

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Addiction in Educational Institutions and Its Relationship with School Dropout

Dr. Messedaa Sabrina

University of Mohamed Bacheir El Ibrahimi, **Bordj Bou Arreridj, Algeria**

Email : sabrina.messedaa@univ-bba.dz

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between drug addiction and school dropout among adolescents, highlighting the bidirectional and interrelated nature of these phenomena. Drug use in schools negatively affects students' concentration, academic performance, and attendance, increasing the risk of early dropout. Conversely, school dropout exacerbates vulnerability to substance abuse due to limited opportunities and support networks. The study analyzes the social, familial, and cultural factors contributing to both addiction and dropout, including peer pressure, family problems, low self-esteem, and poverty. It also discusses the potential of schools as protective environments through preventive programs, social-emotional skill development, psychological support, and collaboration with families and health services. The article emphasizes that addressing addiction and school dropout requires coordinated public policies, investment in education, and fostering holistic adolescent

well-being to strengthen the cultural and social foundations of society.

Key words: Drug addiction, School dropout, Adolescents, Preventive education, Social and emotional support, Cultural factors, Public policy

Introduction

Drug use among adolescents represents a serious threat that impedes their personal, social, and academic development. The school, as a primary place of education, is directly affected by this phenomenon, as the use of psychoactive substances reduces concentration, academic performance, and regular attendance. Many students who use drugs are more prone to academic failure, destructive behaviors, and, in extreme cases, early dropout from the educational system. At the same time, school dropout increases exposure to drug use, as it limits opportunities and support networks. Factors such as peer pressure, family problems, low self-esteem, or impoverished environments exacerbate this

condition. However, the school can also be a protective environment if it implements preventive programs based on social and emotional skills, scientific information, and psychological support, in collaboration with teachers and families. The role of health services should also be noted, as they are key to detecting early signs and timely intervention. Ultimately, preventing substance use not only promotes youth health but also improves their educational and professional futures. Therefore, public policies should prioritize integrating addiction prevention into school curricula.

School dropout and drug addiction represent two of the greatest challenges facing education and public health systems in the contemporary world, especially among adolescents. These phenomena are not only interconnected but also reinforce each other: early use of psychoactive substances increases the risk of dropping out, while a lack of connection with school may facilitate the onset of consumption. Interconnected and overlapping factors that may already lead to high dropout rates reveal the seriousness of this problem for society, as they reflect family, educational, and cultural dimensions (Ali Qahwan, 2011, p. 24). In this article, we attempt to analyze the causes, consequences, and potential intervention strategies to address this dual problem.

1. Defining Concepts and Terms

School Dropout:

School dropout (Spanish, 2020) is defined as the permanent cessation of schooling before obtaining the compulsory secondary education certificate. On the other hand, drug addiction is a chronic brain disorder characterized by compulsive substance seeking and use despite its negative consequences. Al-Hajj Ali Houaria notes that some researchers define a dropout student as one who enrolled in school, regularly attended, then left at an early age, being deprived of the right to education and continued study (Al-Hajj Ali, 2019).

Many studies have shown that adolescents who use drugs are up to three times more likely to drop out of school compared to their non-using peers. Dr. Mohamed Qasim Ali Qahwan considers student dropout a serious problem affecting most education systems in developing societies, a cause of educational wastage, a heavy burden on state resources, and an obstacle to literacy efforts (Ali Qahwan, 2011, p. 15).

Addiction Concept:

Addiction is a pathological condition of psychological and physical dependence on a drug due to repeated use, with an urgent desire to obtain it by any means. This drug affects metabolism in various human cells, especially sensory centers in the brain, which become dependent on its presence (Zubdi, 2009). Fathi Dardar defines it as the repeated use of natural, synthetic, or psychoactive substances, leading to dependence, meaning difficulty in cessation, with the body periodically needing higher

doses, so the addict's life becomes controlled by the substance. Withdrawal symptoms appear if use stops (Dardar, 2005, p. 8). Researcher Abdelhadi Misbah defines addiction as potentially occurring without any physical dependence phenomena. It is the compulsive use to obtain and store the substance, inability to stop, and returning to it if attempts are made (Misbah, 2004, p. 33).

2. From Dropouts: Countless Social and Psychological Problems

Speaking about the reality of school dropouts provides the most significant evidence to dissect and analyze the phenomenon and its societal impact. Many experts seek to examine the trajectories of change occurring in the implicit relationship between societal contributions and the observed rise in drug addiction and trafficking, and its effects on students, families, society, and the national economy. Media reports and television channels represent important expression points discussing the transformations in Algeria's educational system, which have led to adaptation problems to contemporary life. Therefore, it cannot be said that this is a superficial or transient phenomenon. Rather, it concerns addicted students who, even if they attempt to stop, quickly return to use, or switch to stronger substances or narcotics. The destructive effects of addiction begin to appear on these students, marking the start of losses in relationships with peers, colleagues, and anyone who interacts with them (Misbah,

2004, p. 30). This disruption in relationships is the first manifestation of school dropout.

If we discuss deviant criminal behavior, composed of violent criminal acts by these groups, it is evident that all criminal behavior arises from previous deviant experience, leading us to assert that the psychological makeup of academically dropout students is maladjusted to the external environment (Al-Warikate, 2008, p. 2003). Thus, this necessarily reflects a disorder in social relationships, their management, and respect by individuals and social groups within an environment shaped by factors of gathering, history, and operational norms in treatment and communication.

Addicted and dropout students commit these acts provocatively with the aim of criminal confrontation, characterized by vigilance, desire to inflict harm, and deliberate criminal behavior. This undermines societal values, diminishes respect, erodes moral and civil ethics, and violates social coexistence rules. The weakening of social relationships is often due to the lack of solidarity that should contribute to future orientations as the primary driver of human development plans in all aspects (Mohamed Wafa, 2016, p. 30). This weakness is further exploited by drug criminals to extort other students and impose criminal reasoning as coercive law in the streets, seeking to convince street visitors of a symbolic authority represented by these deviant dropouts.

Hence, no deviant social behavior occurs without continuous disturbances growing unchecked, without understanding their limits or effects on the moral and social value system. This includes the absence of competency among main societal actors to establish compensatory ethical systems or behavioral substitutes to correct deviance, develop school management staff, update curricula, use educational tools, activities, and facilities, and improve teaching methods (Ali Qahwan, 2011, p. 41). Each deviant behavior feeds on the dropout state and societal obsession, weakening social relationships and their regulatory dynamism.

3. School Dropout and Addiction: Keys to Understanding and Classifying Recidivists

There are complex issues related to the social lives of recidivists involved in drug crimes, who often form concentrated centers of criminal activity in specific areas, practicing similar criminal logic in assault and daily life regulation violations. This has turned them into organized gangs that recognize each other, define their operational boundaries, and divide targeted areas' spoils under strict supervision. Justice Ministry measures for prison conditions reform helped them organize, cooperate, and interact with elements outside or on the run. They have even reached the point of insulting and threatening prison officers, daring verbal assaults during night patrols. Therefore, any academic or scientific planning to curb crime and monitor gang activity, and

the roles of recidivists, must build analytical indicators tracking their biographies inside and outside prison. This is particularly critical for those disconnected from their families and unwilling to live a normal social life.

Psychoanalytic theory explains addiction as caused by disturbances in early childhood, not exceeding three or four years, including early emotional relationships with parents that feature dual emotions—love and hatred simultaneously. This dual relationship transfers to drugs, which become symbolic of the original object of love, representing danger and affection together. The behavior of addicts corresponds to a stage adjacent to that of obsessive and depressive patients, namely the late oral stage (Zubdi, 2009, pp. 234–235). These recidivist dropouts have incorporated prison life into neighborhood social life, indicating the seriousness of their presence in prisons. The Farouk Constantine Committee, investigating prisons in 2007, noted that this group refuses to engage in proposed vocational integration programs and shows disregard for the project from the outset.

It later became apparent, for example, that the criminal gangs operating in popular neighborhoods are composed of recidivists and school dropouts, and this phenomenon, in turn, continues to expand and spread. In this context, we see that many judicial and security systems focus on the biographies of recidivists in order to contain criminal boundaries through them. In some U.S. states, a person who has been

convicted three times for the same type of crime is subjected to continuous electronic monitoring and is required to report to the security office overseeing their residential area or movements. Recidivists in crimes of a different type, not classified as serious offenses, are required to undergo continuous administrative monitoring, which in all cases helps reduce criminal hotspots and their professional networks.

4. The Collapse of the Cultural Reference Structure of Society Behind the Phenomenon of School Dropout:

When we refer to the findings of researcher Al-Hajj Ali Houaria, especially those of Mustafa Khiati, head of the National Observatory for Child Protection, noting that Algeria records more than 200,000 cases of school dropout annually (Al-Hajj Ali, 2019, p. 188), we are led to confirm the necessary connection with a state of multifaceted disintegration at the levels of thought, perception, and collective behavior. In this case, these levels are disregarded by active individuals or by institutions related to the existence and functioning of this structure, including ensuring the connection of dynamic components to mechanisms of immunity and protection. This removes from this current the protective cohesion that had been formed over decades of accumulated experience, competencies, and skills, particularly in terms of innovations and creativity contributed by

actors with the ability, skill, and resources to do so.

In light of this, the school is the educational institution in which the past is blended with the present to anticipate the future. It is characterized as a laboratory where knowledge and science are combined with scientific curiosity to reach creativity, through students' practice of various activities, seeking a promising life and a bright future for themselves and their country. Its role is no longer merely preparation for life but life itself for students. According to desired perceptions, it should be a dynamic environment that helps students connect and interact with the external environment, provides them with the tools and means to master learning, helps them discover themselves, strengthens their relationship with their community and surrounding environment, encourages experimentation and the use of technology, builds personal capacities, develops skills, and supports creativity (Mohamed Wafa, 2016, p. 39).

This should be the role of students and their supervisors, but the persistence of disintegration indicates the emergence of a cultural vacuum in society, particularly in institutions and cultural bodies. In such a situation, chaos and disorder can be provoked, allowing anyone to intervene unpredictably, contributing to serious disruption of the dynamic functioning of these components. This is due to the persistence of these conditions and the continuation of the cultural

vacuum within society, a state of fading effectiveness, leaving society in urgent need to prevent further tension or recurrence of such events.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the relationship between drug use and the school environment is complex and bidirectional. While psychoactive substances undermine performance, motivation, and student retention, a weak or excluded educational system can facilitate exposure to consumption, especially in a community fluctuating between escalating disorder and cultural vacuum, with few or no innovations or creativity that form, on the one hand, the energy of survival that sustains existence and life in the reference components, and the resilience of the dynamic flow of the cultural structure on the other. As long as society fluctuates between these pressures, any additional pressure or force affecting this flow will result in interactions, some of which are dangerous if the actors move with a tendency toward extremism and use mechanisms of disintegration, linked to structures associated with an alternative compensatory culture opposing the existing one.

Nevertheless, the school also possesses enormous preventive potential. When it becomes a safe, inclusive place committed to the comprehensive well-being of students, it can act as a decisive protective factor against addiction. Therefore, it is essential to

strengthen educational policies integrating prevention, mental health, and socio-emotional support, not as supplements but as central foundations of the educational process. Only in this way can high-quality education be ensured.

School dropout and drug addiction are not separate problems but expressions of a broader crisis related to psychological, health, and opportunity inclusion for youth, as noted above.

Reversing this concerning trend is only possible through coordinated public policies, investment in education, and approaches focusing on the holistic well-being of adolescents, through which committed personalities are formed with traits aligned with the components of the society's cultural structure. These traits serve as vital material for reinforcing the cultural reference of society, responding consistently and coherently with sound social models, and providing developmental spaces for creativity and innovation among students, as required by the internal dynamic flow of the cultural structure—a domain inevitably subjected to the pressure of these currents through mechanisms of disintegration and collapse.

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