

Sociological Approach to Drugs as Youth Risk: From the Traditional Image to the Digital Phenomenon

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Abstract:

This study rigorously investigates both traditional and digital drug modalities, assessing which is perceived as more perilous among the youth. It delves into the motivations for initiating drug use in both forms and elucidates the resultant symptoms. Employing a descriptive methodology, the research utilized interviews for data gathering and a case study approach for detailed analysis.

The findings reveal that both traditional and digital drugs precipitate a state of euphoria, traditional drugs through various hallucinogenic substances, and digital drugs through perilous electronic euphoria induced by magnetic and musical vibrations accessed via advanced digital networks. Commonalities in symptoms and initiation reasons were observed, with neither form being negligible. Key initiation factors span psychological, educational, social, and economic domains, while prevalent symptoms include insomnia, addiction, euphoria, isolation, and conspicuous physical disorders such as red eyes.

Keywords: Sociology, Drugs, Social Risk, Traditional Drugs, Digital Drugs.

Introduction:

Drugs are a pervasive social malady disrupting the orderly functioning of societal systems and causing disturbances within cherished social constructs. With the advent of digitization and globalization, the drug paradigm has transformed significantly. Traditional drugs, historically confined to substances like hashish and opium, now also encompass technological innovations, giving rise to what are termed 'digital drugs.'

These drugs emit magnetic and musical vibrations that profoundly affect the mind, facilitated by sophisticated and compromised digital networks. This engagement results in a gradual but formidable addiction, inducing a euphoria akin to that experienced with traditional drugs, albeit with intensified symptoms and a more tenacious addictive nature that challenges cessation and treatment.

Based on what has been discussed, we pose the following questions:

- _ How do youth differentiate between traditional and digital drugs, and which type do they deem more hazardous?
- _ What drives the youth towards initial use of both traditional and digital drugs?
- _ What are the predominant symptoms observed with the use of each drug type?

Study Objectives:

This research aims to:

- _ Thoroughly discern and compare traditional and digital drug forms, evaluating which is perceived as more perilous by the youth.
- _ Unveil the multifaceted reasons behind drug initiation in both arenas.
- _ Illuminate the array of symptoms engendered by each drug type.

Study Importance:

The relevance of this study is underscored by its examination of a pressing issue that straddles both historical and contemporary realms, exhibiting dual facets. Despite the manifold benefits of electronic communication networks, they introduce significant drawbacks that undermine individual and family stability.

The critical importance of this subject is reflected in its societal message, which raises alarms regarding both traditional and digital drugs, the latter stemming from modern communication methods.

This investigation not only sheds light on pressing societal issues like increased dropout rates, unemployment, and divorce rates, which have intensified due to the digital drug phenomenon but also contributes valuable theoretical and empirical insights to the academic discourse.

Study Concepts:

Definition of Drugs:

Drugs invoke a state of lethargy and immobility, incapacitating the user and dulling both physical and emotional sensations (Jaber et al., 2005, p. 9).

Scientific Definition of Drugs:

Chemically, drugs are substances that induce drowsiness, sleep, or unconsciousness, often accompanied by pain alleviation (Mabrouk, 2004, p. 14).

Defined by Armouch(1993), a drug is a preparation derived from plant, animal, or synthetic chemical sources that impacts humans, animals, and plants in either a detrimental or beneficial manner (p. 2).

Previous Studies:

- **"The Risks of Digital Drugs and How to Confront Them" by Fouzi Louhidi and Ali Hamed (2020):** This study adopts a theoretical and analytical framework to explore key concepts associated with digital drugs. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical method, it analyzes various sources and data. The research underscores that digital drugs continue to stir scientific controversy regarding their real psychological and physical impacts.
- **"Drugs and Their Psychological, Social, and Economic Effects in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries" by Khaled Hamad Al-Muhannadi (2013):** This study identifies prevalent drugs and the reasons behind their use, employing a descriptive methodology with questionnaires distributed to a purposive sample of prisoners. Findings include:
 - _ The initial information gathering stage about drugs predominantly occurs during the preparatory school phase.
 - _ Media emerges as the primary source for drug-related information.
 - _ Common locales for student drug use include vehicles.
 - _ Heroin ranks as the most prevalent drug, with injection as the chief method of administration.
- **"Crime and Addiction to Drugs" by Maha Rajeeem Salem (2012):** This investigation aims to delineate the distinction between drug use and addiction, identify drug types, and explore the nexus between criminal activities and drug usage. Employing a descriptive methodology and questionnaires for data collection, the study concludes:
 - _ A direct correlation exists between drug usage and addiction, with addiction defined as the compulsive, repetitive use of one or more substances, leading to physical dependency.

Commentary on Previous Studies:

The earlier studies act as pivotal reference points, shaping the trajectory of this research. The methodologies and tools employed in these studies have been adopted and refined to fit the contours of the current investigation.

Methodology:

Addressing the multifaceted challenges of contemporary social issues, our study employs a descriptive approach complemented by a case study methodology. This involves formulating questions that encompass all research variables, addressing these through theoretical lenses, and deriving conclusions grounded in this robust interrogation.

Tools:

Data was gathered using a structured interview format, organized around five distinct axes:

First Axis: Personal data including age and gender.

Second Axis: Youth perspectives on traditional versus digital drugs and assessments of their relative dangers.

Third Axis: Exploration of the reasons that youth turn to both types of drugs.

Fourth Axis: Identification of the most significant symptoms resulting from the use of both drug types.

Concepts Related to Drugs:

Addiction (Language):

Originating from the verb 'to addict', the term implies a compulsion to continue a particular behavior, such as alcohol consumption (Ibn Hadiyah, Al-Hassan, Al-Jilani, 1995, p. 25).

Addiction (Terminology): Defined by the World Health Organization as a psychological, and sometimes physical, state that manifests from the interaction between a living organism and a drug, characterized by behavioral responses including a compulsive urge to consume the drug regularly or intermittently to experience its psychological effects and, at times, to mitigate the discomfort of withdrawal (Schilit, R, 1999).

Dependence: In some social science literature, 'dependence' is used interchangeably with 'addiction'. This concept covers all types of drugs, irrespective of whether they lead to physical dependence (Al-Achmawi, Metwally, 2009, p. 51).

Habituation: Defined by the World Health Organization's Expert Committee as a condition arising from continuous substance use, characterized by a non-compulsive desire to continue use, a potential slight increase in dosage, and psychological dependence without physical dependence or withdrawal symptoms. The effects of habituation are primarily personal and limited to the individual (Al-Achmawi, Metwally, 2009, p. 60).

Dependency: This term refers to a state wherein an individual is subject to the influence of a drug and feels the necessity to continue its use to avoid adverse symptoms resulting from its absence (Aanem, 2006, p. 19).

Usage: As defined in Lisan al-Arab by Ibn Manzur, 'usage' refers to the consumption of substances that are neither rightful nor permissible. It encapsulates the intake of everything that is prohibited and forbidden, whether by religious edicts, law, or societal norms (Ibn Mandur, Ibn Makram, 1968, p. 110).

Tolerance: This term refers to the body's adaptation to a drug, such that the cells become desensitized to the same dosage over time. Tolerance reflects a decrement in a drug's biological effect with repeated use of a consistent dose. Consequently, the original dose no longer suffices to achieve the desired effect or satisfaction; instead, the body demands progressively larger doses to attain the same physiological impact as initially experienced (Samir Said Hejazy, p. 36).

Craving: Craving embodies the intense, urgent need to consume a drug. It acts as an internal motivator that drives the addict to seek out and consume the drug to which they have grown accustomed, often compelling them to increase the dosage. This craving manifests as a continuous and relentless endeavor by the addict to procure the drug (Al-Hassan, 2005, p. 70).

Types of Drugs:

Natural Drugs:

These are drugs derived from poppy, cannabis, coca, and khat plants, whose leaves, flowers, or fruits contain narcotic substances, specifically:

- **Cannabis:**

Known scientifically as "Cannabis Indica," this plant exhibits distinct male and female characteristics that can be identified by the naked eye upon maturity, signaled by specific markers at the branch tips. These markers are organized, small in size, and surrounded by a green floral wrap (Al-Khatib, Dasna, p. 13).

Historically, cannabis was cultivated for its fibrous content used in rope making and fabric weaving, and occasionally, it served as a sedative in medicinal practices (Al-Maghribi, 1981, p. 15).

- **Opium:**

Derived from the milky sap of the opium poppy, "opium" is a term that originates from the Greek word for sap. The sap is harvested by making vertical incisions in the seed pods of the plant, which thrives in temperate and subtropical climates (Al-Barak, 1991, p. 65).

- **Coca:**

This plant is predominantly grown in the Andean highlands of South America and Argentina. The soft, oval-shaped leaves grow in clusters of seven and are sometimes processed into a paste or mixed with tobacco for smoking (Imam, 1990, p. 55).

- **Khat:**

A shrub native to the humid, mountainous regions of East and South Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, notably in Ethiopia, Somalia, Aden, and Yemen. The shrubs vary in height, typically ranging from one

to two meters in warmer areas and up to three to four meters in tropical climates (Al-Barsali, 1404H, p. 67).

Naturally Derived Drugs:

- **Morphine:**

Extracted from the poppy straw, morphine can also be obtained through filtration processes. It appears as a fine powder, typically formed into cubes and varying in color from white and pale yellow to brown, possibly with a slight acidic odor.

Morphine's significant effects include severe constipation, nausea, excessive sweating, skin itching, and the prolongation of labor. Notably, morphine is a potent analgesic and intoxicant that can quickly lead to addiction if misused (Mansour, Dasna, p. 173).

Chemically Classified Drugs:

- **Hallucinogens:**

These drugs have the capacity to disrupt sexual responses along with variations in personality, impacts on memory, learning behaviors, and other functions. Among these drugs are:

- **Narcotic Analgesics, such as Heroin:** Heroin is one of the most potent drugs, with its efficacy being 5-6 times that of morphine. It causes rapid addiction and is only used as a substitute for morphine in treating intractable cancer patients in Britain (Mansour, Dasna, p. 129).
- **Sedatives and Tranquilizers:** Sedatives affect brain functions, similar to alcohol, impairing the ability to concentrate and reducing the capacity to efficiently operate vehicles or perform other motor skills. Minor tranquilizers include drugs like Valium (Mansour, Dasna, p. 144).

Secondly: Social Effects on the Individual, Family, and Society:

- Individual Impact:** The user often resorts to isolation and withdrawal from others for fear of being exposed, becoming ostracized by society and undesirable for social interactions.
- Family Impact:** The family suffers a prolonged ordeal in hiding the addiction and repeatedly attempting treatment, which leads them to adopt lying, causing familial structure to crack and collapse, especially if the addict is the father or breadwinner. This may lead to moral and behavioral deviations among the children and increase their propensity to commit crimes.
- Loss of Values and Principles:** Addicts strive to obtain their fix by any means necessary, leading them to fall into vice and commit violations and sexual crimes to finance their addiction.
- Impact on Family Reputation:** The family of an addict often suffers from a poor reputation due to the addict's behavior and addiction, leading many to avoid forming relationships with such families, especially concerning marriages or engaging their children in marriage.
- Potential for Addiction to Spread to Others:** Many addicts transfer their addictive behaviors to those around them, including children or siblings (Mansour, Dasna, p. 9).

Preventive and Treatment Methods for Drug Addiction:

- Physical Treatment:** Physical treatment involves providing the addict with vitamins, nutrients, and beneficial foods to strengthen their physical condition, compensating for the body's losses due to loss of appetite and abstention from food, as most drug addicts suffer from emaciation and weakness (Abdel Rahman Al-Eissawy, 1993, p. 128).
- Treatment with Hypnosis and Warning:** This treatment relies on administering sedatives to the addict for a duration ranging from five to eight days (BasyouniMetwali, 2003, p. 70).
- Treatment for Depression:** Drugs are administered to the addict to address the depression resulting from low morale, lack of self-confidence, and feelings of sadness and discomfort (Abdul Moneim, p. 4).
- Treatment with Electric Shock:** Electric shock therapy is a commonly used technique in addiction treatment, involving the administration of sedatives, sleep aids, detoxifying drugs, and vitamins (BasyouniMetwali, 2003, p. 70).
- Psychological Treatment:** Psychological treatment involves using various psychological techniques and methods to assist the addict in recovering from their condition, performed by a team of specialists in various branches of psychology (Al-Essawy, p. 130).

Secondly: An Examination of Digital Drugs

Definition of Digital Drug Addiction:

Digital drugs, also known as "Drogues Numériques" in French or simply "Digital Drugs" in English, are more technically referred to as "Binaural Beats." These auditory stimuli consist of sounds or tones believed to induce brain alterations akin to the effects of conventional drugs such as opium, hashish, and marijuana.

The specific impact is achieved through audio files containing monaural or binaural tones. When these tones are listened to, they can bring the brain into a state of numbness comparable to that induced by physical drugs, effectively altering or obscuring consciousness (Abu Douh, 2016).

Digital drugs may lead to a form of psychological addiction that presents unique challenges in treatment, distinct from physical addictions. This is supported by targeted research using EEG (Electroencephalography) to assess the impact of binaural beats, revealing significant evidence that even a single exposure can profoundly influence the auditory guidance of this subjective experience, impacting emotional and cognitive states (Fawzi A. Mansouri, 2017).

EEG is a diagnostic tool that records the electrical activity of the brain across the scalp. It measures voltage fluctuations resulting from ionic currents within brain neurons, capturing the brain's spontaneous electrical activity over a period. This tool is instrumental in diagnosing and understanding the effects of digital drugs on brain function.

Some experts argue that digital drugs function like loud music that affects human mood, mimicking the effects of substances like marijuana, hashish, and cocaine. The auditory experience is delivered via headphones or speakers, with the brain merging two distinct signals to produce a third sound known as "binaural beats." This phenomenon can cause illusions and transport listeners to a state of altered consciousness, potentially disrupting their mental and physical equilibrium (Louhidi, Hamed, 2020).

Mechanisms and Causes of Digital Drug Addiction:

- **Mechanism of Digital Drugs:**

In this contemporary form of drug consumption facilitated by the internet, the 'drug dealer' operates from a computer to receive orders through their website. Unlike traditional drug transactions, there is no physical delivery; instead, the buyer procures the drug in the form of digital files.

The process involves downloading specific audio files designed to produce desired effects when listened to through earphones. Each ear receives different sound waves, coupled with a specialized application designed for this type of auditory experience, known as (i_Doser). Users can select from various musical doses available on the site, then download and purchase these files to be played on an MP3 player with stereo headphones.

The typical protocol involves lying down in a dimly lit room, eyes covered, focusing intently on the music, which lasts between 15-30 minutes for moderate doses or up to 45 minutes for more potent doses (Meisoum, 2016).

- **Reasons for Addiction:**

- _ Globalization of the rights system and considering the information network a right for all.
- _ Weak religious and moral restraints in the individual.
- _ Association and companionship with bad influences.
- _ Feelings of emptiness and void.
- _ Travel and influence by foreigners.
- _ Availability of money, especially among the youth.
- _ Personal, social, and family troubles and problems.
- _ Love of imitation and curiosity.
- _ Prevalence of false ideas about digital drugs.
- _ Ease of access to websites promoting them (Jaloul and Farhat, 2020).

It is observed that many countries do not yet recognize the potential dangers of digital drugs, often not treating them as a significant threat to youth. This oversight has led to their rapid proliferation within society, positioning this phenomenon as a potential future pandemic that could prove challenging to control.

Additionally, the absence of religious edicts explicitly forbidding this phenomenon has led many adolescents and young people to gravitate towards it, under the mistaken belief that it is permissible (Al-Sadik, 2020).

The Difference between Traditional and Digital Drugs:

Traditional drugs are known to affect all body organs with scientifically verified effects, offering absolute certainty in their impact. In contrast, digital drugs lack comprehensive scientific validation to confirm their efficacy in inducing a state of euphoria akin to that produced by traditional drugs. While organic drugs induce actual anesthesia, digital drugs primarily produce auditory effects that mimic this state (Chehata, 2018, pp. 05-06).

Experts contend that addiction to digital drugs constitutes a psychological dependency rather than a physical addiction to the sounds themselves. Globally, this form of addiction is not widely recognized and is often dismissed as merely persistent and bothersome noise, akin to the sounds produced by heavy industrial machinery.

These sounds, comprising both audible and inaudible sound waves, can impact nerve and brain cells. Experts also assert that while listening to these sounds does not lead to addiction per se, it can result in destructive negative effects such as diminished concentration and brain cell dysfunction.

Moreover, the unsettling nature of these sounds could potentially drive teenagers and young adults towards actual drug addiction, as corroborated by several studies. A notable instance is the study published by the "Washington Post" conducted by the American Institute for Drug Control in 2010, which highlighted the "lack of any scientific data regarding this phenomenon" (Chehata, 2018, p.06).

Diagnosis of Digital Drugs:

Evidence suggests that exposure to specific binaural pulses, commonly utilized in some hypnotic techniques, can alter mental states, characterized by:

- Exacerbation of epilepsy attacks.
- Serious health complications for individuals with heart conditions.
- Increased occurrences of headaches, insomnia, nightmares, and episodes of anxiety (<https://www.hopeeg.com/>).

Presentation and Summary of Results:

First Axis: Personal Data (Age, Gender)

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Members by Age Variable

Age	Sample Members	Percentage %
18-23	05	
23-28	25	
28-33	05	
Total	35	

From the collected data, it is evident that a significant portion of our sample falls within the age range of 23-28. This prevalence is attributed to the ease of communication with this demographic, facilitated by their consistent presence in accessible locations, which enhanced interaction opportunities. In contrast, the segment of late adolescents is minimally represented in the sample, primarily due to the sensitivity associated with this developmental stage.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Members by Gender Variable

Gender	Sample Members	Percentage %
Male	12	
Female	23	
Total	35	

The data above illustrates that females constitute a higher percentage of the sample, suggesting a greater openness or availability among female participants regarding the subject of drug use, which is often viewed as a sensitive and risky topic for males.

Table 3: Youth Perspectives on Traditional and Digital Drugs, and Which Type is More Dangerous

Drug Type	Males	Females
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Traditional Drugs	Associated with hashish, "candy," heroin, "milk powder," kohl, used by injection or inhalation.	Narcotics, opium, hallucinogens, injectable drugs.
Digital Drugs	Drug music, obtained through internet piracy, euphoric, advanced type, cannot be inhaled like traditional drugs, innovative.	A new type, acquired digitally, intangible.
The More Dangerous	Both, however, traditional drugs are considered more dangerous because they are easily accessible, and their effects are visible on the individual.	Digital drugs are harder to detect as their presence is not easily noticeable.

The table above reflects distinct perceptions between males and females concerning drug types. Males categorize drugs with familiar street names, demonstrating their awareness of the physical methods of drug intake and the clandestine nature of obtaining traditional drugs, often linked with financial transactions. In contrast, digital drugs are perceived as a modern, intangible form that cannot be procured through conventional means, even with financial incentives.

Females, on the other hand, differentiate between drug types more generally, acknowledging the dangers associated with both but noting the specific risks of traditional drugs due to their accessibility and the visible impact they have on users. Conversely, digital drugs, while less detectable, pose a challenge due to their elusive nature and poorly understood symptoms.

Table 4: Reasons for Drug Usage and Main Symptoms of Traditional and Digital Drugs

Sample Members	Reasons for Drug Usage		Main Symptoms	
	Traditional	Digital	Traditional	Digital
Males	Social, bad influences, environmental, psychological reasons such as lack of emotional support	Technological, Internet-related	Addiction, usage, deviance, crime, violence	Isolation from social world, insomnia, headaches
Females	Social, psychological, educational, economic reasons such as unemployment	Technological	Crime, unemployment, deviance, isolation, irrational behavior, madness, red eyes, strange odor	Isolation, euphoria

The findings from the table indicate that psychological and social factors are prominent drivers behind the usage of traditional drugs, while advancements in technology significantly influence the shift towards digital drugs. Both categories of drugs commonly lead to symptoms such as isolation and euphoria, which subsequently have detrimental effects on individual health.

Conclusion:

Digital drugs emerge as a contemporary technological phenomenon causing profound effects. These drugs generate euphoria through binaural beats and emit electronic vibrations that lead to addiction. On the other hand, traditional drugs continue to pose a significant threat to youth, who often turn to these substances due to a combination of psychological, social, and educational pressures.

This study asserts that both traditional and digital drugs elicit traditional euphoria from various hallucinogens, and in the digital realm, they induce a perilous electronic euphoria. Common symptoms and underlying reasons for usage are consistent across both drug types, underscoring the importance of addressing each with equal seriousness.

The reasons driving youth towards drug usage span psychological, educational, social, and economic factors. The principal symptoms associated with both types of drugs include insomnia, addiction, euphoria, isolation, and noticeable physical disturbances such as red eyes.

Key Recommendations:

- Integration of youth into employment, even through part-time contracts.
- Continuous awareness of the harms of both types of drugs through media and its new technologies.

- Development of educational and awareness programs within university institutions to inform youth about the harms of both types of drugs.

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