

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG ALGERIAN YOUTH: EXPLORING THE CITY OF MAGHНИЯ.

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Abstract: *The issue of preventing the consequences of falling into the danger of abuse has become an urgent necessity, and a task entrusted to all social institutions without exception, to ensure the stability of society, through concerted efforts, awareness, sensitization, and adherence to religion and the value system. In this context, this study came to know the Algerian youth's representations of the phenomenon of drug abuse, through a field study that touched on a segment of the youth of the city of Maghnia, relying on observation and interview techniques. The results concluded that drug abuse is considered one of the aspects of deviant behaviour and a violation of the value and legal system of society. Customs, traditions, values and laws. Among the factors that have increased the severity of this phenomenon is the decline in the authority of social control at the level of several institutions, and the ease of obtaining this drug, which explains its large spread in society.*

Keywords: Drugs, abuse, addiction, youth, representations.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of drug abuse has become a global phenomenon that is not limited to a specific society only, and is no longer a social problem, but rather an economic, psychological, physical, and even moral problem, "Due to its highly varied nature in different sociocultural contexts, drug abuse may be seen as normative, marginal, deviant or criminal behaviour." (UNDCP, 1996: 43)

Treating the problem requires searching for its causes, especially since it has begun to affect an important segment of society, namely the youth and adolescents, and even the group Feminism: Relying on these psychotropic substances has become a danger that threatens societies to the point of being used as a hidden weapon between countries targeting this important group in society to break their effectiveness, activity, and strength and paralyze their movement in society.

This phenomenon has become something close to what is normal after it was limited to certain groups and carried out in a very secretive manner, and thus it has taken a different path in recent years, in light of the increase in crime rates, as many international organizations and governments have called for combating this scourge, through policies and laws. (Travis, Western and Redburn, 2014; UNODC, 2023; UNODC, 2021)

To put an end to it, or prevent it. In this context, we pose the following question: What is the nature of Algerian youth's representations of drug use?

2. Research objectives and method

The study aimed to seriously research and innovate the issue of drugs, in parallel with recent developments. We conducted a field investigation in two areas in the city of Maghnia, each area in which we observed approximately four sessions, as follows:

The first area was "Messali Al Haj Street" - Al-Hamri - in an area located in front of the football field. The study was conducted through observation and interviews with members of that street, and our sample in that place consisted of 15 males and females.

As for the second area, it was the Maghnia University Center, two different places in terms of the degree of awareness. We relied on observation and interview techniques to collect scientific material, and on the descriptive and analytical method to diagnose this phenomenon.

3. Research topics

- Drug abuse and addiction: the factors that push an individual to abuse drugs, the social characteristics of addicted individuals, and the extent of the drug's effect on humans.
- Society's view of drug users: the quality of life of the user, the causes and factors of abuse, the view towards the person who uses drugs, the characteristics of the user.
- Drug abuse and crime: The relationship between drugs and committing crimes, the extent to which drug abuse contributes to violence.
- Drug abuse and mechanisms to combat it.

4. Results

4.1. Characteristics of the abuser

According to the respondents, a person who uses drugs is characterized by a set of characteristics or behaviours. That is, the individual who uses drugs has a relationship with other individuals who use drugs, and the successive relationship with the world of abuse. Among these descriptions are, irritability, suffering from a frequent runny nose, trembling, and a constant cough.

All of these symptoms appear to be symptoms. Influenza or a cold may also be accompanied by other symptoms, such as fatigue and a constant feeling of fatigue, or the presence of other health problems, such as redness of the eyes, frequent tears, and a feeling of sleepiness. Drug users can also be identified by the appearance of signs of injection use in the arms, weight loss, sleep disturbances, and lack of interest in personal hygiene and general appearance.

Distinguishing between some of the sensory-behavioural symptoms of the person using it, such as changing many of the values that the person believed in before using it, frequent protests against some of the foundations and rules on which the family, family system, or other things are based, increased controversy and discussion with other individuals, entering the world of illusions, isolation, and introversion. Frequent forgetting and lying to justify actions and other characteristics.

However, these characteristics cannot always be characterized by the person who is a drug user, as he cannot truly be known by mere observation at times. The sample also focused on the psychological aspect of the user, which is: anxiety, depression, weak self-confidence, inferiority, weak faith, and the tendency to sleep a lot through the use of hypnotic or sedative substances.

4.2. Society's view of the drug user

Some view the person who uses drugs as a threat to society and causes material and human losses, to the point of describing him as a deviant and criminal person, while others view the drug user with sympathy and compassion and consider him a victim of living conditions, and help and assistance must be provided to him.

The research sample also saw drug users as two categories: one that must be deterred and is considered a danger to society and its institutions, through abuse, promotion and trafficking. As for the second category, the user may be a victim, so to speak. He may fall under the pressure of friends, or head towards the world of drug use out of curiosity and exploration.

The sample members also focused on the psychological aspect of the person who abuses, as people who abuse differ among themselves. There are those who suffer from a lack of awareness and family and neighbourly guidance... and there are those who suffer from weak religious conscience.

4.3. Drug abuse and its relationship to violence and crime

The sample viewed the drug user as a deviant person who may sometimes assume the personality of a criminal. He is a person hostile to society and its institutions, as he can practice coercion, violence, and even crime against others if he needs money. Over time, he becomes an aggressive person through abuse, and practices various types of violence on others, especially domestic violence, as most behavioural disorders occur in the family sphere. He also becomes impatient, and can even hate himself as a result of what he has become, psychological violence that he practices on himself, such as neglect, deprivation, isolation, and abandonment. The reality shows that many violent crimes are attributed to drug users.

It can be asserted, therefore, that there is a relationship between drug abuse and the commission of various types of violence and crimes, as the person who uses drugs is considered a deviant person, who practices various types of violence, and commits various crimes when he needs money. Abuse leads the person to violence and from there to crime. One of the most famous attempts in this regard is research conducted in Baltimore, United States of America, on a sample of 354 heroin addicts, consisting of 195 black people and 159 white people. 243 people were questioned from among the sample, and among the results: an increase in the rates of crimes that they committed almost daily when they started. Their addiction to heroin, the rise was associated with addiction, and the decline was associated with quitting abuse. (Ballet et al. 1983).

4.4. Drugs between abuse and addiction

***Motives for taking:**

Some samples believe that drug abuse is caused by the weak religious conscience of the users and their sitting with bad companions and invalid company, as well as the feeling of emptiness, the love of imitating others and staying up late outside the home, not adhering to and not adhering to the teachings of the Islamic religion in terms of following its commands and avoiding its prohibitions. All of this leads them to deviance. And corruption.

This is what most social and psychological studies have tended to, stating that sitting with bad friends and the desire to experiment is the most important factor and incentive that pushes individuals to use, and one of the most important factors influencing the behaviour of adolescents and young adults in the United States at the present time is the influence of peer groups. The company of others who use marijuana creates... person to use it, and the presence of friends who use marijuana provides the curious person with a favourable social opportunity (National commission, 1927: 43)

Abuse is also caused by hasty decision-making, a lot of psychological pressures and problems, and a feeling of alienation within the family and society, and thus their desire to escape reality and resort to drugs as a refuge.

While some of the respondents had another view, which is that drug abuse is caused by the disappearance of family ties and weak family communication, which makes him enter the world of drug abuse little by little, until he becomes addicted to it, and thus drug abuse is a desire to fill his voids. One of the important results that Hunt D.G. concluded in this regard is that if the relationship between parents and children is dominated by abandonment or disintegration, the likelihood of children engaging in abuse increases, and if it is dominated by authoritarianism on the part of the fathers, abuse by children is average, and if it is democratic, abuse is weak. (Hunt, 1975)

On the other hand, a good economic level may be one of the reasons for abuse, as it prompts the individual to buy the most expensive drugs, and pushes him to love curiosity and experimentation.

The uneducated and unaware group can also be considered one of the groups most inclined toward abuse, due to their ignorance of the issues resulting from this act, and thus they resort to it as a means of confronting and solving problems.

On the other hand, drug abuse by a family member is considered one of the most important factors that contribute to the individual's abuse, to the point that some members of the same family sometimes share in drug use.

***Drug addiction:**

It was noted that most of the samples saw frequent and continuous drug use that would lead them to addiction in the long run, especially in the absence of internal or external oversight and in the absence of awareness, sensitization, advice and guidance.

The comfort and momentary euphoria provided by drug use leads to addiction. This state that the user reaches leads him to obtain it by any means, and to increase the dose of drugs consumed, including cases in which the body becomes addicted to some components of medical drugs, which requires control of such psychoactive substances. Among the disorders that Arab medicine treats in India with opium are insomnia, nervous excitability, and diarrhea. Among the properties mentioned for opium are that it is a sedative and a pain reliever. This type of medicine is still practiced in India as part of folk medicine. (Lowinger, 1973)

While others believe that addiction is caused by a lack of control over doses, especially if they try many types of drugs and it is no longer enough for them, so they resort to more, which may even lead to death.

4.5. Suggestions and solutions:

There is a sample of respondents who believe that the most important preventive strategies that help to get out of the world of addiction are to provide a helping hand to the addict, support, and encouragement to overcome this crisis, that is, treatment instead of punishment, since the addict is a patient who must be treated.

While others see that enacting strict laws, intensifying efforts, and not remaining silent are one of the solutions to reduce and eliminate this phenomenon.

While others suggested other solutions, such as the role of the mosque as an educational and upbringing institution in prevention, awareness, information, and sensitization of such afflictions, and their impact on the individual, his behaviour, and his psychology.

Preventing this scourge is also linked to the role of various media outlets, including awareness-raising and awareness programmes, and their influence on directing public opinion.

5. Conclusions

The process of detecting an individual's drug abuse is an important step towards treatment, and knowing all aspects of the problem psychologically, socially, health-wise, economically... in order to avoid its various effects.

The problem of drug abuse has become widespread, threatening the security and stability of peoples, especially as it transforms individuals from users to addicts. Psychological disorders appear in the abuser that may create aggression towards others, and may sometimes reach the level of mental illness or may push him to commit suicide. In response to his motives, needs, and desires, he either succeeds in achieving them, or fails in achieving them, and his conflicts begin with himself and with others, and thus different and hostile behaviours appear.

For the individual and society in general, drug abuse is one of the aspects of deviant behaviour and a violation of the moral and legal system of customs, traditions, values and laws... abuse damages the health, psychological, social, economic and mental aspects, and among the factors that increased the severity of this phenomenon is the decline in the authority of social control at several levels. institutions, and the ease of obtaining this drug, which explains its large spread in society.

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