor in the crash. As in the United States for example, for the year 2003, speeding was a contributing factor in 31 percent of all fatal crashes, and 13,380 lives were lost in speeding-related crashes (Wikipedia, 2007).

The act of illegal racing demands speeding power which reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the roadway, extends the distance necessary to stop a vehicle, and increases the distance a vehicle travels while the driver reacts to a dangerous situation. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 16 and 20. Nationwide statistics show that 49 people are injured for every 1,000 who participate in illegal street racing. In addition to the physical dangers street racing poses to racers and innocent bystanders, it create unhealthy climate for the road users. For some illegal racers despite of knowing the danger as well as having to face criminal offences which end up with racers face possible arrest and jail time, racers might have their car impounded for 30 days, The police or Department of Motor Vehicles can revoke a racer's driver's license, car insurance may be cancelled or the rates dramatically increased.

For teens, risk taking is common. And sometimes it can be deadly. Despite of loses in life and monetary value, out of an estimation of 3,500 teenagers losing their lives in fatal cars accidents, 39 percent of these deaths are due to speeding. So why do teens insist on street racing? Some say it's the adrenaline rush, to some it is just like power. This entire attitude in fact could be worse than drug as you got some, you want more. You got power; you want more. You never stop. Some teen's race for money, others do it just for pride (Wikipedia Website, 2007).

# Stress

Stress is an internal part of life. It can be a powerful force to produce positive change and enhance productivity (Brewer, 1997). As argued by George and Jones (2002) the state of stress is actually providing individuals with the experience of handling the opportunities or threats that could be perceived as important and also perceive they might not be able to handle or deal with effectively. However when stress cannot be effectively managed until its causes are uncovered, dragged out into the open and deal with in some way then its existence become a tough job that required guts but unless the person concern tackled in a more relaxation technique then only it would be helpful over the long haul (Leatz, 1992)

Stress is derived from Latin word string meaning to draw tight and was used in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to

describe hardship or affiliation. During late 18<sup>th</sup> century, stress denoted "force pressure, strain or strong efforts" referring primarily to an individual or to an individual organs and mental powers (Hinkle, 1973). The term stress first appeared in the index of psychological Abstracts in 1944. Stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being (Lazarus, 1976). Thus draws attention to the processes whereby people appraise their environment stressors.

Stress is any change in the external and or internal environment of a person which disturbs the balance of a person's well being (Khuan, 1985). It can results in illness or distress if there is failure to adapt resulting in breakdown of resistance, beside that, stress also may temporary in which case the sleeping difficulty disappears along with stress. Stress is believed to be the extreme physiological and emotional arousal a person experiences when confronted with a threatening situation (Vecchio, 1987). From the stress occurred among the people, it will influence them to involve in social activities for examples refer to this study, illegal racing.

Stress has been defined as a stimulus a response or the result of an interaction between the two with the interaction described in terms of some imbalance between the person and the environment (Cox, 1978). Inability to put early remedification may not only harmful to the person but will be inflicted into the environment. It is therefore could be useful to understand the insight of stress as to what extent it drive people to go for illegal racing without considering the effect onto the environment. As suggested by Lazarus (1976) an individual stress reaction 'depends on how the person interprets or appraises (consciously or unconsciously) provide a significance harmful threatening or challenging events.

# Reward

Reward can be defined as benefits or gifts that could exist in different types. The strategies of rewarding could be in the form of extrinsic such as money, fringe benefits, and other materialistic gifts or could also be in the form of intrinsic such as recognition, achievement, appreciation, and other form of praises that motivate someone to further perform the desired behavior (Davis & Newstrom, 1985). Having known for their writings on how to use pay or other form of incentives as a means of motivating employees, the usability of each mechanism should be adjusted accordingly to the nature of work and activities. But the key understanding is that reward may influence someone to do something favorable or unfavorable. For example, in this study, reward or any form of payment may influence people to involve in illegal racing. The higher rewards that were offered, higher probability influence people to involve.

The legal concept involving rewards are derived from the law of contracts, thus for any actual or valid offer must be made to create a contract of reward. The act of offering could only be considered a consummated contract only after the requested action is performed. The form of reward in the most general sense denotes anything of value to any individuals that comes as a result of holding high public office (Hood & Peters, 2003) or any position in the society or ability to satisfy the consummated contract. As been reported by mass media other than to seek for enjoyment, the attractiveness of reward to some extend provide the extrinsic pushing factors for the youth to be involved with the illegal racing

#### Peers

The suggested view by Cobb (2001), described someone who goes to our daycare or someone doesn't start fights is called friends. In fact as commonly accepted, the older children talk about friends in terms of qualities held in common and shared interests. Friends or peers are usually of the same age, race and sex. The other characteristic such as person with whom they share activities, experiences and interest who are comfortable to converse with and who are accepting, defense, supporting and understanding (Brown & Cook, 1986).

From the research that done by Chopre (2001) said that meaning of friend is in times of trouble, someone will be there to support us and sometimes they may need to learn on us. They can make joyful time more wonderful and comforting presences in time of crisis ease our pain. Saccuzzo and Ingrom (1993) agreed a friend entertains, listens, advises and supports. They said most people however have a more limited number of very close friends and perhaps a best friend or two. The strength among the racers in term of their relationship were known to exist as they tend to praised each other and

meet regularly at places of their interest. Most of the time many of the racers has mutual preference for interaction, skill at complementary and reciprocal peer play and shared positive affect is called a friend.

As most writers and researchers shared numerous common views about peers or friends it is agreeable to conclude that friend is person who close give supports, make joyful, can share the problem and give advices to us. Regardless of differences in demographic profiles close friends may have strong influences on each other to be involved either in good or bad activities. As related to this study the impact of closeness greatly described their involvement in illegal racing.

# Psychological

When referring to psychological development in relation to someone's behavior, most writers always connect the discipline in relating to, or arising in the mind and various imaginaries that are attached to the individuals (Hawkins & Allen, 1991). The study of psychology and its development not only limited to the study of humankind but it is intended it to include the understanding of other animal as well. In a more simple understanding the term psychology is defined as the scientific study of behavior in a complex manner both animals and humans. It is through psychological discipline the scientific use of behavioral and other evidence that led to the understanding of the internal processes leading people and members of other species to behave in the ways they do (Eysenck, 2000). In getting more insight about an individual mental process such as thought and feeling, all observation must be inferred from directly observable responses (Passer & Smith 2003). As such the involvement of unhealthy activities like illegal racing should be inferred and closely monitored with the intention of making it more meaningful towards managing social development in the nation.

In recent years, with the trend of increasing social-psychological problems such as child abuse, addiction, suicides, violence's (Zafar et al., 2005), drug abuses, gangsters, and illegal racing requires the involvement of psychologists that could understand the root of the problems.

No one should underestimate the strategic role of psychologists in providing solutions and treatments to problems that keep on changing the traditional lifestyle of the community. It is therefore critical to most individuals or groups to review social learning theory that has always greatly concerned on modeling which plays an important part in both learning and performance particularly in aggressive behavior (Bandura, 1973) beside providing a strong basis for shaping the desired behavior.

It is undeniable that the highest rates of aggressive behavior are found in environments where aggressive models are regarded as a highly valued attribute by the groups. Thus it is evidence that criminals normally fails to become adequately socialized (Eysenck, 1977). In fact based on the theory of criminal personality most of these groups tend to score above average on measures of extraversion, neuroticism, and psychotics. The fact that most nation statistic accurately reflect the level of the unhealthy activities throughout the world were as the result of 'self-image promoter' that actually uses violence to demonstrate toughness and status, and at the same time inviting conflict in order to defend their position (Toch, 1969) and their status-quo.

# Methodology

In ensuring the validity of the measurement, questions were divided into six main sections using a set of nominal scaled questions and five point Likert scaled. In getting a reasonably adequate sample 228 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents which are the public peoples in Hilir Perak. For the Section A of the questionnaire seeks for information concerning the demographic profile of the respondents while in section B, C, D, E and F that used Likert Scale aimed to investigate information related to stress, reward, friends, psychology and illegal racing. This investigation adopted the personally administered questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents that covers the public peoples in selected area at Hilir Perak.

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Profile (n=228)	Frequency	Percent (%)	
Gender			
Male	140	61.4	
Female	88	38.6	
Age			
15-20 years old	108	47.4	
21-25 years old	81	35.5	
26-30 years old	17	7.5	
31-40 years old	22	9.6	
Marital Status			
	170	79 5	
Single	179	78.5	
Married	43	18.9	
Divorce	6	2.6	
Educational Level			
PMR/SRP (Low Certificate Edu.)	52	24.1	
SPM (Malaysian Certificate Edu.)	102	44.7	
STPM (Upper Malaysian Cert. Edu.)	20	8.8	
Diploma	26	11.4	
Degree	21	9.2	
Others	4	1.8	
Job Level			
Student	117	51.3	
Jobless	35	15.4	
Work by own	19	8.3	
Government Sector	25	11	
Private Sector	32	11	
Thvate Sector	52	14	
Home			
Village	91	39.9	
Town	67	29.4	
City	70	30.7	
Involve in Illegal Racing			
Yes	76	33.3	
No	152	66.7	
Frequency of Involve in illegal racing	154	(75	
Never	154	67.5	
1-3 times	13	5.7	
4-6 times	12	5.3	
7-10 times	11	4.8	
More than 10 times	38	16.7	

#### **Study Findings**

All variables in this study are reliable and acceptable with the Cronbach alpha value falls above 0.7 (Hair et. al, 2003).

Table 1 provides an exploration of the sample for our investigation. Most of the respondents were from the male group with 61% representing the

sample while 39% of the female group participated in our study. As been reflected in most literature 79% of the respondents were single. Reviewing on the age's profile, 47% of respondents were in the ages of 15-20 years old, 44% were between 21-30 years old, 10% were the age of 31-40 years old. In terms of educational level, 44%, of the respondents had received their education at SPM level. Looking at the status of employment among the respondent, the largest group were represented by students (51.3%), followed by jobless (15.4%), those working in the private sector (14%), those at the public sector (11%), and the rest were working on their own. As to the identification of involvement in illegal racing, our survey was able to get 33% among those involving in the illegal racing while 67% of the respondent had not been involved in the racing activities. Getting more information of those involved our finding indicated that 17% of respondents involved in illegal racing more than 10 times, followed by 6% represent 1-3 times, 5% represent 4-6 times and 5% represents 7-10 times.

# Correlation Analysis: Testing the relationship of the selected concept

It is our main interest of this paper to investigate the relationship between issues that had been debated as to what extent they are very much related towards inspiring the youth to be involved in illegal racing. The table 2 below demonstrated the finding generated from our survey.

The analysis on the concept of stress and to what extent it could be linked with the involvement of illegal racing demonstrated that the relationship is moderately high as indicated by the P-value of 0.580. Looking further on the concept concerning psychology as one of the determinants in fact indicated a much stronger relationship with the involvement of illegal racing at the P-value of 0.678. It is not surprising with what had been viewed by the general public about the role of friends and the incentive given act as the primary determinant that provide courage for the youth to be involved in illegal racing. Our correlation for this sample displayed that both friends and rewards act as the main determinants with the p-value of 0.751 and 0.782 respectively.

In the earlier part of this paper we seek to prove that all the 4 (four) identifiable variables were among the common factors believed to influence the youth to be closer and involved with illegal racing. Again based on the testing done through our correlation all the factors were significantly associated with the involvement of the youth in the illegal racing (significant p-value of 0.000; 0.000; 0.000; 0.000). So, this result indicates that all the hypotheses formulated earlier were fully substantiated.

Further analysis was conducted to investigate the strength and ability of the selected concept towards explaining the involvement of illegal racing through multiple regressions. From analysis, the R-square  $(R^2)$  value of 69.6% explained that there was a relationship between all the four independent variable with the involvement of the youth in illegal racing. Whereas the remaining of 30.4% could be explained by other factors which were not investigated in the study. Reviewing further on the strength of relationship our study further supported the significant value of the independent and dependent variable with the pvalue of 0.00 and their F-value is 127.744.

Out of those variables, the dimensions concerning reward have the strongest influence with the highest Beta score of 0.463, t-value of 8.124 and significant value of 0.00. The next important variables, concerned on the dimensions of friends with the Beta score of 0.292, the t-value of 4.338 and at the significant value of 0.00. While the least related factor which is stress indicated the Beta score is 0.159. t-value of 3.395 at the significant value of 0.001. However, among the four concepts investigated, the analysis demonstrated that the psychological factor does not have strong impact on the illegal racing. This is indicated by Table 1 where the Beta score is 0.033 which the t-value is 0.523 and it is not significantly associated at the significant value of 0.602.

# **Discussion and Conclusion**

In this research, the hypotheses were initially tested by using the correlation coefficient to determine its significant level. From the analysis, the results indicated that all the four independent variables in the hypotheses were found to be significant at the 0.01 level of significant (2 tailed).

Confidations									
		meanstress	meanrewards	meanfriends	meanpsy chology	meanilleg alracing			
meanstress	Pearson Correlation	1	.504**	.575**	.582**	.580*			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000			
	Ν	228	228	228	228	228			
meanrewards	Pearson Correlation	.504**	1	.737**	.695**	.782			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000			
	Ν	228	228	228	228	228			
meanfriends	Pearson Correlation	.575**	.737**	1	.788**	.751'			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000			
	Ν	228	228	228	228	228			
meanpsychology	Pearson Correlation	.582**	.695**	.788**	1	.678			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000			
	Ν	228	228	228	228	228			
meanillegalracing	Pearson Correlation	.580**	.782**	.751**	.678**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000				
	Ν	228	228	228	228	228			

#### Table 2: Correlation on factors that influence people involved in illegal racing

Correlations

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### **Table 3: Regression Result**

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.670	.151		4.432	.000
	meanstress	.153	.045	.159	3.395	.001
	meanrewards	.400	.049	.463	8.124	.000
	meanfriends	.301	.069	.292	4.338	.000
	meanpsychology	.033	.064	.033	.523	.602

#### **Coefficient**®

a. Dependent Variable: meanillegalracing

In order to substantiate the hypotheses testing, the multiple regression analysis was further analyzed. Through both analytical procedures the investigation therefore confirms that the research model measured by the concepts including stress, rewards, peer groups, and psychology values is good enough to explain its association between all the independent and dependent variables. This result with the R- square  $(R^2)$ value of the model indicates 69.6% of the variations explained the association. The remaining 30.4% cannot be explained and needed further exploration in terms of other concepts which were not included in the study such as factors related to education, social setting, and religious values.

However, among the four variables that have being investigated, researchers indicate that psychological factor does not have strong impact on the illegal racing as displayed by the low Beta score of 0.033 with the critical value of 0.602 which is not significant. This is because, the other three independents variables such stress, rewards and friends' factors have strong influences to the illegal racing.

The phenomenon of stress exists in every individual. Its development could be useful only if it is constructively managed. The impact of constructive stress may not only stabilizing the physiology and psychological system of the individuals but also able to promote productivity and economic as well as social well-being of the whole society. It is therefore useful for the youth and parents to be fully aware the sources of stress and confidently sure about the appropriate techniques of managing stress. Getting involved in healthy social activities, attending workshop, participating in well-planned program may provide useful avenues in reducing stress and thus eliminating unhealthy activities such as illegal racing.

The role of rewards in motivation should always be carefully managed. The difference to its degree of attractiveness among each individual should be made understandable through the act of compromising and collaborating. Using rewards in discouraging the act of illegal racing should be initiated consistently rather than rewarding them for the illegal act done. It seems that much of the activities concerning illegal racing were illegally rewarded. Those who have been rewarded were psychologically motivated even though knowing they are against the norms of the society. Changing the mind-set of these groups may not be that easy but with the concerted efforts of various parties the ultimate goal of avoiding the significant relationship between reward and the act of illegal racing will be materialized.

The need to widen the concept of peers or friendship among the youth should be further explored. Narrowing the concept within the small circle despite of having closed membership and create "esprit de corps" led to the generation of immature ideas, planning, organizing, and strategies which may be acceptable to the small group but negatively affected the large society. Effort done by the police such as "Rakan Cop", sport activities and get together by the youth movement, extra-curriculum activities at school and colleges, to some extent very much contributing in widening the concept of peers. What is important here is to include more positive and interesting values that could develop the cohesiveness of the group members.

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