LIMES PLUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities
limesplus.org/limesplus

Volume 23 · Issue 1 · 2026 Pages 3311–3317

The Effectiveness of Agencies of Socialization in Reducing Addiction

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Received: 2026-02-04 | **Accepted:** 2026-06-25 | **Published:** 2026-11-03

Abstract

Socialization agencies play a vital role in reducing addiction through prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. Their effectiveness is greatest when they work in an integrated and coordinated manner to address this phenomenon, which poses a serious threat to society. Weakness in any part of this system increases exposure to risk factors that may lead individuals to addiction. Effective prevention requires a comprehensive societal effort that begins within the family, which serves as the first line of defense in shaping an individual's personality. This effort extends to specialized institutions that contribute to personality development and protect individuals from addiction, benefiting both individuals and society.

Keywords: Addiction, Agencies of Socialization, Social Control, Social Deviance.

1. Introduction:

Addiction is among the most significant sociological and psychological problems threatening the structure of contemporary societies. It extends beyond individual behavior and constitutes a complex social phenomenon with harmful consequences for individuals and society as a whole. From a sociological perspective, individuals are not viewed in isolation but as products of continuous interactions with their social environments. This perspective highlights the central role of socialization.

Socialization is a dynamic, continuous process through which individuals acquire the values, norms, and social rules that enable them to integrate into and adapt to society. This process is carried out by institutions known as agencies of socialization, including the family, schools, peer groups, religious institutions, and the media.

The effectiveness of these agencies in reducing addiction can be understood through the concept of social control. They serve as preventive mechanisms by strengthening individuals' social capital and providing support networks that reduce the risk of deviance and vulnerability to addiction. When these agencies fail to fulfill their roles, social disintegration may occur. Inadequate family supervision or the limited role of schools, for example, can create conditions that encourage the emergence of addictive behaviors as a form of social deviance.

Accordingly, this paper examines the effectiveness of agencies of socialization in establishing a strong protective framework against addiction. Their role extends beyond raising awareness of the risks of addiction to instilling a strong system of values and internal mechanisms of control. These enable individuals to resist social and psychological pressures that may lead to substance use. The paper emphasizes that a comprehensive solution requires integrating and coordinating the collective efforts of these agencies through a proactive prevention strategy reinforced by society's social and religious values.

2. Drug Addiction

Addiction is a chronic brain disorder characterized by a compulsive urge to use a substance or engage in a particular behavior despite its harmful consequences. It involves physical and psychological dependence on a substance or behavior and may also manifest in activities such as gaming, gambling, and internet use. Signs of addiction may include sudden lifestyle changes, mood swings, social withdrawal, and declining performance.

Addiction has also been defined as a condition characterized by a compelling need for a natural or synthetic drug, accompanied by psychological and physical dependence (Mikha'il, 1996, p. 456).

2.1 Factors and Causes of Drug Addiction:

Among the most important factors that increase an individual's likelihood of developing addiction are the following:

- **Individual/Personal Factors:** These include personality characteristics, such as low self-esteem, an inability to cope with emotional stress, and co-occurring psychological disorders, such as depression and anxiety.
- **Biological/Genetic Factors:** Heredity plays a role in an individual's susceptibility to addiction. Drugs affect brain chemistry and reward pathways.
- **Social/Environmental Factors:** These include the following:
- **The Family:** Family disintegration, the absence of parental supervision, and abuse are major risk factors.
- **The Peer Group:** Peer pressure and the desire to belong may lead individuals to experiment with drugs.
- **Society:** The ready availability of drugs and insufficient awareness of their risks.

2.2 Steps and Stages of Substance Use:

This section traces the development of the problem from occasional use to full addiction:

- **Stages of Substance Use:** These begin with experimentation, progress to regular use, and culminate in full physical and psychological dependence.
- **The Addiction Cycle:** A model consisting of three recurring stages: intoxication/binge use, withdrawal/negative affect, and preoccupation/anticipation (craving).
- **Behaviors Indicative of Addiction:** Physical changes, such as sleep problems and loss of appetite, social isolation, and deteriorating academic or occupational performance.

2.3 Effects and Harms Resulting from Drug Use: This section examines the adverse consequences of addiction at various levels:

2.3.1 Health and Psychological Harms: The nature of drug addiction is generally associated with three distinct aspects, briefly presented as follows:

- **Psychological Dependence:** The actual or intense desire that drives repeated use of a narcotic substance to obtain pleasure or relieve psychological distress.
- **Physical Dependence:** A state in which the body adapts to a drug, manifested in physiological disturbances that vary in severity when the drug cannot be taken. This dependence sometimes produces an intense, intolerable desire to take the drug. Among the substances most commonly associated with physical dependence are alcoholic beverages (alcohol), opium, and its derivatives.
- **Tolerance:** The body's adaptation to a narcotic substance, whereby its use necessitates increasing the quantities consumed to obtain the same desired effect. This depends on the type of drug used: some do not produce habituation, whereas others produce it rapidly. (Lamsawri, 2008, pp. 144-145)

2.3.2 Social and Family Harms:

Family disintegration, increased divorce rates, rejection of social values, and behavioral deviance, including a tendency toward theft or violence.

2.3.3 Economic Harms:

High treatment costs, job losses, and the economic burden on individuals and society.

2.4 Prevention, Control, and Countering Drugs:

This section focuses on strategies and interventions to limit the spread of addiction:

- **Primary Prevention:** Media campaigns, school-based education about risks, and the involvement of parents and community leaders in promoting drug-free environments.
- **Subsequent or Secondary Prevention:** Early detection of substance use and the provision of clinics for addiction treatment and rehabilitation.
- **The Role of Agencies of Socialization:** Strengthening the role of the family, school, religious institutions, and civil society in developing a strong personality protected against addiction.

2.5 Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation:

This section addresses the pathway to recovery and reintegration:

- **Detoxification (Detoxification):** The initial stage of eliminating physical dependence through the use of specialized medications.
- **Psychological and Behavioral Therapy:** Individual and group therapy sessions, such as the 12-step program, to address the psychological and underlying causes of addiction.
- **Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration:** Helping individuals in recovery return to their normal lives, develop their skills, and avoid triggers that may lead to relapse.

White poisons in Arab countries, such as heroin, morphine, cocaine, and others, do not currently constitute a serious problem. There are individuals with addiction, but they are few, whereas the real problem in some Arab countries is addiction to hashish in particular, predominantly among young people (Anshasi, 2001, p. 125). This, of course, does not mean that white poisons should not be combated. Rather, these substances are not available to everyone because of their exorbitant prices, whereas other substances permeate society because their prices are somewhat affordable and young people can purchase them.

3. The Effectiveness of Agencies of Socialization

The effectiveness of each is explained below:

3.1 The Family

The family is the first and most important agency of socialization and addiction prevention. As a healthy and supportive environment, it can significantly reduce the likelihood of addiction. The following are some approaches that families can adopt to prevent addiction:

- **Communication and Dialogue:** Encouraging honest communication and active listening to children helps identify their problems and assist them before these problems worsen.
- **Constructive Use of Leisure Time:** Directing children toward beneficial activities, such as sports and clubs, prevents their involvement in negative behaviors.
- **Good Communication:** Family members should be able to communicate effectively and openly. There should be a safe space in which individuals can express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment or criticism.

- **Building Strong Relationships:** Family members should have healthy, balanced relationships. Trust and respect among them should be strengthened, as should strong emotional bonds.
- **Raising Awareness:** Family members' awareness of the risks of addiction and the adverse effects it can cause should be strengthened. Open discussions and conversations can be used to raise awareness and exchange information. (The Role of the Family in Preventing Addiction, 2024)
- **Supervision and Guidance:** The family exercises effective, informal parental supervision and guides children toward appropriate behaviors.
- **Developing Values and Morals:** Instilling religious and moral values helps fill children's spiritual void, thereby reducing the likelihood of deviance.

3.2 The School:

The school plays an effective and important role after the family. The absence of firm administration encourages pupils to use drugs, while curiosity, inquisitiveness, and imitation among pupils facilitate their spread. Schools should therefore train pupils to comply with school rules and learn to participate in formulating rules and regulations. They should also help pupils accept and respect others and overcome self-centeredness, provide psychological and social care, and help them resolve problems (Raziqa, 2023, p. 134). Thus, the school's role is not confined to education; it also has an important preventive role that complements the family's role through several mechanisms, including the following:

- **Raising Awareness of Drug Risks:** Providing health and cultural awareness programs on the harms of drugs and the misuse of psychotropic substances, alcoholic beverages, and all substances that impair the mind.
- **Psychological and Social Counseling:** Social workers and counselors contribute to pupils' psychological and social adjustment and provide support to those experiencing difficulties.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Engaging students' leisure time in positive activities, such as sports and cultural pursuits, reduces the likelihood of their resorting to drugs. These activities help pupils integrate into positive peer groups.

3.3 Religious Institutions:

These institutions strengthen religious and moral restraint and contribute to individuals' internal protection. Scholars, preachers, and all Muslims must therefore explain, through various means, that Islam opposes every intoxicant, narcotic, enervating substance, and substance that impairs consciousness and sound judgment, that religion prohibits them, and that God Almighty punishes their use. Cigarette smoking is also prohibited. We should therefore follow the example of Canada and some Western countries by taking the following measures:

- Prohibiting direct or indirect tobacco advertising across all media in Islamic societies.
- Banning smoking in workplaces, educational institutions, transportation, and places frequented by the public in general.

Furthermore, it is neither logical nor reasonable to establish an office to combat drugs, with scholars and jurists prohibiting drugs by analogy with alcohol, while shops selling alcoholic beverages open their doors to our children and brothers. (Rida, 2019, p. 101)

3.4 Media and Communication:

The media have considerable power to shape attitudes and guide public opinion. They can contribute by raising awareness, launching intensive campaigns about the risks of addiction, and providing purposeful content that includes educational programs aimed at developing a strong and informed personality. Today, we observe that media audiences are not influenced by media messages in the manner previously assumed by what is known as the “magic bullet” theory. Instead, the principle of selectivity (Selectivity) has

emerged, indicating that media use is subject to individual considerations, personality characteristics, and personal circumstances. These campaigns have therefore neglected such differences (Tayfur, 2018, p. 143). Accordingly, the psychological and social circumstances of young people in particular should be considered when preparing and producing these programs.

3.5 Civil Society Organizations and Government Agencies

These institutions coordinate efforts and provide the necessary support, cooperate with the authorities, and support security efforts to combat trafficking and distribution and enforce strict laws. Civil society plays an important role in drug prevention. The United Nations therefore recognizes the importance of strengthening partnerships with civil society organizations to address the complex challenges of drug use and crime, which weaken the fabric of society. The active participation of civil society, including nongovernmental organizations, community groups, trade unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, religious groups, professional associations, and foundations, is crucial in supporting the United Nations' efforts to fulfill its global mandates effectively. (Drugs, 2025)

Ultimately, the maximum effectiveness of these institutions requires coordination and integration among their different roles to address addiction as a complex social phenomenon requiring comprehensive solutions that encompass prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

4. Mechanisms and Strategies for Addiction Prevention:

The effectiveness of agencies of socialization in reducing addiction extends to integrated preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative strategies aimed at building individuals' psychological and social resilience.

4.1 Strategies within the Family:

- **Sound Upbringing:** This relies on appropriate parenting practices based on love, affection, and understanding, avoiding harshness or excessive indulgence, exercising daily supervision, particularly of adolescents, and knowing the details of their friendships and studies.
- **Strengthening Self-Confidence:** Helping children develop a strong, confident personality capable of making sound decisions and resisting peer pressure (negative peer influences), while also strengthening their religious restraint.
- **Open Dialogue:** Encouraging children to disclose their problems without fear of judgment or blame, and listening actively to them to provide advice and guidance in accordance with the counsel of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who said: “Play with them for seven years, discipline them for seven years, befriend them for seven years, and then give them free rein.” Authentic hadith.
- **Positive Parental Supervision:** Monitoring children's behavior inside and outside the home and getting to know their friends and their friends' families to ensure good companionship.
- **Constructive Use of Leisure Time:** Directing young people's energies toward beneficial activities, such as hobbies, sports, and volunteering, thereby filling the free time that some might use to engage in deviance.

4.2 Strategies for Schools and Educational Institutions:

- **Comprehensive Awareness Programs:** Including topics on the risks of addiction and its health, psychological, and social harms in curricula or presenting them through specialized seminars and workshops.
- **The Role of Social Workers and Psychologists:** Providing support and guidance to students experiencing psychological or social problems and helping them adapt to challenges.

- **A Safe School Environment:** Maintaining a positive and supportive school environment free from stress and problems that may drive students to seek escape through drugs.

4.3 Strategies for Religious Institutions:

- **Moderate Religious Discourse:** Using religious platforms, such as mosques and churches, to promote religious and moral awareness and warn against everything that harms the self and body.
- **Strengthening Religious Restraint:** Instilling religious values and principles that prohibit addiction and regard it as a sin, thereby providing individuals with strong internal protection.

4.4 Strategies for the Media and Civil Society:

- **Intensive Media Campaigns:** Using the power of visual, audio, and print media, as well as social media, to launch continuous, effective awareness campaigns targeting different groups in society.
- **Providing Support Centers:** Civil society organizations' provision of counseling and treatment centers offering services free of charge or at reduced cost to facilitate access to treatment for individuals with addiction.

5. Challenges Facing These Institutions:

- **Rapid Social Change:** Difficulty keeping pace with the changes and new challenges imposed by globalization and technology.
- **Lack of Coordination:** Efforts among different institutions are sometimes fragmented and insufficiently integrated, weakening their overall impact.
- **Social Stigma:** Fear of social stigma prevents many families and individuals from seeking timely assistance.

The effectiveness of these institutions lies in their ability to function as an integrated, interconnected system in which each institution supports the others in developing a well-adjusted individual capable of confronting life's challenges and avoiding the scourge of addiction.

6. Conclusion:

The effectiveness of agencies of socialization is fundamental to addiction prevention and treatment, as these agencies serve as both the first and last lines of defense. By instilling values, building self-confidence, and providing emotional and cognitive support, they significantly reduce the likelihood of individuals turning to drugs. Educational programs and social activities offered by these agencies also help address feelings of emptiness and provide young people with healthy, positive alternatives.

No single institution can succeed independently. A comprehensive approach is essential, combining the family's role in supervision and care, the school's role in awareness and education, and civil society's role in support and rehabilitation. Strengthening the effectiveness of these agencies is therefore not merely an option but a necessity for building a resilient society capable of addressing the challenges of addiction. It is also essential for raising healthy, productive generations through greater public awareness and health literacy.

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