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Drug Use in Algerian Schools: A Socio-Educational and Psychological Approach to Its Determinants, Consequences, and Strategies for Prevention and Support

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Abstract :

This study examines drug and psychotropic substance use in the Algerian school setting as a multidimensional health, social, and educational problem affecting adolescent students. It analyses the social determinants (family disintegration, peer pressure, and the school's surrounding environment), educational determinants (poor academic achievement, school dropout, and weak support mechanisms), and psychological determinants (anxiety, low self-esteem, and sensation seeking), and considers their consequences for students' health, academic performance, behaviour, and social integration. Using a descriptive-analytical method, the study critically reviews the relevant literature and the legislative and regulatory texts within an integrated socio-educational and psychological framework. It concludes that the phenomenon results from the interaction of overlapping factors and that repression alone is insufficient to address it. Effective responses require early school-based prevention; the involvement of families, civil society, and the health sector; accessible listening, psychological, and medical care services; and training for educational staff. The study ends with practical recommendations to strengthen prevention and care policies within the Algerian education system.

Keywords: drug abuse; addiction; school environment; prevention; treatment; psychological and physical effects; awareness strategies.

1. Introduction

The use of drugs and psychotropic substances is among the most prominent contemporary health and social challenges, and it becomes especially serious when it affects school-enrolled students, because adolescence is a sensitive developmental stage in which identity takes shape and the need for belonging and experimentation intensifies. In this context, the school occupies a dual position: it is a space well suited to prevention, early detection, and support, yet it is also exposed to risks from its surroundings, such as peer pressure and easy access to substances.

In Algeria, the State's concern with the phenomenon is reflected in Law No. 04-18 on the prevention of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and the suppression of their illicit use and trafficking, in the establishment of the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction, and in the creation of listening units within educational institutions. Nevertheless, this does not remove the question of how adequate and how well integrated these mechanisms are.

2. Statement of the Problem

Drug use and addiction in schools pose a serious threat to students' health and academic performance. Adolescents are driven to use drugs for a variety of reasons, including social, psychological, and biological ones. Among the social

factors are the influence of friends and social pressures that make adolescents feel a need to belong to a particular group, which may lead them to experiment with drugs (Al-Kuwari, 2022, p. 45; Smith, 2021, p. 115).

In addition, psychological factors play an important role, such as feelings of anxiety and depression, as some individuals turn to drugs as a means of alleviating these negative feelings (Ali, 2023a, p. 70; Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 89). On the other hand, biological and genetic influences may increase adolescents' vulnerability to addiction, making some more susceptible than others to falling into the trap of drug use.

This study proceeds from the following main research question: What factors lead to the spread of drug use in the school setting, and how can this phenomenon be addressed effectively? To answer this question, all of the factors mentioned above must be analysed comprehensively, together with an examination of the school's role in preventing the phenomenon and in raising students' awareness of the dangers of drug use (Al-Hassan, 2021, p. 101; Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 92).

3. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To identify the determinants of drug use and its consequences for students in the school setting.
- 2) To analyse prevention and treatment mechanisms and the role of educational institutions, government policies, and community programmes in addressing the phenomenon.
- 3) To uncover the main challenges and obstacles facing prevention and treatment efforts with regard to drug use in the school setting.

4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from the fact that drug use in the school setting is a social and educational phenomenon whose effects are not confined to the student but extend to the family, the educational institution, and society. Its scientific significance lies in its attempt to understand the determinants of drug use and its health, psychological, educational, and social consequences for students, as well as to highlight the importance of prevention and treatment mechanisms and the role of educational institutions, government policies, and community programmes in confronting the phenomenon. The study also has practical significance, in that its findings can be used to strengthen preventive and awareness programmes, to develop mechanisms for supporting students at risk, and to address the challenges that limit the effectiveness of prevention and treatment efforts in the Algerian school setting.

5. Key Concepts

5.1 The nature of drugs. Drugs are chemical substances that act on the central nervous system and cause changes in an individual's psychological state and behaviour. They include alcohol, illicit drugs such as heroin and cocaine, and misused substances such as sedative medications. Drugs pose a major threat to public health because of the health and psychological problems they cause (Smith, 2023, p. 98).

5.2 The nature of addiction. Addiction is a pathological condition that leads to psychological and physical dependence on a particular substance, whereby the person becomes unable to stop using it despite being aware of the negative consequences. It is characterised by a loss of control over use behaviours and by the need to increase doses in order to achieve the desired effect (Al-Abdullah, 2024, p. 112).

5.3 The nature of the school. The school is the educational institution that socialises individuals and teaches them the skills and knowledge necessary for life. It plays an important role in guiding behaviour and shaping students' values, which makes it an influential environment in combating drug use (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 77).

6. The Importance of the School in Human Life

The school is one of the most important institutions influencing an individual's life, playing a vital role in building personality and developing social and scientific skills. During adolescence, the school is the environment with the greatest influence on the behaviours and values that students acquire, which makes its role essential in shaping many aspects of their lives. The school promotes academic and social development by providing an organised and supportive learning environment and by offering opportunities for social interaction and the learning of values.

In this context, the importance of the school's role is particularly evident in raising awareness of the dangers of drug use and in prevention. The school plays a pivotal role in providing the necessary information about the effects of drugs and in enhancing students' awareness. Through awareness programmes and educational activities, the school can contribute to preventing drug use by informing students of the potential risks and by teaching them strategies for coping with social and psychological pressures (Al-Hassan, 2021, p. 101; Johnson, 2023, p. 45).

Moreover, the school provides a safe environment in which students can express their feelings and discuss their concerns, which contributes to the prevention of drug use. By supporting students and strengthening their decision-making skills and their ability to deal with challenges, the school plays a key role in promoting their psychological and physical health and in preventing the risks associated with drug use (Ali, 2023a, p. 75; Brown & Davis, 2022, p. 60).

7. Types of Drugs

7.1 Natural drugs. These are substances extracted directly from plants without chemical intervention. They act on the central nervous system and cause changes in perception, mood, or behaviour.

Examples:

- (a) **Cannabis (hashish/marijuana).** It is extracted from the cannabis plant and contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which acts on the brain and produces psychological effects. Cannabis is used for both medical and recreational purposes, but it is illegal in many countries (Al-Zoubi, 2018, p. 45).
- (b) **Opium.** It is extracted from the opium poppy and is used in the manufacture of substances such as morphine and heroin, which are powerful analgesics but are also addictive (Smith, 2015, p. 102).

7.2 Synthetic drugs. These are drugs manufactured entirely by chemical means in laboratories. They differ from natural drugs in that their chemical composition is developed without reliance on natural materials.

Examples:

- (a) **Methamphetamine.** It is produced entirely in the laboratory and is used illicitly as a stimulant that acts on the central nervous system and causes addiction (Anderson, 2020, p. 54).
- (b) **Fentanyl.** A potent synthetic narcotic used to relieve severe pain; owing to its high potency, however, it is also used illicitly and has caused many deaths through overdose (Jones, 2020, p. 88).

7.3 Semi-synthetic drugs. Semi-synthetic drugs are those extracted from natural sources and then chemically modified in laboratories in order to increase their potency or alter their effects.

Examples:

- (a) **Heroin.** It is derived from morphine, a natural constituent of opium, but undergoes chemical modifications that make it more potent and faster-acting, and therefore more dangerous than opium itself (Smith & Brown, 2018, p. 73).
- (b) **Cocaine.** It is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant and undergoes chemical processing to increase its potency as a powerful, addictive narcotic (Al-Sharif, 2019, p. 96).

7.4 Digital drugs. These are a type of unconventional “drug” that relies on sound or images to stimulate the mind in ways that alter mood or mental state.

Examples:

- (a) **Binaural beats.** These use specific sound frequencies to stimulate the brain in ways that alter mood or concentration (Davis, 2019, p. 122).
- (b) **Altered images.** These are visual techniques used to change mental state through repetitive patterns or rapidly changing scenes (Al-Shami, 2020, p. 65).

8. Drugs in Algeria

8.1 Types of drugs. Several types of drugs are widespread in Algeria, most notably cannabis (hashish), cocaine, and heroin, in addition to psychotropic substances such as hallucinogenic pills (Ben Omar, 2021, p. 132).

8.2 Use among students. Hashish and hallucinogenic pills are among the drugs most commonly used by students in schools, where they are consumed illegally despite awareness campaigns and monitoring (Ben Saad, 2020, p. 90).

9. Causes of Drug Use in the School Setting

The reasons that lead students to use drugs at school are numerous and range from social influences to psychological and family-related factors. The main causes include the following.

9.1 Social influences. The desire to belong to particular groups is among the most prominent factors that push students to experiment with drugs. Some students seek acceptance in certain social groups and feel that using drugs is a means of achieving this belonging. This phenomenon is reinforced by peer pressure and the desire to conform to group norms (Al-Abdullah, 2024, p. 124; Johnson, 2023, p. 45). Studies indicate that peers can strongly influence students' behaviour, as drug use may be a way of coping with pressure from friends and of asserting one's identity within the group (Smith, 2023, p. 115).

9.2 Family problems. Some families suffer from serious problems such as family disintegration, domestic violence, and weak parental supervision, and these factors increase the likelihood of drug use among adolescents. Children raised in unstable or tension-filled family environments may turn to drugs as a means of escaping their daily problems and seeking comfort in the wrong places (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 89; Brown & Davis, 2022, p. 60). Domestic violence and family problems result in a lack of emotional support and appropriate guidance, which increases adolescents' exposure to the risks of drug use (Ali, 2023b, p. 75).

9.3 Psychological pressures. Some students experience multiple psychological pressures, including academic failure, anxiety, depression, and other stressors that can drive them to use drugs as a means of escaping their negative feelings. Psychological pressures can lead to a search for quick and unhealthy solutions to life's problems, which increases the likelihood of drug use (Ali, 2023b, p. 78; Smith, 2023, p. 112). Research shows that students facing high levels of psychological stress are more likely to use drugs as a way of coping with tension and anxiety (Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 85).

9.4 Low awareness of the dangers of drugs. A lack of awareness of the dangers of drug use is a major factor in the rising number of cases of use among students. When students lack sufficient knowledge of the health, psychological, and social harms of drugs, they may not recognise the seriousness of their actions. Inadequate awareness programmes or the absence of accurate information about the risks may increase students' exposure to these dangers (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 92; Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 90). Effective awareness-raising and appropriate education can play a decisive role in preventing drug use and in changing behaviours in schools.

10. Effects of Drug Use on Adolescents

Drug use has multiple negative effects on adolescents, including the following.

10.1 Physical health. Adolescents who are addicted suffer serious physical harm, including liver damage, kidney failure, and heart disease. Narcotic substances can destroy tissues and vital organs in the body, increasing the risk of chronic and severe diseases (Ali, 2023b, p. 85; Smith, 2023, p. 130). In addition, users may suffer from a weakened immune system and greater susceptibility to infections and diseases.

10.2 Mental health. Drug use can lead to serious psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis. It may intensify psychological symptoms and aggravate pre-existing psychological problems, and it can also give rise

to new mental disorders, such as suicidal ideation. Studies have shown that drug use can aggravate psychological crises and increase the incidence of mood disorders (Brown & Davis, 2022, p. 65).

10.3 Academic performance. Academic performance declines markedly among adolescents who use drugs. They suffer from poor concentration and a loss of motivation to learn, which leads to lower grades and more frequent absences. This academic decline can affect adolescents' educational trajectories and limit their future opportunities (Ali, 2023b, p. 78; Johnson, 2023, p. 55). The negative effects also include a reduced ability to manage time and to organise study.

10.4 Social behaviour. Users become more prone to aggressive behaviour, social isolation, and involvement in behaviours that violate the law. Drug use can impair adolescents' ability to communicate effectively with others and increase their chances of engaging in unlawful or dangerous behaviour (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 99; Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 80). It may cause problems with peers and family and aggravate difficulties in social relationships.

11. Characteristics of Students Who Use Drugs

Students who use drugs can be identified through a set of distinctive signs, which include the following.

11.1 Academic deterioration. Students who use drugs show a marked decline in academic achievement. This may appear as lower grades, increased absences, and diminished interest in school activities. Poor concentration and a lack of motivation to learn lead to a decline in academic performance. Other symptoms may include reduced participation in class, neglect of homework, and difficulties with organisation. Academic decline may, in turn, increase students' stress and anxiety about their academic future (Johnson, 2023, p. 70).

11.2 Behavioural changes. The behavioural changes associated with drug use include social withdrawal, whereby students begin to avoid social activities and distance themselves from friends and family. They may also display aggressive behaviour and increasingly rebellious or irritable conduct. These changes may lead to problems with classmates and teachers and heighten the likelihood of internal and external conflicts. Behavioural changes may also include reckless conduct or involvement in unlawful behaviour (Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 83).

11.3 Physical changes. Marked weight loss can be observed as a sign of drug use, together with signs of exhaustion and persistent fatigue. Changes in bodily appearance may include pallor, dark circles under the eyes, and altered sleep patterns. These physical changes also give rise to other health problems, such as a general weakening of physical capacity and exhaustion.

11.4 Psychological changes. Psychological changes include increased anxiety, depression, and mood swings. Symptoms such as unexplained crying spells, irritability, and a quick temper may appear. Drug use may also aggravate pre-existing psychological conditions and may cause the emergence of new mood disorders such as bipolar disorder (Al-Abdullah, 2024, p. 145; Smith, 2023, p. 139). These changes contribute to the deterioration of students' overall psychological state and affect their ability to cope with the pressures of daily life.

12. The Role of the School in Confronting Drug Use

The school plays a decisive role in preventing drug use through several core strategies.

12.1 Awareness-raising. Comprehensive awareness programmes are among the most important tools for preventing drug use. These programmes aim to educate students about the dangers of drugs and their negative effects on physical and psychological health and on academic performance. Through workshops, lectures, and community initiatives, the school can provide reliable and up-to-date information, which helps to raise awareness and reduce early experimentation with drugs (Ali, 2023b, p. 95; Smith, 2023, p. 150). Awareness-raising also includes equipping students with the skills needed to cope with social pressures and to avoid involvement in drug-use behaviours. In the Arab context, studies stress the importance of using targeted awareness strategies that focus on local and cultural needs (Al-Abdullah, 2024, p. 152).

12.2 Psychological support. The school provides important psychological support for students who experience behavioural or family problems that may push them towards drug use. Through individual and group counselling and psychological support programmes, the school can help them deal with psychological pressures and develop positive coping strategies (Ali, 2023b, p. 100; Brown & Davis, 2022, p. 80). Psychological support also includes providing a safe and supportive environment for students facing family or social difficulties that may contribute to an increased risk of drug use. In this context, psychological and counselling programmes are essential for mitigating the psychological impact of drug use (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 115).

12.3 Monitoring. Monitoring plays an important role in preventing drug use through the regular observation of students' behaviour. The school can implement systems for tracking students' behaviour and detecting early behavioural changes that may indicate a drug-use problem. Through direct interaction with students and by providing support and assistance when needed, the school can intervene in a timely manner to offer support and guidance (Ali, 2023b, p. 105; Johnson, 2023, p. 66). Monitoring also includes cooperation with other community actors, such as local authorities and health centres, in support of preventive efforts (Al-Abdullah, 2024, p. 160).

12.4 Cooperation with the family. Strengthening cooperation between the school and the family is essential to ensure that students' behaviour is followed up and that a supportive environment is provided for them. This includes organising regular meetings with parents to discuss students' behaviour and providing the support and guidance needed to deal with behavioural problems. Such cooperation enhances the effectiveness of prevention strategies and ensures integrated support for students. Continuous communication with the family also helps to build a strong partnership in combating drug use (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 120).

13. Theoretical Perspectives on Addiction

The theories that explain addiction include the following.

13.1 The psychological theory. The psychological theory regards addiction as a response aimed at escaping psychological pressures or seeking immediate pleasure. According to this theory, individuals turn to drugs as a means of coping with feelings of anxiety, depression, or psychological tension. Research shows that drugs provide a temporary sense of relief, which makes them attractive to individuals facing psychological difficulties. This escape from psychological problems can lead to the development of addiction, as the individual becomes dependent on drugs to relieve emotional pain. Moreover, addressing underlying psychological problems such as anxiety and depression is considered essential for reducing reliance on drugs as a means of escape (Jones & Brown, 2022, p. 101; Keller & Hall, 2022, p. 88; Smith, 2023, p. 144).

13.2 The social theory. The social theory focuses on the influence of the social environment and surroundings in which an individual lives on addictive behaviour. This theory assumes that interaction with peers, social pressures, and exposure to cultures and practices of drug use can significantly influence individuals' behaviour. For example, belonging to social groups that encourage drug use can increase the likelihood of addiction. Likewise, communities that suffer from a shortage of resources or from deviant social values may be more exposed to higher rates of addiction. This theory emphasises the importance of understanding the social context in which an individual lives and how it influences drug-use behaviour (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 117).

13.3 The biological theory. The biological theory suggests that addiction may result from genetic or chemical factors in the brain that lead to drug dependence. It focuses on how chemical changes in the brain and genetic differences affect susceptibility to addiction. Studies indicate that chemical changes in the brain, such as an imbalance of neurotransmitters, may contribute to strengthening drug dependence. Genetic factors also play a role in increasing susceptibility to addiction, which highlights the importance of biological and genetic research for a better understanding of addiction. On the basis of this theory, treatment needs to include strategies that target biological and genetic changes in order to enhance the effectiveness of treatment programmes (Al-Abdullah, 2024, p. 153; Anderson & Taylor, 2023, p. 70; Johnson & White, 2023, p. 89).

14. Consequences of Drug Use

The negative consequences of drug use are manifold and affect individuals and society as a whole, particularly adolescent students.

14.1 Death. Drug use can lead to death through overdose, which is one of the major dangers associated with drug use. For example, there are reports of deaths among adolescents resulting from excessive doses of opioids such as fentanyl. In addition, fatal accidents caused by driving under the influence of drugs, such as traffic accidents resulting from alcohol or other drug use, pose a real threat (Smith, 2023, p. 162).

14.2 Chronic diseases. Users suffer from chronic health problems resulting from drug use. For example, many students who inject drugs may contract viral infections such as hepatitis. The use of contaminated needles can also lead to infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS), which is particularly dangerous among young people who do not follow proper hygiene measures (Anderson & Taylor, 2023, p. 85; Smith, 2023, p. 162). The use of narcotic substances can also lead to heart disease and chronic damage to blood vessels.

14.3 Psychological problems. Drug use has a major impact on mental health, as it can lead to problems such as depression and psychosis and to an increased risk of suicide. For example, studies indicate that students who use drugs may show symptoms such as severe anxiety and depression, which increases the likelihood of suicidal ideation. The use of stimulant substances can also cause psychotic symptoms, such as hallucinations and delusions, which impair academic performance and social interaction (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 129; Keller & Hall, 2022, p. 88).

14.4 Impact on society. The impact of drug use extends to society as a whole. Among adolescents, use can lead to an increase in crime, as students who use drugs are more likely to engage in unlawful activities such as theft to finance their use. Use can also cause problems at work or at school, contributing to higher youth unemployment rates. In addition, drug use may lead to family disintegration as a result of the conflicts and tensions generated by drug-use behaviours (Al-Issawi, 2023, p. 129; Smith, 2023, p. 162).

15. Factors Underlying the Spread of Drug Use in Algerian Schools

15.1 Social factors.

(a) **Social and environmental pressure.** In many Algerian schools, students face pressure from their peers to enter the world of drugs. Some students may try to prove themselves or to fit in with certain groups through drug use (Al-Humaidi, 2019, p. 45). For example, some students in Algerian secondary schools may be pressured by their friends to try drugs as a means of integrating into particular groups (Ben Omar, 2021, p. 77).

(b) **Family problems.** The effects of family disintegration and emotional instability can play a major role in pushing students towards drug use. Studies have shown that students raised in disintegrated families, or in families marked by constant conflict, are more likely to become involved in drug use (Amrani, 2022, p. 112). In Algeria, there are cases showing how family problems increase the chances of drug use among students (Al-Djazairi, 2020, p. 89).

15.2 Psychological factors.

(a) **The desire to escape reality.** Some students seek an escape from their psychological or academic problems through drug use. Stress arising from studies or personal problems may lead students to look for pain relief through drugs (Al-Daoud, 2021, p. 56).

- (b) **Peer influence.** Peer influence plays a major role in shaping students' behaviour. If their peers use drugs, students may slip into this behaviour under their influence (Al-Burj, 2019, p. 64).

15.3 Educational factors.

- (a) **Insufficient awareness and education.** Some schools lack comprehensive programmes to raise awareness of drugs and their harms. The absence of adequate education about the health and social risks of drugs may increase rates of use among students (Al-Said, 2020, p. 73).
- (b) **Weak monitoring and supervision.** Weak monitoring and supervision by teachers and administrators can contribute to the spread of drug use. Where supervision is insufficient, students may exploit this lack of oversight to take drugs (Al-Masoudi, 2022, p. 82).

15.4 Economic factors.

- (a) **Poverty and unemployment.** Poverty and unemployment may contribute to increased drug use among students. Poor economic conditions can make drugs an alternative response to feelings of despair and instability (Bouguenda, 2021, p. 94).
- (b) **Availability of drugs.** Easy access to drugs may encourage students to try them. The availability of drugs in some neighbourhoods and communities close to schools can be a motivating factor for their use (Charaf Eddine, 2019, p. 61).

These factors illustrate the underlying reasons for the spread of drug use in Algerian schools and highlight the need for integrated strategies to address the phenomenon.

16. Efforts of the Algerian State in Combating Drug Use in Schools

16.1 Legislation and laws.

- (a) **Anti-drug laws.** Algeria has enacted a series of deterrent laws to combat drug use. Law No. 04-15, which entered into force in 2004, aims to criminalise all forms of drug trafficking and use and to establish appropriate penalties (Boudjemaa, 2018, p. 98). These laws include severe penalties for anyone who traffics in or uses drugs, as well as special measures for juvenile offenders.
- (b) **Strengthened penalties.** Penalties relating to drug use and drug trafficking in schools have been strengthened. They include imprisonment and fines, which reflects the State's seriousness in combating this phenomenon (Zakaria, 2020, p. 120).

16.2 Awareness and educational programmes.

- (a) **Awareness campaigns in schools.** The Ministry of National Education, in cooperation with health bodies, organises awareness campaigns in schools about the dangers of drugs. These campaigns include workshops, lectures, and educational materials aimed at informing students about the risks of drug use and ways of preventing it (Guidoum, 2021, p. 87).
- (b) **Health education programmes.** Health education programmes that include teaching units on drugs and their prevention have been introduced into school curricula. These programmes aim to raise students' awareness from an early age of the health and psychological risks of drug use (Nasser, 2022, p. 65).

16.3 Strengthening monitoring and supervision.

- (a) **School patrols.** Local authorities, in cooperation with police units, work to strengthen monitoring in schools and the surrounding areas. These efforts include periodic visits to schools to monitor the situation and to provide support to students who may be exposed to the influence of drugs (Barkani, 2019, p. 102).
- (b) **Establishment of follow-up committees.** Follow-up committees have been formed in many schools to ensure the implementation of awareness programmes and to provide support to students in need. These committees include specialists in mental health and social welfare (Al-Ayyadi, 2020, p. 75).

16.4 Treatment programmes and psychological support.

- (a) **Treatment and support centres.** Treatment centres have been established to help students with drug-use problems. These centres provide treatment and psychological services to help students recover and reintegrate into society (Hamdan, 2021, p. 80).
- (b) **Psychological counselling in schools.** Schools provide psychological counselling services to help students deal with problems related to drug use. This includes providing psychological counsellors to help students cope with pressures and challenges (Mahmoud, 2022, p. 90).

16.5 Cooperation with international organisations.

- (a) **Partnerships with international organisations.** Algeria cooperates with international organisations such as the United Nations and the United Nations Joint Programme on combating AIDS and drugs in order to exchange knowledge and expertise in combating drug use (Bachir, 2019, p. 66). These partnerships aim to improve anti-drug strategies and to strengthen local efforts.
- (b) **Technical and financial support.** Algeria receives technical and financial support from international organisations to implement anti-drug programmes. This includes funding awareness and treatment projects and improving the infrastructure of support centres (Rabhi, 2021, p. 53).

Combating drug use in Algerian schools requires continuity and integration among governmental, awareness-raising, and treatment efforts. These efforts contribute significantly to reducing drug use and to achieving a healthy and safe school environment.

17. Ways of Preventing and Treating Drug Use

17.1 Ways of preventing drug use. Several strategies aim to reduce the likelihood of initiation and to prevent the spread of use among young people:

- 1) **Awareness and education.** Implementing comprehensive and continuous awareness programmes to raise awareness of the dangers of drug use and its negative effects on health, social relationships, and academic performance. These programmes may include workshops, seminars, and reliable educational resources for school students.
- 2) **Life-skills education.** Training students in stress-coping and decision-making skills can reduce their inclination to experiment with drugs. Life-skills programmes include training in problem-solving, time management, and building self-confidence.
- 3) **Fostering a supportive environment.** Creating a supportive school environment that offers psychological and social support to students and strengthens their sense of belonging. This may include building positive relationships between students and teachers and providing an encouraging learning environment.
- 4) **Family involvement.** Strengthening communication between the school and the family in order to follow students' behaviour and to provide additional support at home. Involving the family in awareness and education programmes can help reinforce educational messages about the dangers of drugs.
- 5) **Providing alternative activities.** Offering enjoyable extracurricular activities for students can help to occupy their time and provide healthy alternatives for coping with stress. These activities include sports clubs, the arts, and volunteer activities.

17.2 Treatment of drug use. Treatment approaches include several strategies aimed at helping users recover and return to their normal lives:

- 1) **Psychotherapy.** Providing psychological support and therapy for addicted individuals helps to address the psychological causes of addiction and to develop strategies for coping with stress. Psychotherapy includes individual and group counselling sessions, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, which aims to change the patterns of thinking and behaviour associated with addiction.
- 2) **Rehabilitation.** Rehabilitation programmes combine medical and psychological treatment with social and economic support. These programmes include medical treatment for detoxification, as well as social support such as vocational training and financial assistance to help those in recovery rebuild their lives.
- 3) **Community support.** Supporting individuals in recovery through support groups and community networks. These networks may include self-help groups and mentoring programmes that provide a supportive environment for sustained recovery.
- 4) **Monitoring and follow-up.** Following up on individuals' condition after treatment to ensure that they do not return to drug use. This includes continuous monitoring, early intervention if signs of relapse appear, and the provision of additional support when needed.

18. Recommendations of the Study

- 1) **Strengthening awareness programmes within schools.** Efforts should be intensified to develop and implement comprehensive awareness programmes for school students, focusing on the dangers of drug use and its negative effects on health, social relationships, and academic performance. These programmes should include workshops, seminars, and interactive educational materials to enhance awareness and prevention.
- 2) **Providing intensive psychological and social support.** It is necessary to provide dedicated psychological and social support services for students at risk of drug use. These services should include individual and group counselling sessions, as well as professional consultations for families to help them deal with students' behavioural and psychological challenges.
- 3) **Tightening monitoring within schools.** Monitoring and supervision within schools should be strengthened in order to follow students' behaviour and to detect cases of drug use at an early stage. This includes establishing effective mechanisms for monitoring behaviour and for early intervention when necessary, in addition to training teaching and administrative staff to recognise and respond to signs of drug use.
- 4) **Strengthening school-family cooperation.** It is necessary to strengthen cooperation and communication between the school and the family in order to follow the student's behaviour and provide the support he or she needs. Effective channels of communication should be established between schools and families to exchange information on students' situations and to develop joint strategies for prevention and intervention.

19. Conclusion

This study concludes that drug and psychotropic substance use in the Algerian school setting is a multidimensional phenomenon, shaped by the interplay of social factors, such as family disintegration, peer-group pressure, and the school's surrounding environment; educational factors, such as academic failure, school dropout, and weak support; and psychological factors, such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and sensation seeking. The phenomenon cannot be reduced to a single factor, nor addressed through a one-dimensional approach that confines itself to security or punitive measures.

It has become clear that the consequences of drug use do not end with the student's physical and psychological health but extend to academic achievement, behaviour, and social integration, and are also reflected in the climate of the educational institution, the stability of the family, and the security of society. The cost of the phenomenon is therefore

not measured solely by the number of users, but also by the educational trajectories and the future of entire generations that it threatens.

With regard to mechanisms of response, the efforts made by the State—through Law No. 04-18, the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction, and the listening units within educational institutions—constitute an important institutional foundation. However, their effectiveness remains contingent on the degree of integration among these mechanisms, the availability of qualified human resources, and the engagement of the family, the health sector, and civil society, together with the adoption of early prevention as a more effective option than intervention after the phenomenon has become entrenched.

In light of the foregoing, there is a need to strengthen health education within the school space, to train educational staff in early detection, to improve the conditions of psychological and medical care while guaranteeing confidentiality, and to develop a system of periodic monitoring and evaluation that provides accurate data to serve decision-makers.

In conclusion, confronting this phenomenon is a shared responsibility that requires a shift from a logic of repression to a logic of protection and support, so as to safeguard the student's right to learn and develop in a safe environment. There also remains a need for local field research that deepens understanding of the phenomenon and informs preventive policies with documented data.

20. References

Note. Arabic-language sources are transliterated, with English translations of titles given in square brackets.

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