

Substance use among school students in Algeria: A sociological approach

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Abstract---Substance use within the school environment is increasingly recognized as a complex socio-educational issue that poses significant challenges to both educational systems and broader societal stability. Beyond its immediate individual implications, this phenomenon reflects deeper structural and relational dynamics that shape adolescent behavior within contemporary school contexts. From a sociological perspective, drug use among students can be understood as the outcome of multiple interrelated factors, including weakened familial supervision, the growing influence of peer groups, and adolescent tendencies toward experimentation and identity formation. These factors are further reinforced by broader social conditions such as school disengagement, social inequality, and exposure to deviant subcultures. The consequences of substance use are multifaceted and extend beyond academic decline. They include poor scholastic achievement, increased absenteeism, school dropout, and the emergence of deviant behaviors such as aggression and delinquency. Moreover, substance use adversely affects both the physical health and psychological well-being of adolescents, thereby compromising their social integration and future prospects. In contexts such as Algeria, where schools remain central institutions of socialization, addressing this phenomenon requires an integrated preventive strategy grounded in the coordinated efforts of the family, the educational system, and wider social institutions. Families are essential in providing supervision, emotional support, and value transmission, while schools play a key role through awareness programs and the reinforcement of positive behavioral norms. At the societal level, public authorities and civil organizations are called upon to strengthen prevention policies, combat drug trafficking networks, and promote protective social environments conducive to youth development.

Keywords---Substance use, school environment, sociological analysis, adolescence, prevention, Algeria.

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1. Introduction

Drug abuse within the school environment constitutes one of the most pressing social challenges facing contemporary societies. Its ramifications extend well beyond the individual user, affecting the family unit, the educational institution, and the broader social order. From a sociological standpoint, this phenomenon is best understood as the product of a complex interplay of social, cultural, institutional, and normative factors that shape adolescent behavior within specific structural contexts.

As a primary institution of socialization, the school is expected to transmit societal norms and values while simultaneously equipping learners with cognitive and social competencies. However, in certain contexts, schools may also become reflective spaces of wider social dysfunctions, where weakened parental oversight, intensified peer group influence, and the pressures associated with rapid socio-economic and cultural change intersect. Consequently, sociological analyses suggest that the presence of drug use in educational settings cannot be reduced to individual deviance alone; rather, it reflects deficiencies in social control mechanisms and the partial failure of key socialization institutions to fully accomplish their regulatory and formative functions.

A rigorous understanding of drug use within schools provides deeper insight into its structural determinants and the conditions that facilitate its diffusion. It also enables policymakers and practitioners to design more coherent and effective preventive strategies grounded in the reinforcement of the complementary roles of the family, the school, and civil society. Such an integrated approach is essential for fostering collective awareness and mitigating the growing risks associated with this multifaceted social problem, particularly within educational environments.

Research Problem

Drug abuse and addiction remain among the most complex and persistent social problems confronting societies worldwide. Numerous international conferences and academic forums have highlighted the profound social, economic, and psychological consequences associated with this phenomenon. Despite sustained international cooperation under the frameworks of the United Nations and various regional organizations, many states continue to encounter significant difficulties in developing comprehensive, sustainable, and effective responses to the drug problem.

In Algeria, the situation reflects a growing concern, as the country is increasingly affected by both drug consumption and trafficking networks. It is no longer merely a transit zone for illicit substances; rather, drug-related activities have progressively penetrated multiple layers of society. This expansion is evidenced by recurrent media reports documenting the involvement of criminal networks in the distribution of drugs across residential areas, educational institutions, workplaces, and public spaces.

In recent years, Algerian schools have increasingly been identified as spaces where both drug consumption and trafficking occur among students. This development reflects deeper structural imbalances of a socio-cultural and socio-economic nature, arising from a constellation of interconnected factors. Several national studies have confirmed the aggravation of this phenomenon within educational settings.

According to data published by the National Office for the Fight against Drug Abuse and Addiction, drug consumption in schools has shown a steady upward trend. A nationwide field survey conducted across 426 middle and secondary schools (excluding the provinces of Illizi and Tindouf) and involving more than two million students revealed that approximately 54,000 students were cannabis users. The same study indicated that 1.97% of respondents reported consuming hallucinogenic substances, 0.42% cocaine, and 0.33% heroin (Haradi, 2022, p. 382).

Similarly, another study conducted on a sample of 450 secondary school students across several Algerian provinces found that 14% reported daily drug use, while 20% indicated occasional consumption (Bouhania, p. 258).

These findings underscore the severity of the phenomenon, which extends beyond public health concerns to encompass educational, moral, and security dimensions that collectively threaten the stability and core mission of the educational system. Consequently, responsibility for addressing this issue cannot be attributed solely to schools; rather, it is a shared societal responsibility involving families, civil society organizations, and media institutions.

Given the increasing complexity and seriousness of the phenomenon, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the current situation of drug use in Algeria?
2. What are the main categories of drugs, and which substances are most commonly used among students?
3. What are the primary causes and determinants of drug use within schools?
4. What are the consequences of drug consumption and addiction among students?
5. What preventive mechanisms and intervention strategies can be implemented to address drug use among school-aged populations?

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Concept of Drugs

2.1.1 Linguistic Definition

The term *drugs* in Arabic (*mukhabdarāt*) is derived from the root *khadara*, which conveys meanings of concealment, covering, or veiling. In classical linguistic usage, it referred to anything that obscures perception or hides reality from direct awareness. From this perspective, drugs linguistically denote substances that impair cognitive clarity and alter normal mental functioning.

This etymological meaning is particularly significant as it reflects an early intuitive recognition of the psychoactive effects of such substances, long before their scientific categorization. The notion of “concealment” metaphorically corresponds to the disruption of consciousness and rational judgment induced by drug consumption.

In contemporary lexicographical sources, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines a drug as “a substance used as a medicine in the treatment of illness or an illegal substance that people take to produce pleasurable effects” (Oxford University Press, 2023). Similarly, the *Cambridge Dictionary* defines it as “any natural or synthetic chemical substance used as a medicine or, when taken illegally, for its psychological or physical effects” (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

These definitions highlight the dual nature of drugs, which may function as therapeutic agents under medical supervision but become harmful psychoactive substances when used outside regulated contexts.

2.1.2 Terminological and Sociological Definition

In scientific and sociological literature, drugs are generally defined as psychoactive substances—natural, semi-synthetic, or synthetic—that act on the central nervous system and alter cognition, perception, mood, and behavior.

From a biomedical standpoint, drugs include stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and narcotics, each affecting specific neural pathways and neurotransmitter systems. However, sociological perspectives extend beyond the biological dimension, emphasizing that drugs are not merely chemical substances but also socially constructed phenomena shaped by cultural norms, institutional frameworks, and power relations (Becker, 1963).

Accordingly, drug use cannot be fully understood outside its social context, as meanings, patterns of consumption, and levels of acceptance or deviance are defined through social interaction and labeling processes.

Repeated use may lead to dependence, defined as a state in which individuals lose control over consumption despite awareness of its harmful consequences. This dependence affects physical health, psychological stability, cognitive functioning, and social integration.

Thus, drugs may be conceptualized as substances that, when used outside medical or legally regulated frameworks, produce a continuum of effects ranging from temporary psychoactive alteration to chronic addiction and social disaffiliation.

2.1.3 Legal Definition of Drugs

From a legal perspective, Algerian legislation defines drugs as any natural or synthetic substances that pose a threat to individual or public health, induce dependence, and negatively affect the central nervous system. Their production, possession, distribution, and consumption are strictly prohibited except under authorized medical or scientific conditions (Official Journal of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2004).

At the international level, the *1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* classifies narcotic substances into schedules based on their potential for abuse, dependence, and medical utility (United Nations, 1961). This regulatory framework reflects a global consensus on controlling substances that threaten public health and social stability.

Similarly, the *1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* extends this control to trafficking networks and illicit production systems, defining drugs as controlled psychoactive substances listed in international schedules (United Nations, 1988).

These legal frameworks demonstrate that drugs are not only medical or biological entities but also objects of governance and international regulation, embedded within broader political and institutional structures.

2.1.4 Scientific (Neurobiological) Definition of Drugs

According to Julien, Advokat, and Comaty (2011), drugs are “chemical substances that, when introduced into the body, alter normal physiological functioning by acting on the central nervous system, affecting cognition, mood, perception, or behavior, and potentially leading to physical or psychological dependence.”

From a neuroscientific perspective, drugs interact with the brain's reward system, particularly dopaminergic pathways responsible for pleasure, motivation, and reinforcement. By artificially stimulating or inhibiting neurotransmitter activity, these substances disrupt the brain's natural regulatory mechanisms.

Prolonged use may result in tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and neuroadaptation, whereby increasingly higher doses are required to achieve the same effect. Additionally, drugs impair executive functions such as decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, thereby increasing vulnerability to compulsive behavior and addiction.

2.1.5 Concept of Psychotropic Substances

Psychotropic substances refer to chemical agents that affect mental processes and the central nervous system, regardless of the mode of administration, including inhalation, ingestion, smoking, or injection.

These substances may induce various psychoactive states, including stimulation, sedation, hallucination, or altered consciousness. Their repeated use can lead to psychological and physical dependence.

From a sociological perspective, psychotropic substances may also function as symbolic tools used by adolescents for coping with stress, escaping institutional pressures, or negotiating identity formation within peer groups (Merton, 1938).

2.1.6 Concept of Drug Use and Addiction

The *Arab Medical Encyclopedia* defines addiction as a compulsive dependence on a psychoactive substance that alters brain functioning and behavior, making cessation difficult without medical intervention.

Similarly, the *American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013)* defines addiction as “a complex brain disorder characterized by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequences.”

Accordingly, addiction is understood as a chronic condition marked by loss of control over substance use, persisting even in the presence of severe negative outcomes.

From a sociological and educational perspective, substance use among school-aged learners may be interpreted as the outcome of multiple intersecting factors, including academic stress, identity conflict, and weak institutional integration within the school environment.

Peer group influence plays a particularly significant role in normalizing deviant behaviors, as adolescents often seek belonging and social acceptance. In this regard, Sutherland’s Differential Association Theory suggests that deviant behavior is learned through interaction with others (Sutherland, 1947), while Durkheim’s concept of anomie explains drug use as a response to normlessness and weakened social regulation (Durkheim, 1897).

Thus, drug use in school settings should be understood not as an isolated individual pathology, but as a socially embedded phenomenon shaped by structural, relational, and cultural dynamics.

3.Types and Classifications of Drugs

3.1 Classification of Drugs According to Their Source

3.1.1 Natural Drugs

Natural drugs are substances extracted directly from plants. Examples include:

- **Opium**, which is derived from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*).
- **Cannabis (Hashish)**, derived from the cannabis plant.

3.1.2 Semi-Synthetic Drugs

Semi-synthetic drugs are produced from naturally occurring substances that undergo chemical processing or modification. Examples include:

- **Heroin**, which is synthesized from morphine extracted from opium.
- **Morphine**.
- **Codeine**.

3.1.3 Synthetic Drugs

Synthetic drugs are manufactured entirely through chemical processes in laboratories. Examples include:

- **Ecstasy (MDMA)**.
- **Amphetamines**.

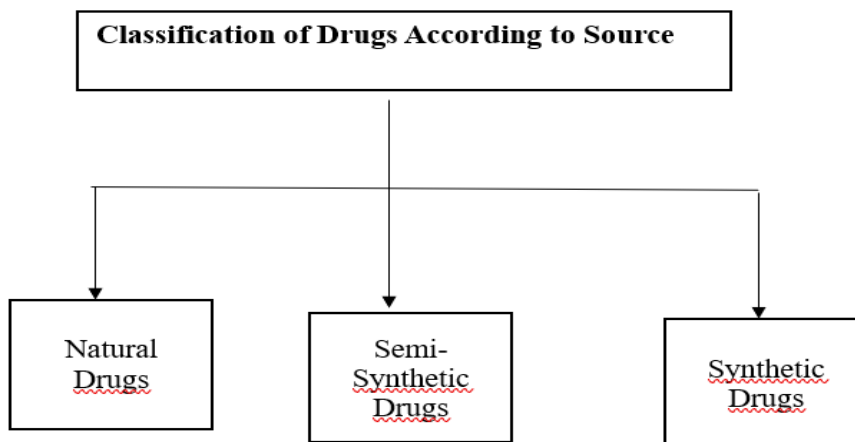


Figure 1.

3.2 Classification of Drugs According to Their Effects on the Nervous System

3.2.1 Stimulants

Stimulants increase the activity of the central nervous system.

Examples include:

- Cocaine.
- Amphetamines.
- Nicotine.

3.2.2 Depressants

Depressants slow down brain activity and generally produce relaxation, sedation, or drowsiness.

Examples include:

- Alcohol.
- Barbiturates.
- Cannabis.

3.2.3 Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens alter perception, sensation, and cognition

Examples include:

- LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide).
- Hallucinogenic mushrooms (*Psilocybin mushrooms*).
- Psilocybin.

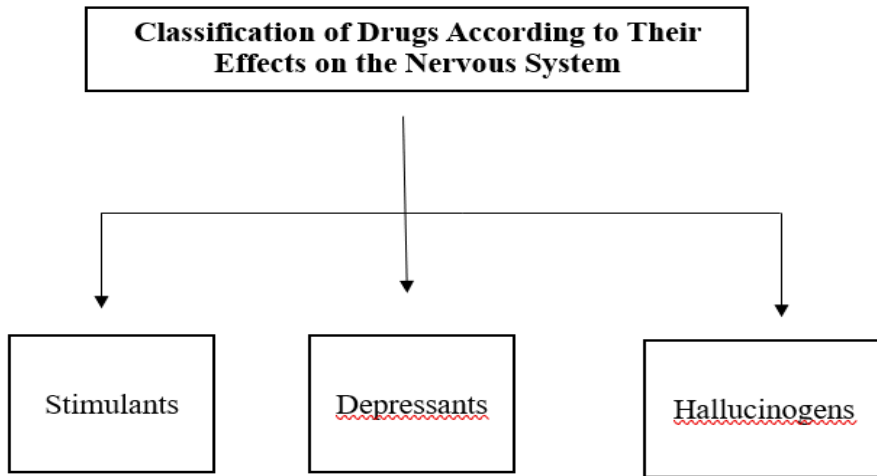


Figure 2.

3.3 Classification of Drugs According to Their Legal Status

3.3.1 Legally Authorized Drugs

These are substances legally prescribed or administered for medical purposes.

Examples include:

- Morphine (a powerful analgesic).
- Codeine (commonly used in certain cough medications).
- Some benzodiazepines.

3.3.2 Illicit Drugs

These substances are prohibited by law and have no legally authorized non-medical use.

Examples include:

- Heroin.
- Cocaine.
- LSD.

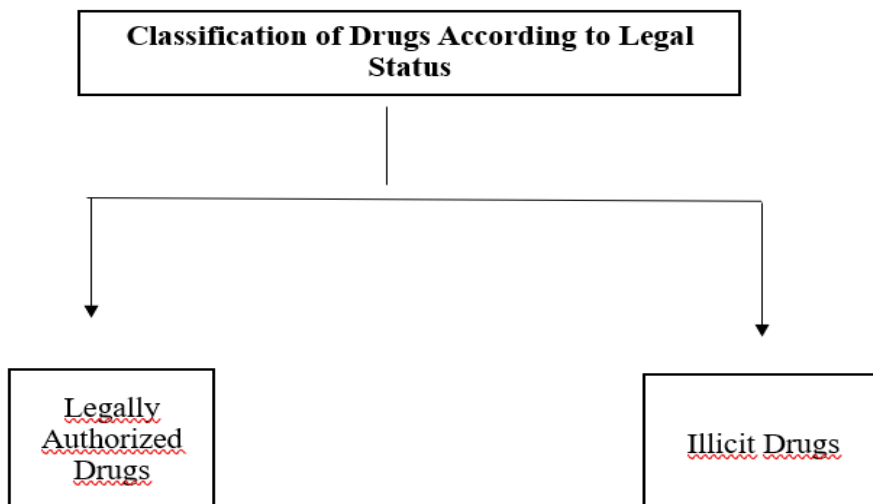


Figure 3.

4. The Drug Reality in Algeria: Use, Trafficking, and Addiction

Drug-related activities in Algeria constitute an increasingly serious social and public health challenge. The country has witnessed a steady rise in both drug consumption and drug trafficking, while security services continue to seize substantial quantities of various narcotic and psychotropic substances on a regular basis. The phenomenon is no longer confined to a particular age group. Rather, it affects diverse social categories, particularly adolescents and young adults, thereby intensifying its adverse effects on public health, social cohesion, and public security.

Algeria's geographical position has played a significant role in the expansion of drug trafficking activities. Located at the intersection of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, the country serves as a strategic transit corridor between producing and consuming regions. However, Algeria is no longer merely a transit country. In certain areas, cannabis cultivation has emerged for both commercial and personal consumption purposes, while the country has increasingly become a market for consumption and, to some extent, production of specific illicit substances.

Furthermore, Algeria's vast territory presents substantial challenges for law enforcement authorities, particularly along the southern and western borders, where drug trafficking and smuggling networks are highly active.

Table 1: Distribution of Seized Cannabis by Geographical Region (2015–2020)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
72731,438	81090,852	41492,505	19681,559	30477,923	45108,673
45788,616	18863,994	9207,262	9259,199	17850,426	29519,755
1607,740	1575,542	1021,094	1613,809	1968,678	947,291
6557,979	7558,742	889,047	1381,819	4836,393	1428,805
126685,773	1090989,130	52609,908	37936,386	55133 ;420	77004 ;524

Source: The National Office for Drug Abuse and Addiction Control 2015-2020

The statistical data reveal that the western and southern regions accounted for the largest proportions of seized cannabis during the study period. Large quantities of cannabis resin were intercepted in both regions. The prominence of the western region can largely be attributed to its proximity to a neighboring country widely recognized as one of the world's major producers of cannabis resin, making this border area particularly vulnerable to trafficking activities.

Similarly, the southern region presents significant challenges due to the vastness of its borders and the complexity of its terrain. These geographical characteristics facilitate illicit cross-border trafficking and complicate surveillance and enforcement efforts. Consequently, substantial quantities of drugs enter Algerian territory, generating a range of social, economic, and public health problems.

According to statistics published by the National Office for Drug Abuse and Addiction Control, the western region accounted for 58.87% of all cannabis seizures recorded in 2022, while the southern region accounted for 33.18%. With regard to psychotropic substances, the distribution pattern differed somewhat. The southern region represented 31.71% of all psychotropic substance seizures, whereas the central region accounted for 33.92%, representing the largest share nationwide.

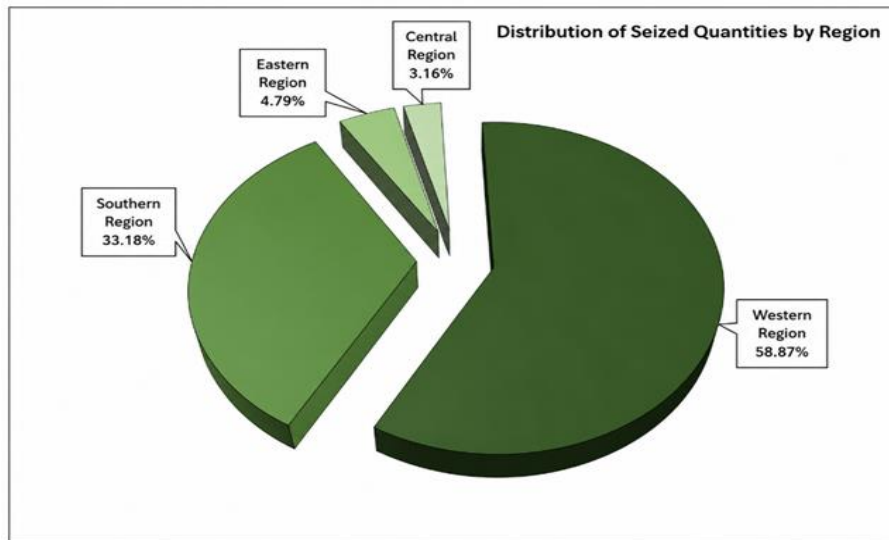


Figure 4. Regional Distribution of Cannabis Seizures in Algeria (2022)
Source: National Office for Drug Abuse and Addiction Control (2022).

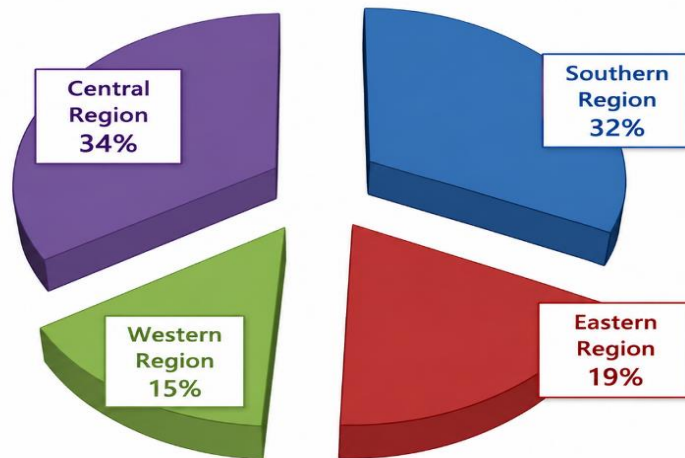


Figure 5. Regional Distribution of Psychotropic Substance Seizures in Algeria (2022)
Source: National Office for Drug Abuse and Addiction Control (2022).

As part of Algeria's efforts to combat drug trafficking, possession, consumption, and illicit distribution, official statistics provide insight into the number of individuals convicted in drug-related cases during 2022.

Table 2. Number of Individuals Convicted in Drug-Related Cases by Gender

Possession & Consumption Cases						Trafficking & Trade Cases					
Number of cases		Number of convicted people				Number of convicted people				Number of cases	
		Acquitted		Convicted		Acquitted		Convicted			
Closed	Registered	male	female	male	female	female	male	female	male	Registered	Closed
56,800	58,742	2151	70	57,637	440	65	1745	130	13853	58,742	56,800

Source: National Office for Drug Abuse and Addiction Control (2022).

The data indicate that 58,742 cases related to possession and consumption were registered during 2022, while 8,459 cases involved drug trafficking and distribution.

One notable finding is that drug-related offences are not exclusively associated with males. Women also appear among those convicted in such cases. The statistics show that:

130 women were convicted in trafficking and distribution cases.

440 women were convicted in possession and consumption cases.

These findings demonstrate that drug-related crime affects both genders and should not be viewed as a predominantly male phenomenon. The increasing involvement of women in drug-related offences raises serious concerns regarding future family stability and broader social cohesion.

If the drug problem is not addressed through evidence-based and professionally designed interventions, it may pose significant risks to the stability of both the family institution and society as a whole. Consequently, the development of effective social policies grounded in scientific research remains an urgent priority.

5. Causes and Factors of Drug Use in the School Environment

Drug use and addiction in the school environment represent a serious social phenomenon that threatens the social fabric and negatively affects the educational process as well as students' psychological and physical health. The causes and factors behind the spread of this phenomenon are diverse, ranging from social and economic factors to psychological and familial ones. The following section presents the main causes and contributing factors to the spread of drug use among school students.

5.1 Social factors

The social environment plays a central role in either increasing or reducing the risk of drug use among school students. The main factors include:

5.1.1 Weak parental supervision

Some recent studies have shown that weak parental supervision contributes to pushing the student toward drug use. When the family's role in monitoring children is absent, especially during adolescence, the student loses a sense of discipline, which makes them more vulnerable to risky behaviors such as drug use without understanding the consequences. In the absence of family communication and dialogue, the student seeks belonging and recognition elsewhere.

Weak parental supervision does not only mean the absence of daily monitoring, but also includes the absence of emotional support, behavioral guidance, and continuous dialogue. All of these elements constitute a protective environment when present, and a high-risk environment when absent (Hamad bin Muhammad Al-Manea et al., 2019, p. 235).

This leads the student to seek peer groups in the neighborhood or school environment, increasing exposure to deviant peers who may encourage drug use.

5.1.2 Family problems

The presence and recurrence of family problems such as divorce (family breakdown) or domestic violence whether between parents or between parents and children creates an unstable and tense environment. This may push the child to seek stability outside the family environment. The student may

also resort to drug use as a temporary escape from their stressful family situation.

5.1.3 School environment and external surroundings

The school environment and the student's social surroundings can significantly contribute to the spread of drug use. The lack of awareness and educational programs in schools about the dangers and consequences of drugs leaves students without sufficient and accurate information to make sound decisions.

In addition, the shortage of psychological and social counselors in schools deprives students of necessary support to face their social and psychological problems.

Most Algerian schools also lack extracurricular activities both educational and recreational which pushes students to seek alternative spaces for entertainment and exploration, including drug use.

5.2 Economic and cultural factors

Financial pressure on families may create a tense environment that sometimes leads children toward deviant behavior under the belief that necessity justifies means. Some students may engage in drug trafficking within their neighborhood or school environment to obtain money to meet unmet needs.

Globalization has also contributed culturally, as students are influenced by foreign cultures through media and social networks that sometimes portray drug use as a modern or liberating behavior. This may push adolescents to adopt such behavior as a form of modern identity expression.

5.2.1 Peer group

A study conducted by researchers on peer groups and drug use among juvenile users found that most drug users begin at an early age, mainly between 15–25 years. It also showed that most users consume drugs within peer groups, and that drug-using peer groups tend to encourage such behavior (Sahbi Ibrahim Al-Hajj et al., 2021, p. 438).

Peer groups are therefore a major social factor influencing student behavior, including drug use. Some friends may present drug experimentation as an “adventure” or entertainment, and refusal may lead to exclusion from the group. Observing peers using drugs may also normalize the behavior, especially in the absence of parental supervision.

When the peer group is accepting or encouraging of drug use, it provides psychological and social cover that reduces feelings of guilt or fear.

The following table illustrates the correlation between drug use and peer group influence :

Table No. 3 : Correlation between drug use and peer association

Correlations				
Have you had an experience with drug?			Do you have friends who use drugs?	
Spearman's rho	Have you had an experience with drug?	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,366**
		sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	446	446
	Do you have friends who use drugs?	Correlation coefficient	,366**	1,000
		sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	446	446

Source: Bouheraoua Azze-eddine et autres:Field study on drug use among students in Batna secondary school (Algeria) ; factors and effects,2024, P,661

The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the statistical analysis table show a correlation between the variable "friends who use drugs" and the variable "drug use" at a signification level of 0.00

5.3 Psychological and behavioral factors

Psychological factors constitute one of the main drivers of drug use among school students.

Adolescents go through critical developmental stages that strongly influence their behavior and decision-making.

Studies show that mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) increase the risk of drug use. Some students resort to drugs as a way to escape psychological distress.

Adolescents are also characterized by curiosity and a tendency toward rebellion, often using experimentation as a way to assert independence or challenge parental and school authority. Some students view drug use as a form of rebellion against social norms or a way to escape classroom pressure.

Additionally, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, feelings of social rejection, and depression may push some students to use drugs in an attempt to gain acceptance or improve their self-image.

6. Consequences of Drug Use and Addiction

Drug use does not only affect the individual's physical, psychological, and social health, but also extends to those around them and society as a whole. Drug use in all its forms contributes to increased insecurity and moral decline, leading to higher rates of crime such as theft and murder, thus threatening social stability. The following section presents the main negative consequences of drug use among adolescents and school youth.

6.1 Effects on the individual

The consequences of drug use and addiction are severe and even catastrophic for the individual's life and personal safety. They include chronic and life-threatening diseases, psychological crises that are difficult to overcome, and significant disruption to social life, including family and school environments.

6.1.1 Physical effects

- Brain cell damage due to drug overdose (<https://qaweern.sa>, August 2025)
- Serious diseases such as liver cirrhosis and kidney failure
- Increased risk of lung or stomach cancer
- Rupture of arteries and blood vessels, potentially leading to death
- Heart attacks, strokes, coma, and possible death

6.1.2 Psychological effects

- Panic attacks and persistent anxiety due to drug effects on the brain
- Severe depression and chronic sadness, potentially leading to suicide
- Possible development of bipolar disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Severe mood swings, alternating between calmness and extreme irritability

6.1.3 Social effects

6.1.3.1 Effects on the family

- Harsh or abusive treatment of the addicted child by family members
- Violence against parents or siblings under the influence of drugs
- Increased stress and tension within the household
- Constant fear and insecurity due to unpredictable behavior
- Family conflict and neglect of other children
- Emotional and psychological harm to siblings
- Theft of money or valuables to buy drugs
- Social stigma and isolation of the family

6.1.3.2 Effects on society

- Increase in violent crimes such as theft, murder, rape, and kidnapping
- High financial burden on the state for prevention and treatment programs
- Moral decline due to rising criminal behavior and lack of self-control (<https://altaafi.com.eg>)
- Spread of infectious diseases such as HIV due to shared needles

- Loss of skilled human capital, negatively affecting social and economic development

6.2 Educational and academic effects

Drug use negatively affects thinking, concentration, and memory, leading to reduced cognitive performance, lower academic achievement, higher failure rates, and increased school dropout.

The following table shows the correlation between student drug use and academic performance:

Table No. (4): Correlation between drug use and academic performance

Correlations				
Have you had an experience with drug?			What are the results of your study?	
Spearman's rho	Have you had an experience with drug?	Correlation coefficient	1,000	-,111*
		sig. (2-tailed)	.	,020
		N	446	446
	What are the results of your study?	Correlation coefficient	*111-,	1,000
		sig. (2-tailed)	,020	.
		N	446	446

Source: Bouheraoua Azze-eddine et autres:Field study on drug use among students in Batna secondary school (Algeria); factors and effects,2024, P,661

Commentary on the Table :

The statistical table indicates the existence of a correlation between students' academic performance and drug use at a statistical significance level of 0.02.

Note : This table falls within the first category of educational effects resulting from drug use.

- The presence of a student who uses drugs constitutes a negative role model and increases the risk of the phenomenon spreading among other students.
- Students who use drugs may become more aggressive or socially withdrawn, and they may display disrespectful behavior toward teachers, classmates, and even the school administrative staff.
- Frequent absenteeism from school is another consequence of drug use, which may eventually lead to school dropout.
- Drug addiction may also be associated with aggressive behavior, contributing to an increase in conflicts, fights, and the spread of school violence.

8.The Role of the Family, School, and Society in Drug Prevention

8.1 The Role of the Family in Drug Prevention

The family plays a fundamental role in protecting its members from drug abuse by providing a supportive, healthy, and nurturing environment. Through emotional, psychological, and social support, families foster trust, respect, and resilience among their members. Families also fulfill essential educational and socialization functions by instilling moral and social values that contribute to the healthy development of children.

Several preventive strategies can be adopted by families to reduce the risk of drug use among young people :

8.1.1 Building Strong Family Relationships

Family relationships should be based on healthy communication, mutual respect, and open dialogue. Parents bear primary responsibility for cultivating strong emotional bonds through effective communication and supportive interactions.

8.1.2 Promoting Awareness

Families should educate children about the dangers of drugs and the harmful physical, psychological, and social consequences of addiction. Parents must also serve as positive role models, as preventive messages lose credibility when contradicted by parental behavior.

8.1.3 Monitoring and Supervision

Parents should remain attentive to their children's behavior and peer relationships without creating an atmosphere of excessive control. Effective supervision requires balancing oversight with trust in order to foster a sense of security and openness.

8.1.4 Providing Emotional and Psychological Support

Listening to children's concerns and providing emotional support reduces the likelihood that they will seek maladaptive coping mechanisms such as drug use.

8.1.5 Educational Follow-Up

Parents should monitor their children's academic progress and maintain communication with teachers in order to identify behavioral changes or warning signs at an early stage.

8.2 The Role of the School in Drug Prevention

The school is one of the most important educational and social institutions involved in preventing drug abuse among students. Through educational programs, awareness campaigns, and supportive interventions, schools can play a decisive role in protecting students from substance use and addiction.

8.2.1 The Teacher's Role in Preventive Education

Teachers are not only instructors but also mentors, guides, and role models. They contribute to students' intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development. To maximize their effectiveness, teachers should actively participate in extracurricular activities, parent-teacher associations, and awareness programs designed to educate students about the dangers of drug use and its impact on their health, education, and future careers.

8.2.2 The Role of Educational Curricula

Contemporary curricula extend beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. They function as educational tools that connect students to social reality and promote higher-order thinking skills. Through carefully designed curricula, schools can foster awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and encourage responsible decision-making and healthy lifestyles.

8.2.3 The Role of School Activities

Extracurricular activities constitute a fundamental component of modern education. They satisfy students' psychological, social, physical, and developmental needs while providing meaningful opportunities for self-expression and personal growth. Such activities contribute to the holistic development of students and serve as effective preventive mechanisms against engagement in risky behaviors, including drug use.

8.3 The Role of Society in Drug Prevention

Prevention remains one of the most effective strategies for reducing the spread of drugs within society. Preventive programs aim to protect community members particularly adolescents and young adults—by addressing or minimizing the factors that contribute to drug use.

8.3.1 Involvement of Key Social Sectors

Effective community-based prevention requires cooperation among all major social institutions, including law enforcement agencies, government bodies, civil society organizations, healthcare institutions, and the media.

8.3.2 Early Warning Signs of Addiction

Families should remain attentive to indicators that may suggest substance abuse, including:

- Sudden changes in friendship networks.
- Increased aggression and irritability.
- Social withdrawal and isolation.
- Chronic absenteeism from school or work.
- Unexplained access to money or financial resources.

- Volatile and conflictual relationships with parents and siblings.

8.3.3 Governmental and Legal Institutions

Law enforcement agencies and governmental bodies contribute to prevention efforts by combating drug trafficking, distribution, and consumption. Strict legal measures against traffickers and dealers play a significant role in limiting the availability of illicit substances.

8.3.4 Media and Social Media Platforms

Traditional and digital media perform important educational functions through awareness campaigns, television programs, radio broadcasts, and online content. By disseminating scientifically accurate information and engaging specialists in medicine, psychology, and sociology, media outlets can contribute substantially to public awareness and prevention efforts.

8.3.5 Healthcare Institutions

Healthcare organizations support prevention through health education, treatment services, rehabilitation programs, and psychological support for individuals recovering from addiction. These interventions reduce relapse rates and facilitate successful recovery.

8.3.6 Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations constitute strategic partners in drug prevention. Their effectiveness stems from their close connection to local communities and their ability to engage directly with young people and families.

Their contributions include:

- Organizing workshops, lectures, and awareness campaigns in schools and universities.
- Conducting public outreach initiatives through social media and community events.
- Collaborating with psychologists, social workers, and healthcare professionals to provide guidance and early intervention services.
- Facilitating social reintegration through vocational training, employment support, and rehabilitation programs for recovering individuals.
- Providing educational programs for parents on identifying warning signs of substance abuse and improving communication with their children.

9. Conclusion

Drug use within the school environment should be understood not merely as an individual act of deviance but as a reflection of broader social dysfunctions. Drawing on Durkheim's sociological perspective (Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*), deviant behavior emerges when mechanisms of social regulation weaken and when social institutions fail to perform their integrative and regulatory functions effectively.

Within the educational context, such dysfunction manifests itself through inadequate parental supervision and socialization practices, as well as the school's inability to consistently reinforce social values and regulate behavior within its environment. Furthermore, peer-group pressure and the growing influence of consumerist and digital cultures constitute significant factors encouraging experimentation with drugs among students.

Consequently, addressing this phenomenon cannot be limited to security-based or medical approaches alone. Rather, it requires a comprehensive and forward-looking sociological framework that emphasizes the complementary roles of families, schools, civil society organizations, and public policies. Protecting the school environment from drugs is therefore not merely an educational responsibility but a broader societal imperative that depends upon society's capacity to reproduce balanced patterns of socialization capable of promoting prevention, protection, and the well-being of future generations.

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