BOOK REVIEWS

Psychoactive drug abuse in Hong Kong: Life satisfaction and drug use, by Yuet Wah Cheung and Nicole Wai-ting Cheung, Singapore, Springer, 2018, ix + 123 pp., €84.99 ISSN 2211-0550 / ISSN 2211-0569 (electronic) / € 71.39 ISBN 978-981-10-6154-7 (eBook)

This book presents the result of a comprehensive analysis of data from a three-year study (2009 to 2012) among young individuals in Hong Kong who use psychoactive drugs. At the helm of the volume is Professor Yuet-Wah Cheung, former faculty and Chair in the Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (until July 2016), and currently Distinguished Professor and Academic Head in the Department of Sociology of Hong Kong Shue Yan University (since September 2016). Professor Cheung has managed grants and published work in the areas of crime and deviance, drug abuse and drug policy, medical sociology, and ethnic relations. Co-authoring the book is Dr. Nicole Wai-ting Cheung, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, who has worked in the areas of the sociology of deviance, and the sociology of youth and addiction. Notably, both authors worked a decade earlier on a longitudinal study on drug use in Hong Kong (Cheung, Yuet Wah. A Brighter Side: Protective and Risk Factors in the Rehabilitation of Chronic Drug Abusers in Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009).

Drawing on data collected through interviews conducted at six-month intervals from a sample derived from 36 participating outreach and treatment and rehabilitation centers for the *Longitudinal Survey of Psychoactive Drug Abusers in Hong Kong* (LSPDA), the authors examined the social, demographic and psychological correlates of psychoactive drug use among

youth in Hong Kong. Resulting panel data was analyzed using random-effects probit regression analysis. Principal findings of the study indicate that psychosocial variables were better predictors of drug use more than sociodemographic factors. Specifically, the authors found that a permissive attitude towards drug use, as well as prior usage were strongly linked to current psychoactive drug use. On the other hand, life satisfaction reduced likelihood of drug use. The authors stress, however, that the effects of these psychosocial variables were primarily within the short-term period.

Given the breadth of coverage, the book is organized into five main sections. Chapter 1 offers the reader a brief historical perspective on drug use in Hong Kong, in particular the transition in terms of drug choice (i.e., from heroin to psychoactive drugs, in particular ketamine), as well as an insight on drug use among the young population from the 1950s to the decade of 2010. This first section sets the context for the conduct of the longitudinal study. Chapter 2 elaborates on the study methodology, outlining the approach used over the three-year period of data collection, the variables of interest that were elicited during interviews, selection of study participants, and the choice of analytic technique. The third section, spanning Chapters 3 to 5, presents the study results. Comparison of each category of the independent variable with respect to the dependent variable through bivariate analysis is presented in Chapter 3, while Chapter 4 takes on a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between gender and psychosocial variables. Chapter 5, on the other hand, examines the role of two psychosocial variables (life satisfaction and depression, collectively taken to mean subjective well-being) in terms of drug rehabilitation. In Chapter 6, the authors tie up the book by providing a summary of the study and its main findings, and offering insight into what these may mean for readers. Areas for future research (posed as

questions) as well as study limitations are also provided in this section. The final section consists of two appendices: the first provides further information on the study sample across the six interview waves, while the second tabulates the results of analyses of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable stratified by gender.

The book balances rigor with an accessible presentation style given its intended audience. For example, tables showing results of statistical analyses (which may be of greater interest to academic readers) are accompanied by text that explains what these mean in a comprehensible language. The section on results (Chapters 3 to 5) also incorporate at the end of each chapter a discussion of what the findings mean. The principal findings are recapitulated towards the end of the book before implications for research, practice and policy are presented.

Researchers working in the same discipline may also find the book helpful in designing their own projects. In addition to devoting one entire chapter to the study methodology (Chapter 2), the authors also explain the underpinning of some methodological choices, point out aspects of measurement and design that can be improved, and offer a list of related points of inquiry that other scholars may wish to pursue.

Overall, the book is a welcome reference for researchers in the discipline, practitioners working with the youth, and policymakers who are keen on developing interventions to curb drug use especially among the young.

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