Critical criteria for the reality of societal perceptions towards drug addicts

محكات نقدية لواقع التصورات المجتمعية نحو المتشافين من تعاطي المخدرات

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Abstract:

The study aimed to identify the negative perceptions of society towards recovering drug addicts, and to identify the extent to which society views them as deviants, mentally ill, and a stigma on themselves and society. The study raised the general question: To what extent does society view recovering drug addicts negatively? The following questions branched out from it: 1- Does society view recovering drug addicts as deviant? 2- Does society view recovering drug addicts as mentally ill? 3- Does society view recovering drug addicts as a stigma? The study answers the following hypotheses: 1- Society perceives recovering drug addicts as highly deviant. 2- Society perceives recovering drug addicts as highly mentally ill. 3- Society perceives recovering drug addicts as highly stigmatized. The researchers used the descriptive analytical approach on a sample of 25 professors specializing in psychology at Mohamed Boudiaf University in M'Sila, who were chosen intentionally,. The study tool was a survey questionnaire consisting of three questions, answered according to three alternatives: (highly 3, medium 2, weakly 1). After using appropriate statistical methods, the study reached the following results: - Society

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perceives that a person recovering from drug addiction is highly deviant. - Society perceives that a person recovering from drug addiction is highly mentally ill. - Society perceives that a person recovering from drug addiction is highly stigmatized. Thus, the study hypotheses were confirmed, and society actually holds negative perceptions of those recovering from drug addiction (drug stigma).

 Keywords: Social perceptions, drug addiction, deviant, mentally ill, stigma

ملخص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على تصورات المجتمع نحو المتشافين من ادمان المخدرات، والتعرف على مدى نظرة المجتمع اليهم على أنهم منحرفين ومرضى نفسانيين ووصمة عار على انفسهم وعلى المجتمع. وقد طرحت الدراسة التساؤل العام: **إلى أي مدى ينظر المجتمع نظرة سلبية إلى المتشافين من ادمان المخدرات؟** وتفرعت عنها التساؤلات الآتية:

1- هل ينظر المجتمع إلى المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات على أنه منحرف؟

2- هل ينظر المجتمع إلى المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات على أنه مريض نفسيا؟

3- هل ينظر المجتمع إلى المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات على أنه وصمة عار؟

وتجيب الدراسة على الفرضيات الآتية:

1- يتصور المجتمع أن المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات منحرفا بدرجة كبيرة.

2-يتصور المجتمع أن المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات مريضا نفسيا بدرجة كبيرة.

3-يتصور المجتمع أن المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات وصمة عار بدرجة كبيرة.

وقد استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي على عينة من 25 أستاذا تخصص علم النفس بجامعة محمد بوضياف بالمسيلة، تم اختيارهم بطريقة قصدية، وتمثلت أداة الدراسة في استبانة استطلاعية تكونت من ثلاثة أسئلة، تتم الإجابة عنها وفق ثلاثة بدائل: (بدرجة كبيرة 3، بدرجة متوسطة 2، بدرجة ضعيفة 1). وبعد استخدام الأساليب الإحصائية المناسبة توصلت الدراسة إلى النتائج الآتية:

- يتصور المجتمع أن المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات منحرفا بدرجة كبيرة.

-يتصور المجتمع أن المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات مريضا نفسيا بدرجة كبيرة.

-يتصور المجتمع أن المتشافي من ادمان المخدرات وصمة عار بدرجة كبيرة.

ومنه تحقق فرضيات الدراسة، وأن المجتمع فعلا يحمل تصورات سلبية على المتشافين من ادمان المخدرات (وصمة المخدرات).

الكلمات المفتاحية: التصورات الاجتماعية، ادمان المخدرات، المنحرف، المريض نفسيا.

Introduction: Addiction is one of the diseases that has spread in recent years in a large and noticeable way among all age groups of children, youth and the elderly. A child who is not more than 10 years old is vulnerable to addiction, whether drug addiction or alcohol addiction, due to parental neglect and lack of adequate supervision over his behavior. The same applies to young people. As for the elderly, they may resort to addiction due to psychological problems such as loneliness and depression. When the addict is convinced of the futility of drug abuse and the necessity of quitting and recovering from it, the stage of recovery or recovery from drugs begins, which is a stage that requires the combined efforts of the addict, family and society to help cities recover. However, society still looks at the recovering addict negatively, as he is an addict, which hinders the recovery process. Therefore, social factors are considered one of the most important challenges that may lead to the recovering addict relapsing after he recovers, whether the period is long or short. This can undermine the recovering addict's self-confidence and the recovery he has achieved, and society's lack of acceptance of him due to his history and the "stigma" of an addict. Therefore, we will try to address the issue of society's negative view of the recovering addict on the basis that he is deviant and mentally ill.

Study problem: It is accepted that drugs have their many dangers and problems that have become costing the world a great human and economic wealth. Psychological, physical, social and economic problems are a basic result of the spread of drugs and their use. These problems are - in fact - among the most dangerous social, health and psychological phenomena facing most countries of the world at the present time. This is because approximately a quarter of the world's population uses drugs in the hope that they will help them change their lifestyle and thinking!! Therefore, the drug problem is truly one of the most dangerous problems in the contemporary world, and the problem of drug addiction is a dangerous phenomenon at all levels due to its destructive effects on the individual, family and society. Some theories have emerged that emphasize the importance of social factors in explaining deviant behavior in general and drug abuse in particular. Saeed Al-Maghribi has tried to explain drug abuse with a social explanation based

on the assumption that any human behavior is nothing but the result of a series of social experiences through which the individual acquires a concept of the meaning of behavior and desirable and undesirable positions. This is done through the family and cultural standards. Research and studies conducted by psychologists, sociologists and others have shown that the phenomenon of drug abuse increases in difficult living conditions and social and psychological factors in which a person is unable to adapt to his surroundings or submit to the control of his family and existing ideals represented by values, morals and religion. Kaplan also believes that the loss of standards and the conflict between individual values and societal values affect the behavior of individuals and push them towards losing social balance and moving towards deviation in a clear manner... Also, the sudden change in values may lead to the tendency of members of society towards practicing some types of deviant behavior and drug abuse when there is a big difference between an industrial society and an agricultural or developing society... This explains that abuse is linked to the lack of clarity of social standards, the lack of social integration in the family, and the lack of societal cohesion. Therefore, the tendency of members of society towards drug abuse may be partially linked to the changes that have occurred in the social environment in advanced industrial countries (1). In this study, we will address the problem of negative perceptions of society towards those recovering from drug addiction. Accordingly, the study answers the following questions:

The general question: To what extent does society view those recovering from drug addiction negatively?

 The following questions branched out from it:

Partial questions:

 1- Does society view a recovering drug addict as deviant?

2- Does society view a recovering drug addict as mentally ill?

3- Does society view a recovering drug addict as a stigma? The study answers the following hypotheses: General hypothesis: Society views recovering drug addicts negatively.

 Partial hypotheses:

1- Society perceives a recovering drug addict as highly deviant.

2- Society perceives a recovering drug addict as highly mentally ill.

3- Society perceives a recovering drug addict as highly stigmatized.

Importance of the study: The importance of the study lies in addressing a very important topic, which is the topic of recovery from drug abuse, which is one of the complex psychological and social topics, given the sensitivity of the topic and the perceptions that society holds towards cities in general; especially in Islamic societies, and Algeria is one of them. Drug, alcohol or intoxicant abuse generally makes the individual socially ostracized, despised and worthless, especially if the addiction reaches the point of recovery in clinics and specialized centers, so the recovering addict is viewed as mentally ill or a deviant person, and these descriptions continue to haunt him; which is known as stigma or shame as it is in various social literature. Therefore, the study attempts to draw the attention of psychologists to help recovering addicts recover, and to sensitize society to change its view of recovering addicts on the basis that the individual made a mistake and can correct the mistake, as well as trying to change traditional social perceptions towards the recovering drug addict, and the need to focus on treatment and integration into society, and not punish him because he made a mistake.

Study objectives: The study aims to achieve a number of objectives:

- Verifying that society actually views the recovering drug addict as a deviant person.

- Verifying that society actually views the recovering drug addict as a mentally ill person.

- Verifying that society actually views the recovering drug addict as a stigma.

- Identifying the topic of drug recovery in the social environment.

Study terms:

1- Social perceptions: Doise defines them as "generative principles for making decisions related to specific integrations in the set of social relations and organized by the symbolic processes involved in these relations" (2). _ It is the way society views a person recovering from drug addiction, or it is the individual's evaluation by society.

2- Drug addiction: - It is the use of harmful substances medically, socially and organically in large quantities or doses and for long periods, which

makes the individual accustomed to them and subject to their influence and makes it difficult or impossible for him to be persuaded about them. Addiction may be addiction to alcohol and intoxicants, or addiction to drugs or even some medicines and drugs (3). _ It is the habituation to narcotic substances to a degree that is difficult to quit.

3- The deviant: Deviance is "a violation of the rules characterized by a sufficient degree of deviation from the limits of general tolerance in society" (4). _ He is an anomaly from society, and he is the person stigmatized with characteristics that make him outside society.

4- The mentally ill: is a person who suffers from noticeable health problems that affect how a person feels, thinks, behaves, and interacts with others (5). _ It is the description of society by the person as suffering from psychological disorders due to the effect of drug abuse on mental abilities. The methodological aspect of the study: Study method: The researcher used the descriptive method appropriate for this type of study. By identifying the perceptions of society towards those recovering from drug addiction, by investigating reality and converting qualitative data into quantitative data that can be analyzed and judged.

Study sample: The study was conducted on a sample of 25 professors specializing in psychology at Mohamed Boudiaf University in M'Sila, who were chosen intentionally. Spatiotemporal boundaries: The study was conducted at Mohamed Boudiaf University in M'Sila in 2024.

Study tool: The study tool was a survey questionnaire consisting of three questions, which are answered according to three alternatives: (highly 3, medium 2, weakly 1).. Statistical methods: The researchers used frequencies and percentages. Presentation of the results in light of the hypotheses:

1- Presenting the results of the first hypothesis: Society perceives that a person recovering from drug addiction is highly deviant.

Table (1):' responses to the first question

Weakly	moderately	To a large extent	The question
01	02	22	Does society perceive a recovering

			drug addict as a deviant person?
4.00	8.00	88.00	Ratio

Table (2): Arrangement of' answers to the first question

Arrangement	ratio	number	Evaluation	The number
1	%88.00	22	To a large extent	1
2	%08.00	02	moderately	2
3	%04.00	01	Weakly	3

We note from Table 2: The first place went to the highly rated respondents, 22 in number, representing 88.00% of the total sample responses. The second place went to the moderately rated respondents, 02 in number, representing 08.00%, while the third place went to the weakly rated respondents, 01 in number, representing 04.00%. This means that society perceives that the person recovering from drug addiction is highly deviant. Hence, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

2- Presenting the results of the second hypothesis: Society perceives that the person recovering from drug addiction is highly mentally ill.

Table (3):' responses to the second question

Weakly	moderately	To a large extent	The question
01	04	20	Does a recovering drug addict society perceive a mentally ill person?
4.00	16.00	80.00	Ratio

Table (4): Arrangement of' answers to the second question

Arrangement	ratio	number	Evaluation	The number
1	%80.00	20	To a large	1

			extent	
2	%16.00	04	moderately	2
3	%04.00	01	Weakly	3

We note from Table 4: The first place went to the highly rated respondents, 20 in number, representing 80.00% of the total sample responses. The second place went to the moderately rated respondents, 4 in number, representing 16.00%, while the third place went to the weakly rated respondents, 1 in number, representing 4.00%. This means that society perceives that a person recovering from drug addiction is mentally ill to a great extent. Hence, the second hypothesis is confirmed.

3- Presenting the results of the third hypothesis: Society perceives that a person recovering from drug addiction is a great stigma.

Table (5):' responses to the third question

Weakly	moderately	To a large extent	The question
00	01	24	Does the society perceive a stigma of recovering from drug addiction?
00.00	04.00	96.00	Ratio

Table (6): Arrangement of' answers to the third question

Arrangement	ratio	number	Evaluation	The number
1	%96.00	24	To a large extent	1
2	%04.00	01	moderately	2
3	%00.00	00	Weakly	3

We note from Table 6: The first place went to the highly rated respondents, 24 in number, representing 96.00% of the total sample responses. The second place went to the moderately rated respondents, 01 in number, representing 04.00%, while the third place went to the weakly rated respondents, 00 in number, representing 00.00%. This means that society

perceives a recovering drug addict as a stigma to a large extent. Hence, the third hypothesis was achieved.

Discussion and interpretation of the results in light of previous studies: The field study data confirmed the validity of the study hypotheses, whether the first, which sees that society perceives a recovering drug addict as a deviant person, or the one that confirms that he is mentally ill, or the one that says that drug use is a stigma on the recovering drug addict's forehead that continues to haunt him throughout his life. Recommendations and suggestions: The researcher recommends a set of suggestions, the most important of which are the following: - Sensitizing society to the need to change its viewpoint towards recovering drug addicts. - The psychological team and the social assistance team prepare the psychological and social conditions for drug addicts and accompany them, to facilitate the treatment process and integration into society. - Making the addict feel that he should look at himself positively and forget the past. - Activating the family's work to accept and care for his son, and to guard him so that he does not return to the stage of relapse. - Making the person recovering from drug abuse feel that he should not return to bad company and stay away from them as much as possible. - Filling free time with reading and sports and not being alone, because that reminds him of drugs. - Following the recommendations and instructions of the attending physician and following advice and guidance, and taking the treatment prescription with respect. - Going to public places for entertainment and amusement, cultural centers, etc., and not being in empty places.

Conclusion: We conclude from the above that every person who exceeds social values and controls is considered deviant and disrupts the general order of the social system, and accordingly, drug abuse, no matter how much he recovers from it, remains in the eyes of society an addict and deviant, and the criminal remains a criminal even if he repents from the crime, because he has lost the credibility of society and the standards of evaluation and control. Therefore, the recovering drug addict will always be stigmatized and will remain an outcast and unwanted person, because he has lost the trust of society. Now in our Algerian society, the drug addict is described even after the recovery stage as mentally ill or mentally unstable,

and he becomes like a madman whom society fears and does not trust with his children, neighbors, or all members of society. This is because society's perception of drugs is that they are a substance that makes the mind go blank and makes its user unconscious. Therefore, the study concluded that society views the recovering drug addict in the same way as the drug addict, completely neglecting the role of treatment and reintegration. He is a deviant and mentally ill person, and his actions and stigma accompany him.

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